



Northumberland
County Council

Flagstaff Park
Berwick upon Tweed
Management Plan 2023-2027



Flagstaff Park Management Plan

2023-2027

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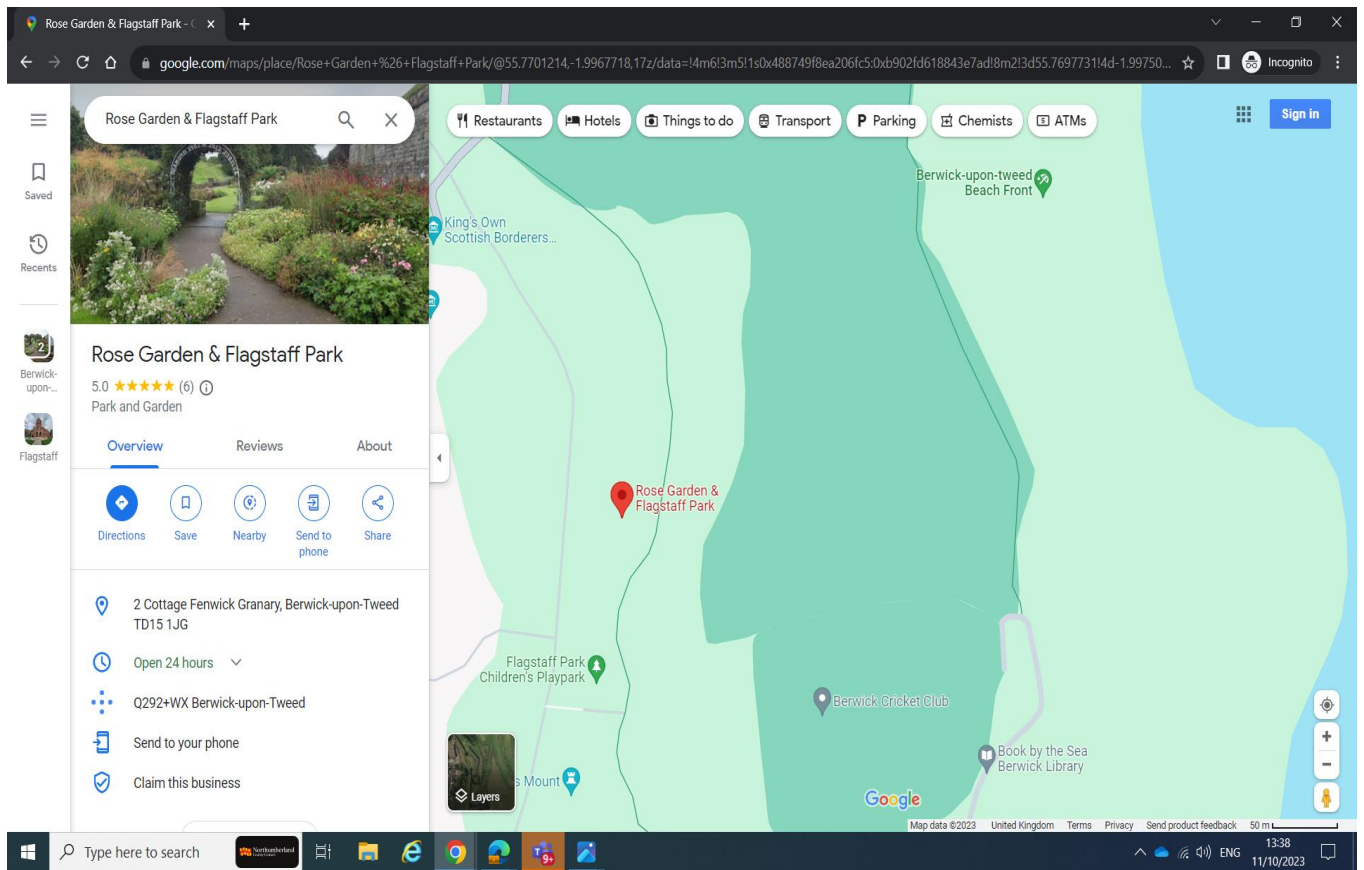
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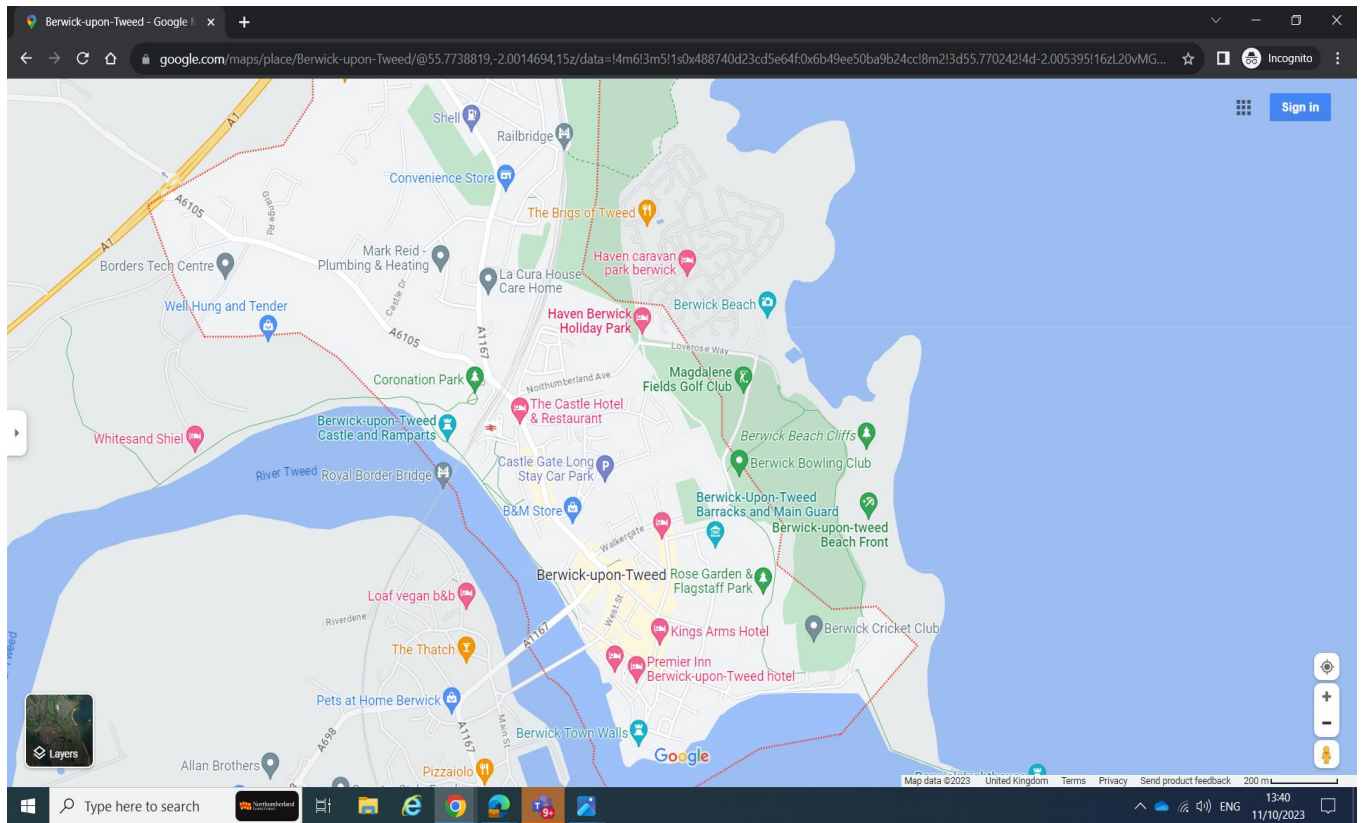
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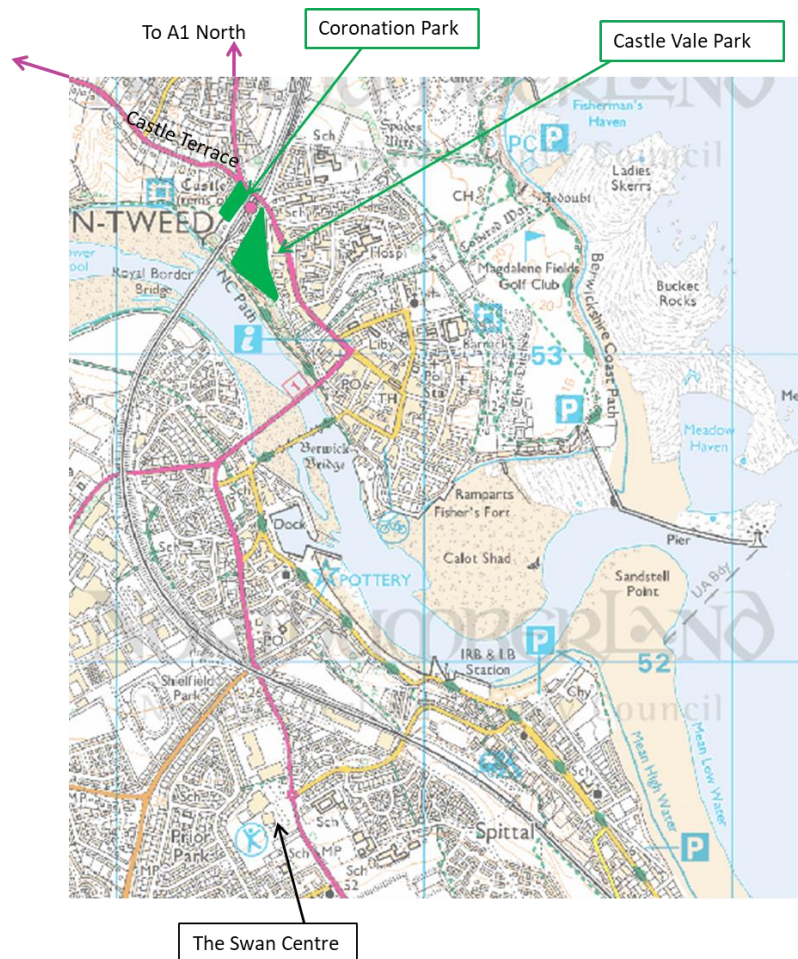
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Location Plans





Location Map showing Flagstaff



Plan showing the other 2 parks Castle Vale & Coronation Park

1. Introduction

1.1 Summary of the Plan

This management plan sets out the current position for Flagstaff Park, and what can be expected in terms of maintenance and future development. It is intended to be a working document for all staff, volunteers and other stakeholders involved in the management and maintenance of the park.

The plan follows the Green Flag Award format and guidelines set out in 'Raising the Standard' (2009). Each chapter describes the current situation for the parks, and states where improvements are to be made. Work programmes and future projects are included towards the end of the plan.

It is a five-year plan and will be reviewed in its entirety in 2027. The plan was written in Autumn/Winter of 2023 and is the first plan specific to Flagstaff. There are no specific visitor numbers information as surveys are yet to be undertaken

An annual update about management, work programmes, projects, achievements, activities are included in Chapters 12 and Appendix 1 & 2 and will be added to for each year

1.2 About the Park

Flagstaff Park is located on the northern banks of the River Tweed, situated between the Elizabethan Walls and the Northumberland Coast. This is one of three public strategic parks owned by Northumberland County Council in Berwick, which includes Castle Vale and Coronation Park. Pedestrian routes from the town centre and from the train station incorporate the Elizabethan Town Walls.

At just 2.5 hectares, Flagstaff Park is one of the most northerly, formal parks in England. It provides an attractive route from the town to the coast, outdoor educational and events space, sculptures, formal planted rose garden and commemorative decorative arches, each positioned to make the most of the stunning and timeless view of the coast and town walls, and formal and wildlife friendly planting. It also provides some of the best accessible views of the remains of the Elizabethan Walls. The land outside but adjacent to the park incorporates a Golf Course and tennis courts, owned by Northumberland County Council on long term leases. A nearby Bowling Club is situated adjacent to the park.

1.3 A Brief History of the Park

Flagstaff lies within a valley, bordered to the east by the Elizabethan Town Wall and by the remains of Berwick Castle to the west. It is in one of the most historic parts of Berwick, as it is the site of numerous medieval structures built to defend the town during many conflicts.

Flagstaff, or also known locally as 'Coronation' Park, lies within an area that was a ditch, bounded to the west by the Elizabethan Town Walls, which were built between 1558 and 1570, and to the east by the medieval fortifications commenced by Edward 1 in 1296. The name of Flagstaff is not known for certain, an illustration in a tourist guide c1900 suggests the existence of a flagstaff on top of Windmill Bastion, which projects from the curtain wall, and a 1924 OS map indicates the existence of a flagstaff on Coxon's Tower to the south. However, there is no direct evidence of a flagstaff in the park. A more detailed history of the Walls is included in the link

https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/berwick-upon-tweed-castle-and-ramparts/history/?_gl=1*7um9yv*_up*MQ..*_ga*MTI1NTIxODI0MS4xNzAwMDQ2MTI0*_ga_QK86RM1N34*MTcwMDA0NjEyMy4xLjEuMTcwMDA0NjE5Mi4wLjAuMA..



A view from the entrance path to the Town Walls

In 1954 a tourist guide mentions the “Rest Gardens” at the Flagstaff Park when the Mayor opened the gardens and he pointed out that the gardens were ‘only the beginning’ of the future development of the park. The Rest Gardens were created presumably for the coronation of Elizabeth 11 in 1952, hence the local name of ‘Coronation Park’, there would seem to have been a public park of some sort before the development mentioned by the Mayor.

The creation of a park for the new monarch is also evident at Coronation Park nr the rail station, also owned by NCC, to mark the coronation of Edward VIII but then later George VI. During the war years it seems likely

that the area was used as a rifle range as ariel photographs from 1948 show 2 ranges built into the side of Windmill Bastion.

A guide in 1959 describes the park as - 'though the park lies more seaward, it is amply sheltered by the massive Elizabethan Wall on one side and the earthworks of the old Edwardian Wall on the other. In summer it is a feast of colour and justly popular with visitors' In the 1954 guide a photograph is captioned as Rose Gardens at Flagstaff.

More recently the park is being used for events. In the mid-90's the Maltings Community Theatre staged The Merry Wives of Windsor which culminated in the park, where the circular area passing for Windsor Great Park. Other events have included touring productions of Shakespear, an event for Queen Elizabeths Gold Jubilee, the creation of decorative arches for the platinum and commemoration of Queen Elizabeth, the planting of a platinum display of bulbs and planting of the 'Queen Beth Avenue' of fruit trees and the installation of two wooden sculptures.



The Beacon on the top of the walls

The beacon overlooking the park from the Town Walls was last lit in June 2022 to celebrate the Queens Platinum jubilee, with a Town Crier reading out a proclamation. The beacon is one of a chain of beacons that line the coastline of the UK, now used only for ceremonial purposes previously used to warn of attack

1.4 Designations

The park is dedicated as a Public Open Space and lie within the Berwick upon Tweed Conservation Area, listed as 'ornamental parkland' in the Historic Landscape Character Assesment

There are scheduled ancient monuments in Flagstaff Park:

- The Elizabethan Walls
- The Barracks borders the boundary.

The park borders many Grade II listed building, including the Magazine Building, built in 1750

The site borders the SAC for the River Tweed and the SSSI for the Northumberland Shore

1.5 Site Details

Grid reference; NU452863 What Three Words – eggshell.surveyed.demoted

Area; 2.5 ha

Access; The park is situated in the busy town of Berwick in Northumberland and can be accessed from several streets and footpaths. There are 3 entrances in total.

Local facilities; There are no public toilets the nearest being the Rail station and in town
The nearest public telephone is the Rail station

Transport; Buses no direct services to the park
The Rail station is a transport interchange with buses just outside the station entrance

Train -
East Coast Main Line station of Berwick with 14 regular services to Edinburgh and Newcastle

Parking; The nearest car parking is at Wallace Green free with disc parking and a smaller space near Berwick Bowling Club (discs)

2. The Vision for the Park

Flagstaff Park is a vital component of the busy historic market town and tourist destination of Berwick upon Tweed. The main purpose of Flagstaff Park is to offer free to access, clean, well maintained and well managed green spaces, which meet the needs of residents, workers and visitors to Berwick as a place of calm or active and sociable activity. By involving park users and the local community as the main drivers in its development and management, the aim of the parks is to foster a sense of local pride and community cohesion.

The vision for Flagstaff Park is to:

- Maintain and continue to improve the park to a high standard
- Ensure there is strong community involvement in the management and development of the park
- Make provision for recreation, education and healthy living in a safe and pleasant environment
- Provide and improve habitats for wildlife and sustainable use of resources.

3. A Welcoming Park

Aim - The overall impression for someone approaching and entering the site is positive and inviting.

3.1 Announcing the Park

Flagstaff Park has 3 entrance points, off Pier Road to the south, one from the gate from the walls and from the Stanks side nr the Bowling Club



Entrance sign from the 'Stanks'

Each entrance at Pier Road and Off the Town Walks has the NCC local park signs which included the standard pictorial signs for picnic area, historic feature etc. All entrances are well maintained and well signed. There is currently no notice board at the main entrance. The play area has its own Berwick Town Council sign and there are historical information signs about the Elizabethan walls nr the entrances.

3.2 Physical Access

There are 3 main pedestrian access points. There is no parking, though parking is readily available in the town centre. Public access along the route is not allowed but vehicles from the County Council and Town Council access for maintenance ie grass cutting, bins. There are no formal access rights across this land.



The pedestrian access from the Town Walls

The topography of the area, being relatively flat with no steps and steep slopes within the park, allows easier access for wheeled scooters, buggies etc. The access down from the Elizabethan Town Walls is stepped however, again due to the confines of the topography and the Scheduled Ancient Monument. There is currently no parks leaflet or interpretation panel for the park but in 2023 because of the Queen Elizabeth Commemoration schemes a new panel will be erected in the park in 2024. There is an NCC website

The Park Officer has parked within area of the Rose Garden for ease of use for tool transport, but all other vehicles would be restricted due to public safety concerns

There is a bus stop/interchange at the Rail station where numerous buses use the site and a taxi rank. The rail station is on the main East Coast main line and at present 16 trains stop regularly for Edinburgh and London, with some limited stopping at minor stations including Morpeth and Alnmouth.

Many visitors use the park to walk through from the Haven Caravan Park at Magdalen Fields, particularly in the summer. The park is frequently used by people following town trails along the walls and walking down to the Pier Road to take in the views and families visiting the formal play park, operated by the Town Council. There are no real restrictions on pedal cycles. Many people use the parks to walk their dogs and general bins are provided for waste. The NCC's animal welfare officer patrols the parks to monitor and encourage responsible dog ownership. Removal of overgrown, poorly maintained shrubs, as well as major improvements to the planting and the seating in the park, have created a well-planned and well-maintained feel. This enhances the welcoming feel as you enter.

The main path through the park is not a public right of way but is a popular walk.

Most users in the park walk dogs and as mentioned, there are general bins, and the NCC animal welfare officer can be called into monitor and check on responsible dog ownership.

3.3 Social Access

In recent years this park has been well looked after by local volunteers and is a key element in the management of the parks and have also provided a welcome and friendly presence on the site, and often report back comments from both residents of the town and visitors. The improvement of infrastructure within the park, combined with the increased staff presence of the Parks Officer also contributes to the welcoming feel of the park. All this adds to the perception of public safety and lessens the fear of crime.

Within the confines of geography and topography we have tried to ensure access for all. Handrails are installed at the Gate from the Town Walls leading to viewpoints and to help those less mobile

The 'Friends of Castle Parks' volunteer group plays an active role, under the supervision of the Parks Officer, in creating a welcoming, well cared for, and safe atmosphere for all park users. There is one set of steps in the park, but there are also ramped paths that allow access to all areas for those with reduced mobility.

3.4 Aspects of Design

The park was designed in the 1930's primarily containing a formal rose garden and the layout of the parks has been maintained as part of their heritage. However, there is opportunity and scope to deliver features and

uses more relevant to today's users, to encourage a desire to explore and discover the parks' features. Recently, this has involved wooden chainsaw sculptures and a bee bank. The planting in the park contains a good variety of texture, colour and benefits to wildlife, complemented by mix of hard and soft landscaping.

4. Healthy, Safe and Secure

Aim - The park is a healthy, safe and secure place for all members of the community to use. Relevant issues are addressed in the management plan and implemented on the ground. New concerns which arise are addressed promptly and appropriately.

4.1 Healthy Parks & Partnerships

The most sustainable solution to achieving a sense of security is to ensure the parks are well used and well respected. The presence of the Parks Officer, clearly identifiable with NCC uniform, helps visitors feel secure. The presence of the volunteers, again in logoed clothing, on regular workdays ensures good and effective management and development of the parks and feeling of community engagement. Other agencies/partner organisations that contribute to management included, pre-covid;

- Northumberland Youth Offending Service - uses volunteers to help with conservation projects in the parks
- Northumberland Police and Police Support
- Berwick Friends of Castle Parks - the main source of gardeners, raise publicity through their website, fund raise and help with events
- Local County Councillors funding - assist in provision of bulbs
- RHS In Your Neighbourhood - participate successfully in their local /national award scheme
- Berwick Town Council – play area provision
- Army cadets/Brownies units - conservation projects Berwick Community Crew Youth Group – conservation projects

The park will continue to provide opportunities where possible for these, and other groups. The Friends of Castle Parks provide a regular weekly presence through practical conservation. In 2019 there was a Northumberland County Council horticultural apprentice who helped the Parks Officer weekly. Opportunities will be sought to continue this.

Both parks are well used by walkers and runners. The improvements to the infrastructure of the parks mean they are more accessible than before, creating more opportunities for people to enjoy informal outdoor exercise. A rise in use was particularly noted in 2020 under the covid pandemic.

The Parks Officer organises weekly volunteer gardening and maintenance tasks, both of which offer a healthy pastime to local people.

The local police force are involved in tackling anti-social behaviour on all park sites in the town but as such Flagstaff to date has had no reportable incidents. A log of 101 calls would be made by the Park Officer and the volunteers is kept and reported to the Green Spaces Officer to action, this is currently in place for the other NCC parks. Litter picking events are held with the local police and their Police cadets.

The recent horticultural improvements and restoration of planting schemes provide plenty of space for peaceful and contemplative use of the parks. A full plant list of the formal garden is in Appendix 4

A town wide Nature Trail, launched in Spring 2020 by the U3A, now starts at Castle Vale Park with one start panel and one information point generated by the local U3A group with advice from the Park Officer. It may be that this trail could be extended to Flagstaff or a sculpture trail from the other parks.

4.2 Quality and Safe Equipment and Facilities

All the features within the park have been improved and are of a high quality, both in design and manufacture. The features within the parks are checked on a regular basis by the Parks Officer and NEAT teams to ensure they remain in a safe condition for visitors, and any issues are dealt with promptly by reporting to either the Green Spaces Officer or Senior NEAT Team Leader.

There are formal play and sports facilities within the park which includes a formal play area operated by Berwick Town Council, Cricket Club, Golf Club and Tennis courts which all on NCC land but leased out with responsibilities for maintenance lying with the leasees. The main areas are the entrances, seats, footpaths, steps, bins, handrails and trees. Immediate and obvious dangers are addressed promptly. Repairs are being done by Northumberland County Council's Neighbourhood Services, park staff or local contractors where necessary.

An annual checklist, introduced in 2015, monitors and records the condition of trees to the Tree Officer, there is a twice-yearly check of trees for safety reasons initiated in 2023 and footpaths and entrances are reported to the Green Spaces Officer or Senior NEAT Team Leader.

4.3 Health and Safety Policies

Flagstaff Park fall within the remit of Northumberland County Council's health and safety policies and risk assessments, copies of which are issued to all Neighbourhood Services operational staff, all of whom are on a regular training programme of relevant courses. This can be highlighted in their annual appraisals, including

the Parks Officer. Copies are available on the council's internal website. A copy of a risk assessment is attached in Appendix 3. Specific risk assessments are prepared for individual events.

Volunteers working in the park are subject to the same high duty of care as an employee of the council, thus are effectively classed as employees and as such are asked to sign a Volunteers Code. The duty of care extends to ensuring that volunteers are provided with a safe place of work, safe system of work, safe equipment, adequate training and supervision and personal protective equipment when necessary. The onsite training on the day of work for volunteers is undertaken by the Parks Officer. The officer will have checked whether the work needs a specific risk assessment, provides an outline of the work, what tools will be involved and what is to be achieved. Volunteers will also be given a tools demonstration if any tools are unfamiliar. Tools are checked at the end of the task for damage or fault and either repaired or replaced, if necessary. PPE needed for the task is provided by NCC. All volunteers work under the direct supervision of the Parks Officer.

A volunteer's code of conduct is in Appendix 5.

A first aid kit is carried by the Parks Officer and training is provided for all staff.

Accident reporting is done online by relevant NCC staff.

There will be times when the Parks Officer is lone working, which cannot be avoided. To minimise risk for these occasions, staff are issued with a mobile phone and, if requested, a personal attack alarm. Emergency contact details are kept for staff and volunteers in the event of an accident.

4.4 Feeling Safe and Secure

The compact size and open aspect of the Parks creates a feeling of safety. The presence of the Parks Officer and recent improvements to the planting schemes create a well-maintained feeling, which contributes to the perception of safety.

The park has an open feel, with the improved features, contributing to the well managed and cared for feel in the park. Sight lines have been opened where possible. There is no lighting in the parks at present. The presence of staff and the Friends group mean that problems are reported quickly and therefore addressed. There are currently no CCTV cameras. The County Council has a Fix My Street portal online for the public to report any issues.

There is generally little antisocial behaviour or criminal damage within the park. If it does occur it is spotted and dealt with promptly by the Parks Officer or NEAT team and the local community police officer.

The Parks Officer, when there have been issues is able to pass concerns to the Green Spaces Officer. The NEAT teams will also help to keep the amount of litter under control. CCTV is currently being considered. Local police are attending the Friends Group meetings

Evidence of antisocial behaviour in the park is monitored and reported to the police if deemed necessary.

4.5 Encouraging Responsible Dog Owners

The park is a popular route for dog walkers and, as everywhere, dog fouling occurs. The parks are included in the patrol routes for the Animal Welfare Officers, who can issue fixed penalty notices to owners who do not clear up after their dogs. There are general litter bins in the park and at or near park entrances on and at the rose garden. The Parks Officer encourages responsible dog ownership with park users and has engaged the local Scouts to produce posters that raise awareness of the issue, which have been positioned in prominent places onsite. In 2022, we engaged with Brownies and Guides to produce a set of posters to be displayed onsite. A copy of the winning poster is included in Appendix 6 . Furthermore, members of the public can report dog fouling issues on the NCC website.

For dog fouling issues, the increased presence of the Parks Officer and positive general public use, following the recent improvement works, should contribute to a reduction in both type of incidents. This will be monitored during the next three years.

5. Well Maintained and Clean

Aim – Issues of cleanliness and maintenance are addressed for aesthetic and health and safety reasons.

5.1 Litter and Waste Management

Cleanliness is part of the package that creates a feeling of safety within the park and encourages more positive behaviour from visitors. Poor maintenance produces hazards for the public and staff and creates an atmosphere of unkemptness, disinterest, and worsened perceptions of safety. NCC consider it important, therefore, to maintain high standards of cleanliness and follows the Government Guidelines in the Litter Strategy for England (2017) and Keep Britain Tidy initiatives. Flagstaff Park is patrolled by the Parks Officer and volunteers, and litter picked when necessary.

There are three bins in Flagstaff Park. These are emptied by the NEAT team twice a week. There are bins in the play area emptied by the Berwick Town Council, the play park is freehold. This will be monitored to establish if this is sufficient across a wider period of use. Close working links between the park staff and NEAT teams mean that operational issues of this kind can be identified and addressed easily and quickly.

Litter collected by the Parks Officer and volunteers is bagged and left at park entrances to be collected and disposed of by the NEAT teams as part of their regular town-wide cleansing activities. The use of sharps boxes for needles is monitored and training given in picking up and disposing. Volunteers are not asked to pick up needles but are to report their position for staff to collect.

Green waste is at present composted where possible. Where trees are pruned or felled, the wood is left in habitat piles and chipped and left onsite as a valuable wildlife habitat and also used as a mulch for the flower beds.

5.2 Grounds Maintenance

The grounds maintenance operations are done in-house to a high standard by the Parks Officer, with support from the NEAT team. The Parks Officer cares for the formal horticultural aspects of the park, whilst the NEAT teams grass cut. Operations of such can be seen in Appendix 1. Any tree works are undertaken by the NCC Tree Team under direction from the Tree Officer. The Tree Officer and Green Spaces officer have bi-monthly catch ups regarding site inspection issues that are highlighted by the Parks Officer, Volunteers or the public.

Criminal damage, such as graffiti or vandalism to the parks' infrastructure, are thankfully rare events. However, if they do occur then they are dealt with as soon as they are discovered. The Parks Officer deals with as much as possible, with support from the NEAT team or relevant contractors when necessary. All graffiti, vandalism and criminal damage is reported to Northumbria Police by the Parks Officer. Social media sites are used to highlight the issues to the wider community to promote more reporting of the issues.

5.3 Building and Infrastructure Maintenance

There are no buildings in the parks; infrastructure includes footpaths, handrails, the Rose Garden, bins, steps, gates, arches and entrances. The seats and bins are the responsibility of Berwick Town Council.

As with grounds maintenance, the infrastructure is the responsibility of Neighbourhood Services within Northumberland County Council, with support from Strategic Assets Management and Property Services where necessary. There is, at present, little maintenance required

5.4 Equipment Maintenance

There is no fixed play equipment or sports equipment in the park that directly comes under the control of NCC. Equipment, including mowers, hedge cutters, strimmers and hand tools, is maintained under Northumberland County Council's maintenance programme. Mechanical equipment is serviced annually during the winter, and hand tools are inspected regularly and replaced or repaired if necessary. All staff undergo an extensive induction covering health and safety and the safer use of machinery and are regularly included in the NCC training programme.

Risk assessments are available on the NCC intranet site and no vehicles are left in the parks at night. There is a small amount of fuel stored for the machinery at the NCC depot in secure containers. Ride on mowers are fuelled at the depots and all equipment checked by operatives before use. Recently, new battery-operated equipment has been purchased for the Parks Officer and volunteers and suitable training is given before use.

6. Sustainability



Our recycled Christmas Tree -

Aim - Methods used in maintaining the park and its facilities are environmentally sound, relying on best practice according to current knowledge. Management is aware of the range of techniques available to them and demonstrate that informed choices have been made and are regularly reviewed.

Sustainability means 'able to be maintained at a certain level' (Oxford dictionary online). For our parks in Northumberland, sustainability means finding the balance between the best community involvement, environmental practice, available budget and staff resources. Northumberland County Council would like to see the parks maintained as an example of sustainability and good practice so future generations will inherit a better environment. The council therefore values its partnership working with residents, businesses and visitors to the town. Northumberland County Council has a Climate Action team who are producing a Climate Action Plan 2021-23 will include action points on Engagement & Partnership working, Reducing Waste, Natural Resource Based Carbon Sequestration, for the parks we will action relevant points from the plan when discussions are held with the Climate Change Team.

6.1 Horticulture, Peat and Pesticides

Flagstaff Park have no demanding annual flower beds or sports turf, which significantly reduces the need to use peat or chemicals. Recent horticultural improvements specifically avoid an introduction of annual bedding to eliminate regular use of peat as a growing medium, and the high financial and staff cost associated with replacing bedding twice per year. Plants are supplied by volunteers, and we recommend peat free compost where possible. Plant species are wildlife friendly, such as calendula. While staff and volunteer resources allow, all weeding in the beds, footpath edges, and areas under and around the street furniture in both parks will be done using physical or mechanical methods, avoiding the use of herbicides and unsightly browned-off edges of grass.

To improve the biodiversity of the park through the creation of a meadow on the banksides, no pesticide use had been necessary to eliminate the ruderal weeds and rank grasses on the meadow site. This will be reviewed as the meadow progresses and progressive hand pulling of weeds can be employed.

Green waste generated by weeding and meadow maintenance from the park on a small scale can be composted and we need to find an area that we can assign to a composting facility. Large amounts are collected with the council's municipal green waste collections and composted off site at a local SITA green waste recycling site or at Com-Vert green waste composting facility near Alnwick. Chipped green waste from shrubs and trees is recycled for use as mulch on council shrub beds. NCC is currently exploring whether space in the Council depot can be set aside for use to compost and grow on plants. New plans for 2023 included

composing sites in two other of the parks NCC own created onsite with the application to the RHS for funding, then this will be looked at for Flagstaff.

Whenever possible, and where space and location allow, brash and timber from trees will be wood chipped and used as mulch and to be reviewed to be stacked to create invertebrate habitat piles. Bird and bat boxes will be added to the park.

All of these have contributed to a wildlife rich resource which monitors any climate change issues and is practised in all operations on the park, and this will hopefully show in the wildlife counts that if we can accommodate in 2024/25. The creation of a new bee bank also has added to the habitat types.

6.2 Energy, Water and Resources

The nature of Flagstaff Park and the features in them keep energy and water use and resource requirement to a minimum.

There is no on-site water or electricity provision

Any benches and bins are maintained by the Town Council.

The use of herbaceous planting in the park has significantly reduced the need to water plants in dry weather. Watering will only be done when it is necessary to avoid the loss of plants. It will be done during cooler times of day and applied topically as there are no water sources nearby.

The recent purchase of mechanical tools powered by rechargeable batteries helps to reduce our consumption of petrol and oil, thus reducing emissions and reducing noise pollution. (Tool purchase has been funded by the Friends of the Parks, and a successful grant bid, from funds raised predominantly from Open Gardens events).

6.3 Arboriculture and Woodland Management

The path edge in from the Bowling Green is lined with semi mature species mainly sycamore, but in 2022 onwards other species have been planted including horse chestnut, oak and hazel

Trees and shrubs on the banks leading into the park provide welcome biodiversity and wildlife habitat and provide ground stabilisation. However, the soil upon which they grow is likely to be shallow, which may create problems as larger tree species mature and outgrow the capacity of the bank to support them. These trees will be monitored and if they pose a risk to the safety of people using the park, they will be felled. Wherever

possible they will be section felled to a height that enables us to retain a trunk to decompose naturally and provide standing deadwood habitat, which is becoming increasingly rare.

Trees around the grass circle area consist of a mixture of semi mature and juvenile mixed broadleaves. In recent years trees have been planted to fill gaps due to storm damage or as memorial trees transported from a site that was to be developed. The trees are inspected regularly and if needed crown cleared or crown lifted, with some selected felling for safety and to open vistas that were originally part of the park's design. They will be inspected annually for safety and any necessary works carried out if any trees become unsafe. We are mindful of Ash Die Back also in all other ash in the park, this will be an ongoing assessment. In particular, attention will be paid to those trees closest to the historic town walls to check for any damage from roots or collapse

7. Conservation and Heritage



Flagstaff Park in By Gone Days 1944

Aim - Particular attention is paid to the conservation and appropriate management of natural features, wildlife and flora, landscape features, buildings and structural features. These features will serve their function well without placing undue pressure on the environment.

7.1 Natural Features, Wildlife and Flora

Flagstaff Park contains a variety of managed habitats, including trees, rose gardens, spring bulbs, and some areas of rough grass and mown grass.

Wherever possible all plants have been selected to be wildlife friendly or nectar rich, providing a long flowering season. New planting will prioritise wildlife friendly plants

We are aware that there are no regular weekly bird, butterfly and flora surveys that have been done by the Park Staff and volunteers. From 2024, emphasis was put on butterfly, meadow, and bird surveys in conjunction with Berwick Wildlife Group to support the Friends group, with results recorded and monitored. Survey results will be entered into the national BTO Garden Birdwatch database, thereby contributing to national as well as local wildlife monitoring.

There is currently no sightings of grey squirrels in Flagstaff Park. Links have been made to the Northumberland Red Squirrels Group to investigate whether culling of greys is possible or practical in this area where needed. Culling is being actioned in the River Tweed Estuary area at present.

Events including the RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch, Bioblitz, Big Beastie Hunt and the Heritage Open Days give the public the opportunity to learn about the wildlife in the other NCC parks and the adjacent area and create bat and bird boxes for use in the parks and at home. In 2019, community reparation volunteers built tawny owl and kestrel boxes, installed by Northumberland County Tree Team. Timber was donated by a local construction firm. This will be rolled out in Flagstaff

The management of all the trees is carried out to cause minimum disturbance to the wildlife and to enhance the natural woodland. No tree felling will take place during the bird breeding season and bat hibernation season unless the tree poses a risk to park users. Fallen deadwood is usually left on the ground, where possible, to provide alternative habitats. Safe standing deadwood will also be left.

Consideration was given as to whether we could provide a wader scrape near the road gates as this area is currently left as a rank grassland, however due to the archaeology of the area we would be prohibited from disturbing the ground. The bank sides of the footpath were currently mown regularly until 2021, we are now allowing the grass to grow for biodiversity reasons and then this is cut and removed in early September

All herbaceous plants have been selected to be wildlife friendly or nectar rich, and to provide a flowering season that lasts as long as possible. An increase in the number of butterflies in the park has already been observed, and monitoring will continue.

There are self-sown sycamores on the banks and dunes near the golf course, and a stand of mature trees that line the walkway along the main path

There is a relatively newly planted 'Queen Beth Avenue' of apples and pear trees, funded by the local councillor and planted with Northumbria Police and their young cadets called 'mini' police. The avenue consists of 7 apple species named 'Queen' and 7 pear species named 'Beth' planted for the platinum jubilee of Queen Elizabeth



Councillor Catherine Seymour & Northumbria Police- 'Queen Beth' Avenue

The understorey is dominated by rank or mown grass and planted bulbs such as wood anemone, bluebell, wild daffodil and celandine. The bank will be managed lightly to encourage a wider diversity of plant species.

Through the work of the Parks Officer at events and with schools and local groups, additional habitats such as log piles, insect homes, bat boxes have been created to benefit invertebrates, and a bee bank has been installed. The park a new has a new rose hedge planted in 2022 in time for the Queens Platinum Celebration by the Friends Group.

7.2 Landscape



Historic Town Walls & Rose Garden

Flagstaff Park hugs the area around the Town Walls from the gate and to the dune system around the Golf Course. The views along the footpath are popular with photographers of the Walls as well as the view from the walk along the walls of the park.

The steep historic walls make up the landscape of the parks and was one of the key factors in the location of the formal Rose Graden, the commemorative arches and planting for the jubilees of the late Queen Elizabeth in keeping with the Royal theme.

Vistas will be maintained through sympathetic tree and woodland management.

7.3 Buildings, Structures and Historic Character

With no buildings in Flagstaff Park management requirements are not onerous. There are now 3 ornamental arches each put in to celebrate royal occasions. They are galvanised steel. These are checked on a regular basis for damage.

The formal play area is owned freehold and maintained by Berwick Town Council, including an annual and weekly inspection undertaken by the staff of the Berwick Town Council. Its design is incorporating of all ages.

It is highly popular with locals and the visitors to the local caravan park just north of the park who use the route though the park to access the town and play park.



The formal play park

The Town walls are under the remit of English Heritage.

8. Community Involvement

Aim - Park management authorities will actively pursue the involvement of members of the community with representation of as many park user groups as possible.

Community involvement is at the heart of the successful use, management and improvement of the park. The support of local people, user groups, partners and other stakeholders is fundamental to the parks' success.

Community involvement in Flagstaff Park was a fundamental element in the success of the In Your Neighbourhood award, thanks to the immense efforts made by a small number of volunteers and the support of the local County Councillor.

The number of people involved in the parks has increased significantly, with more volunteers, groups and events. Groups involved so far have included Berwick Academy, Berwick Youth Group, U3A, the police youth service and individual volunteers. A full list is included in Chapter 4.1. The Berwick Parks Project Friends Group has totalled over 200 hours of voluntary work in 2022 has proven to be a different picture due to Covid restrictions on persons meeting outdoors and this will be reflected in any figures, Covid had also impacted on the number of hours that were available for general weeding and maintenance. New volunteers are always actively recruited on events via the public, notices on the social media sites of the Friends Group and notices onsite.

NCC also has a new Volunteer Co-ordinator post in place from 2019 with a view to progressing a more uniform approach to all the volunteer groups that NCC operate and to keep in contact with all listed volunteers

8.1 Patterns of Use

A visitor survey may be looked at for 2024/25 to understand the patterns of use and wishes of groups, residents and visitors who have a stake in how the parks develop. Monitoring attitudes to the parks ensures that management and future developments meet the needs and expectations of all park users.

8.2 Volunteers and the Friends Group

The two original groups that were involved in the Parks for People project in Castle Vale and Coronation Park have now merged into one group called The Friends of Castle Parks. So far, community involvement has included practical maintenance and gardening, help with events, representation on the former steering group and an emerging Friends group. This will continue and expand through the work of the Parks Officer.

The Friends group now encompasses Flagstaff. They are proactive in conversing with businesses and have worked at attracting funding bids; a successful bid in 2018 saw a grant from the private firm Suez to create the wildlife sculptures in Coronation Park and in 2019 a bid to NCC's Community Chest award for equipment for all the parks. Recent funding success has led to the installation of two new wooden animal sculptures.

The Open Gardens event around the town involves local who open up their gardens for a small fee which contributes to the funding for the parks, to great success. There are also planned a series of winter talks all added to the website and notice boards. The volunteers work on other areas around the town where help is needed, this includes being directly involved in the new Community Orchard in the north of the town and Flagstaff Park, both owned by NCC

8.3 Events

The Parks Officer organises and leads a wide range of events in the other NCC parks, including dawn chorus walks, wildlife monitoring and heritage walks. There are opportunities to increase this offer into Flagstaff through links with Berwick Youth Project, The Maltings and Active Northumberland. AN Art IN The Park Event is planned for 2024 alongside a [possible Outdoor Theatre event

A programme of events for each year, is developed and advertised locally, regionally and online, making use of events listings already produced by Berwick upon Tweed Town Council and Northumberland County Council or Active Northumberland. The events programme has been taken on board by the Friends of Castle Parks Group forming their own committee for event planning.

8.4 Schools and Other Groups

There is an opportunity to increase use of the park by local schools. The Parks Officer is working on finding out what the park can offer local schools and how they can use the park more. One idea discussed involved a sculpture trail, installed in 2019 in the NCC parks at Castle Vale and Coronation and this has meant involvement with the local schools and two new sculptures designed by the children were put in Flagstaff in 2023 funded by the Friends Group, with a possibility of another two. A trail may be considered.



Sculpture of a Honeybee – designed by School Children, installed Oct 2023

Bulbs planted showing in Spring 2023 below



Berwick Youth project, local guides and scouts were involved in the commemorative planting in the circle of the bulbs showing E11R 70 in 2022 with bulbs funded by the local County Councillor. The bulbs start with snowdrops, crocus daffodils followed by tulips, all in platinum colours

The Parks Officer has continued to work with other groups, including Guides, Scouts, Army Cadets, the town's youth project, as required and as projects become apparent

9. Marketing

9.1 Marketing Strategy

Marketing of a park involves understanding the aspirational goals and current position of the park in terms of use, events, public perception and public needs for the site, then responding to that information in a way which increases use and the sense of public involvement and ownership of the park.

The aspiration for Flagstaff Park is that they return to their status of well loved and respected areas of green space within the town of Berwick, with excellent standards of maintenance, good community involvement at all levels from management to events, education activities and volunteer activities and adequate staff resources to deliver these.

The current position for the parks is that they have excellent standards of maintenance and infrastructure, as awarded in national schemes such as Green Flag and Britain/Northumbria in Bloom, (2023 saw Flagstaff awarded the 'Outstanding') and have excellent opportunities for increasing the community involvement and ownership through the Parks Officer, Friends Group and existing strong volunteer base.

In order to increase community involvement, the message that the park has been improved and has something to offer must be conveyed to residents, schools, workers, tourists, and visitors to Berwick. This will be done through regular events, promotion of the park, and activities through various outlets listed below and others as they become available. Examples include using shop windows in the town centre to display information about the improvements and events, posts on social media, leaflets and events such as public talks.

A visitor survey will provide responses to inform future park management and events. An activity plan has been produced see Chapter 11. NCC are currently investigating an online visitor feedback form for all its parks, with comments that can be left for individual parks.

A full marketing strategy for all of Northumberland's Parks is available from the Green Spaces Officer if required. Northumberland has 13 formal parks and country parks of which 12 hold Green Flag.

9.2 Information Provision and Interpretation

Information about the parks is provided in the following places:

- Park signs at the entrances.
- Inclusion on the town map as a point of interest produced by the Chamber of Trade
- Posters put up in the rail station for events in all parks
- Friends of Castle Parks website <https://www.friendsofcastleparks.org/>
- Northumberland County Council website/Tourist Information site <https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/berwickparks.aspx>
- Visit Berwick website <http://www.explore-northumberland.co.uk/walksinberwick.html>
- Events leaflets produced and distributed by Northumberland County Council and Berwick upon Tweed Town Council
- Regular press releases for events and newsworthy stories
- Facebook and twitter posts through Northumberland County Council, Friends of the Parks, Berwick Deserves Better and Berwick upon Tweed Town Council.
- Linking with other projects which enhance and promote Berwick upon Tweed

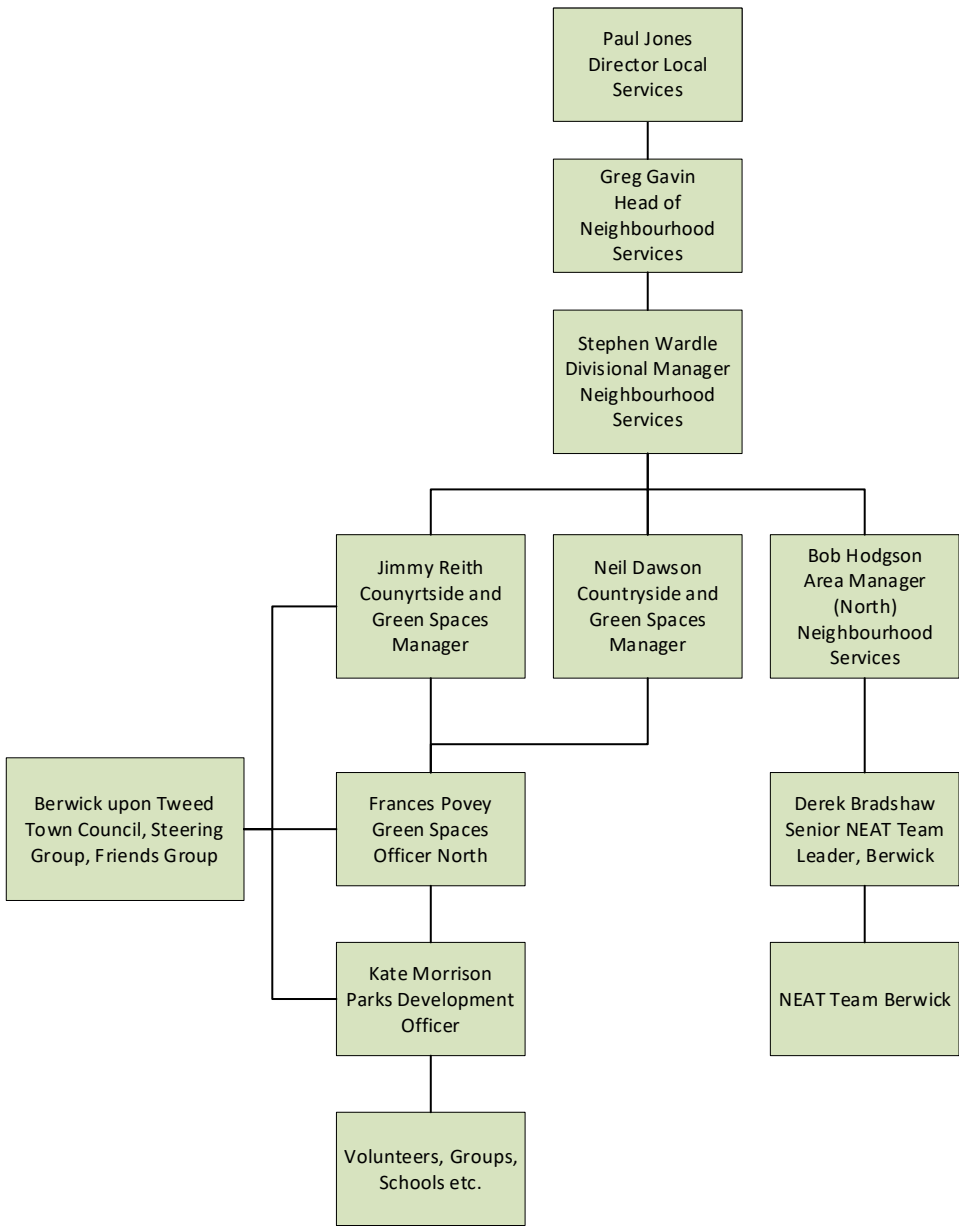
- Any other opportunities as they become available

10. Management

Aim – The park will be valued by those involved in its management, and have a management plan that sets out the balance between all applicable priorities, partners and policies, and identify the contribution the park is making to wider strategic aims. The plan will be actively implemented and reviewed regularly. Sound financial management of the park is also demonstrated.

10.1 Staffing Structure

The current staffing structure shows the management and maintenance roles in relation to the parks. The parks sit within the Local Services Directorate of Northumberland County Council, within the Neighbourhood Services section. The main management and development duties are carried out by the Green Spaces and Countryside Team, with maintenance support from the Neighbourhood Environmental Action Team (NEAT) maintenance teams in the same Neighbourhood Services division.



10.2 Local Strategic Context of Flagstaff Park

Parks, Country Parks and Green Spaces sit within the Neighbourhood Services division of the Local Services Directorate of Northumberland County Council.

Berwick Parks Project and the Parks for People funding has become a catalyst for a much wider programme of park improvements throughout the county, largely as a result of the success of the project and the involvement of key senior officers, including the former Chief Executive of the Council and the current Local

Services Director, in the planning and opening day stages of the project. This has also raised the profile of Flagstaff Park through local county councillor funding.

It is important for parks to be recognised strategically by Northumberland County Council to ensure they remain visible and valued in all sections of the council. Flagstaff Park contributes to several policies including:

1. Northumberland County Council Corporate Plan

The corporate plan sets out the council's vision, strategic aims and policy priorities for economic growth, places and environment, stronger communities and families, health and wellbeing and developing the organisation. Flagstaff Park contributes to:

- 'Places and Environment – our aim is to maintain and further improve the quality of our towns, villages and countryside.
- Stronger Communities and Families – our aim is to ensure that all residents genuinely feel safe, belong, and have a say in how the county is run, and to provide a range of quality community and cultural services and facilities which inspire creativity and participation.

The link is ' <https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/About/Policy.aspx>

2. Neighbourhood Services Service Statement 2023

The importance of well managed and maintained parks, country parks and green spaces are acknowledged in the service delivery plans, and the attainment of the Green Flag Award every year is a Key Performance Indicator. The link is <https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/About/Policy/Service-statements.aspx>

3. Northumberland Core Strategy Document

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Planning/Planning-policy/Policies.aspx>

As public open space, Flagstaff Park fits into the council's Local Plan Delivery document, specifically in the following areas:

- 'Policy 45, Recreational Open Space - include policies for the protection and enhancement of open space, sport and recreation facilities relevant to the Delivery area.
- Policy 46, Green Infrastructure - identify local green infrastructure assets to be protected and seek opportunities to create new green infrastructure.'

Other strategic areas that the parks contribute to include:

- Northumberland Biodiversity Action [https://www.nwt.org.uk/sites/default/files/2018-10/Nland Biodiversity Action Plan.pdf](https://www.nwt.org.uk/sites/default/files/2018-10/Nland_Biodiversity_Action_Plan.pdf)
- Northumberland's Master Climate Change Action Plan 2021-23 was published on Feb 10th 2021 <https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Climate-Change/Climate-Change.aspx>

10.3 Financial management

The parks have sound financial management. General budget control is maintained by the Green Spaces Officer, with support from the Green Spaces and Countryside Manager, NEAT area manager and Northumberland County Council's finance teams.

The parks now draw on the budget for the NEAT North teams, through the additional works the NEAT teams carry out in the parks and also the Green Spaces budget if any unforeseen maintenance issues arise.

Some funding is available for events, tools and plants from funds raised by Friends of the Parks whose main funding source is the annual Open Gardens Event.

Since the end of the Parks for People Project in June 2018 the Parks Officer post was secured on a permanent basis by funding from the County Council.

Full budget records are held by the Green Spaces Officer. A breakdown of costs for the parks is given in Appendix 2. At present, no specific budget from the Neighbourhood Services team is allotted to the park's management. Money is instead allocated from the general maintenance pot on demand by request from the Green Spaces Officer; this is under review for 2023/24

11 Action & Activity Plans

11.1 The Activity Plan

The following programme of activities was drawn up focussing on increasing the range of activities offered and number of visitors to the parks. The table is updated annually as activities are achieved. This forms a template for producing any activity plans.

	Activity	Lead	To be done	Complete					
				23	24	25	26	27	
1	Maintain a system for volunteering by individuals	PO	From 2023	y					
2	Promote volunteering to organisations and groups	PO	From 2023	Y					
3	Conduct Wildlife surveys	PO	From 2024						
4	Complete biodiversity improvements	PO	From 2023	Y					
5	Increase the capacity of Friends of Group	PO	Ongoing	y					
6	Improve signage to and on arrival at parks where needed	GSO, PO	From 2024						
7	Prepare new dog fouling posters	PO, GSO	From 2024						
8	Deliver a programme of events	PO	From 2024						
9	Produce films on wildlife	PO, FOBP	From 2024						
10	Address anti-social behaviour	PO, GSO, Police	From 2023	Y					
11	Monitor Visitor use of parks, bi-annually	PO, GSO	From 2024						
12	Develop nature trail with U3A	PO	From 2024						
13	Add two wildlife sculptures	PO	From 2023						

14	Develop biodiversity	GSO, PO	From 2023	y					
15	Develop more opportunities for apprentices/volunteers	GSO, GSCM, PO	From 2023	Y					

PO – Parks Officer GSO – Green Spaces Officer GSCM – Green Spaces and Countryside Manager
 FOBP – Friends of Berwick Parks

11.2 The Action Plan

	Action	Lead	To be done	Complete					
				23	24	25	26	27	
1	Welcoming Place Safe Access – Improve the main gates to Flagstaff Park, possible Capital Investment Programme money (NCC)	GSO, Contractors	From 2024						
	Keep notices for events up to date on social media	PO	From 2023	y					
2	Healthy Safe & Secure - New Posters for dog fouling from Brownie Group to be drawn up and put out on site	PO	From 2024						
	Police liaison officer to attend Friends Meeting to discuss ongoing Anti – social behaviour	PO	From 2023	y					
3	Well Maintained & Clean – check the condition of the footpaths	PO	From 2023	Y					
	Highlight Park benches to be improved to Berwick Town Council	GSO	From 2024						
	Look for funding to replace the entrance gates	GSO FOBP	From 2024						
	Varnish sculptures	PO, FOBP	From 2024						
	Monitor all trees near historic structures. Monitor all ash trees	GSO, PO, Tree Officer	From 2023	Y					

4	Environmental Management – the climate action plan is relatively new and information starting to cascade down. Liase with Climate Champions in area and co-ordinate with FOBP	GSO, PO, FOBP	From 2023						
5	Biodiversity, Landscape & Heritage – plant new rose hedge in with FOBP for Queens Platinum Celebrations	PO, FOBP	From 2022	Y					
	Install two wildlife wooden sculptures	Po, Contractor	From 2023	Y					
	Conduct Wildlife surveys	PO, FOBP	From 2024/25						
	Plant 4 Oaks in line with Queens Canopy	PO	From 2023	Y					
	Create possible new composting facility on site	PO,	From 2024						
	Put up new bat boxes	PO, FOBP	From 2024						
	Liase with Tweed Pollinators Group on improving existing wildflower meadow and planting schemes	PO, GSO	From 2023	y					
6	Community Involvement - create a events programme for all year ran by FOBP	PO, FOBP	From 2023	Y					
	Hold Litter events with the Mini Police & other outside organisations	PO	From 2023	Y					
	Create new plant identification stones through Art in the Park event	PO FOBP	From 2024						
	Increase capacity for winter talks programme	PO	From 2023	Y					
	Maintain a presence in Heritage Open Days in Berwick	PO	From 2023	Y					
	Create more training days for FOBP	GSO, PO	From 2023	Y					
7	Marketing & Communications - create new YOU Tube video for the Friends Website for 2024	PO, FOBP	From 2024						
	Create opportunities for press releases – ie creation of Queens Platinum celebration arch/panel	GSO	From 2023	Y					
	Maintain high profile on NCC & FOBP website, social media	GSP, PO, FOBP	From 2023	Y					
8	Management -Develop more opportunities for apprentices	GSO, GSCM, PO	From 2024						
	Maintain funding opportunities, sponsorship	GSO, GSCM	From 2023	Y					

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12. Annual Updates

This chapter will be added to annually to include each year’s achievements, events and monitoring and evaluation in the relevant years.

12.1 2022/2023 Achievements

Winter 2021 - Avenue of fruit trees called Queen Beth Avenue planted by Holy Trinity school and Mini police
Bulbs to commemorate Platinum jubilee planted in the form of E11R 70 by Brownies, Guides and Rainbow Scouts in the grass circle



Volunteers planting Platinum Celebration Bulbs Winter 2021

April 2022 - bulbs visible in the platinum based colours, snowdrops, crocus, daffodils and tulips

July 2022 - schools competition to design the new wooden sculptures to be installed 2 winners



Sculpture of a Hedgehog – designed by school children installed Autumn 2023

August 2022 – RHS first time judging for ‘In Your Neighbourhood’

October 2022 – RHS awarded the park Level 4

March 2023 – Queen Elizabeth Arch installed – the arch is a project commemorating the Late Queen Elizabeth, funded by local County Councillor Catherine Seymour. This is the third arch to tie in with the ‘Coronation’ theme of the park



Contractors, local to Berwick manufactured, designed and installed the new arch 2023

April 2023 – New rose hedge planted with ‘Queen Elizabeth’ roses, replacing a failing beech hedge.

May 2023 - Bee Bank constructed with spoil from new Rose Hedge and advice from Buglife, new interpretation sign added for information



Bee Bank Sign

July 2023 – Connecting Threads Visit – filming pollinators with volunteers

August 2023 – RHS Judging “In Your Neighbourhood”

October 2023 – Hedgehog and Honeybee Sculptures installed, funded by the Friends Group after a competition in July 2022 within local schools to design them

Awarded “Outstanding” RHS “In Your Neighbourhood” Award. Level 5 Second year applied for

Volunteers – 1 – 2 per week for 2.5 hours, approx. 200 volunteer hours in 2023 Jan to November

Appendix 1 Work Programmes

Flagstaff Park Work Programme													
TASK	Who	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
GROUNDS MAINTENANCE													
Cut Grassed Areas	NEAT Team			1	2	2	2	2	2	2	1		
Edge paths and Remove weeds	Parks Officer/Volunteers	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Cut back overhanging vegetation	Parks officer/Volunteers				1					1			
Empty Bins Around Park	NEAT Team	12	8	12	12	31	30	31	31	30	12	8	8
Park checks and litter pick	Parks Officer/Volunteers	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Litter Pick Woodland Banks	Parks Officer/Volunteers	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Maintain Sculptures	Parks Officer/Volunteers						1						
Maintain Benches	Town Council						1						
Clean Signage and interpretation	Parks Officer/Volunteers	1			1			1			1		
Annual Footpath Inspection	Area Manager			1									
Repair Tarmac Path	NCC						As required						

Repair Benches	Town Council													As required
Repair sculptures	Parks Officer/Volunteers													As required
HORTICULTURAL FEATURES & TREES														
Prune Shrubs	Parks Officer/Volunteers			1									1	
Edge Beds and Borders	Parks Officer/Volunteers			1	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	2	1	
Apply Mulch to Beds and Borders	Parks Officer/Volunteers		1											
Weed flower beds	Parks Officer/Volunteers	1	1	2	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	1	1
Hedge Pruning	Parks Officer/Volunteers												1	
Prune Roses	Parks Officer/Volunteers			1										
Annual Tree Inspection	Tree Team											1		
Tree Works	Tree Team													As required
Prune fruit trees	Parks Officer/Volunteers													1
MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES														
Update Management Plan	Green Spaces Officer	1												
Green Flag Application	Green Spaces Officer	1												
Support Friends Group	Green Spaces Officer/Parks Officer													As required

Collate Annual report on Park Usage	Green Spaces Officer	1											

Appendix 2

Budget

Appendix 2: Budgets						
staffing budgets for Northumberland County Council's						
GROUP	LOCAL SERVICES		BUDGET HOLDER			Paul Jones
DEPARTMENT	Neighbourhood Services		BUSINESS SUPPORT CONTACT			Ann Crozier
COST CENTRE		222500				
Post Designation	Grade	Fte	Min Point	Max Point	Spinal Point	Total Salary
Park & Green Spaces Officer Full time	CM Grade 7	1	30	34	34	30,756
Parks Officer Full Time	CM GRADE 4 SCPT 13 - 17	1	29	31	31	23,802.00
		2				54,558

Appendix 3

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>Neil Dawson</i> Date: <i>July 2023</i>	Job Title: <i>Countryside and Green Spaces Manager</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.	L	

			First aid training and first aid kits provided		
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 4

Plant List – Flagstaff

Rose – Rosa Rosy Cushion

Rose – Rosa Harlow Carr

Rose – Rosa Munstead Wood
Rose – Rosa William and Catherine
Rose – Rosa Trumpeter
Rose – Rosa – Elizabeth
Rose – Rosa Margaret Merrill
Allium – Purple Sensation
Russian Sage – Perovskia – Little Spire
Skimmia – Skimmia japonica rubella
Ice Plant – Sedum Autumn Joy
Rudbeckia – Goldsturm
Mountain Pine – Pinus Mugo
Phlomis russeliana
Persicaria amplexicaulis “Firetail”
Catmint – Nepeta “Six Hills Giant”
Corsican Hellebore – Helleborus foetidus
Hebe albicans
Geranium “Anne Thomson”
Geranium “Brookside”
Sea Holly – Eryngium x zabeii
Calamagrostis acutifolia “Overdam”
Brachiglottis “Sunshine”
Elephant’s Ears – Bergenia “Overture”
Giant Oat - “Stipa gigantea”
Globe thistle – Echinops ritro
Yarrow – Achillea “Cloth of Gold”
Smoke bush – Cotinus coggyria
Green Dogwood – Cornus flavirimea

Red Dogwood – *Cornus sibirica variegata*

Cape Fuschia – *Phygelius “African Queen”*

Service Berry – *Amelanchier canadensis*

Mahonia – *Mahonia media*

Eastern redbud – *Cercis canadensis*

Viburnum cinnamomifolium

Dyer’s chamomile – *Anthemis tinctoria*

Californian lilac – *Ceanothus arboreus*

Potentilla fruticosa

Evening primrose – *Oenothera biennis* Salad Burnet – *Sanguisorba minor* Spanish Daisy – *Erigeron*

karvinskianus

Peony Rose – *Paeonia* spp.

Black Mondo grass – *Ophiopogon planiscapus niger*

Masterwort – *Astrantia* spp.

Physocarpus opulifolius “Diabolo”

Appendix 5

Volunteer Good Practice Guide



Northumberland
County Council

Northumberland County Council

Parks, Countryside Sites and Local Nature Reserves

Volunteer Good Practice Guide

October 2018



www.northumberland.gov.uk

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1. Introduction

Northumberland County Council greatly values and encourages the contribution that volunteers make to the management of parks and countryside sites across the county. This document outlines the Council's approach to working with volunteers and is a summary of the procedures in place for volunteers and voluntary groups working on Northumberland County Council's parks, countryside sites and Local Nature Reserves (LNRs). It is designed to guide both staff and volunteers and to ensure the safe operation of a site for volunteers and visitors.

2. Volunteer Agreement

All volunteers will be supplied with a copy of this document.

A Volunteer Agreement Form (Appendix A) must be completed by all volunteers, which confirms that the volunteer agrees to adhere to the guidance contained in this document.

Completed and signed forms for all registered volunteers should be returned to the relevant Council officer and will be kept on file and in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation.

3. Definition

A volunteer is a person who carries out voluntary work and does so by choice and is unpaid. The Council must be satisfied that all volunteers are appropriately trained, organized and managed on site.

Volunteers may be under the direct supervision of a council officer, or alternatively “Friends of” and other independently constituted community groups may have their own “Volunteer Coordinator/supervisor” for their volunteer activities. They will be the point of contact for the Council’s site officer/manager for work related issues.

4. Role Descriptions

Tasks to be undertaken by volunteers will be clearly defined and the volunteer given a role description for each of the sites and individual tasks that may be undertaken.

Independently constituted groups must have an agreed work program in place before commencement of any tasks on site. Any tasks or projects undertaken that are not on this agreed program must be identified and agreed with the Council’s site manager/officer before commencement.

5. Code of Conduct

The conduct of persons on the site falls under the Council’s jurisdiction and where relevant, Standard Site Operating Procedures (SOP’s), codes of conduct, and safe working practice must be followed at all times.

The public are entitled to expect the highest standards of conduct from all volunteers and staff of any organisations operating from any park, countryside site or LNR.

- Volunteers should be polite and courteous at all times.
- The use of strong or discriminatory language is not acceptable
- Volunteers should aim to assist the members of the public wherever possible, or if they cannot, to take details and to aim to follow up after consultation with staff or other volunteers.
- Volunteers will be subject to NCC respect policies in relation to other volunteers and staff.
- Violent behaviour, or the threat of violent behaviour will result in immediate exclusion from the volunteer activity.

Members of independently constituted groups will be expected to adhere to their groups own code of conduct and policies, with disputes between members settled by their group.

6. Capability and Disciplinary Procedures

Northumberland County Council expects the highest standards of performance and conduct from all employees and volunteers delivering its services.

Standards of performance and conduct should be established from the onset with each volunteer. Normal day to day supervision should be enough to determine whether standards are being maintained. Any fall in standards needs to be communicated to the volunteer and a solution agreed

between the supervising officer and the volunteer, clearly communicated and recorded. Should performance issues continue, then the Council's site officer/manager will investigate and advise the volunteer of any action required. If evidence of misconduct or capability is evident, a warning and/or coaching may be the appropriate outcome. In the worst cases, the services of the volunteer may be terminated.

If the volunteer is part of an independently constituted group working on a site, the group will be advised of the situation and asked to investigate. The supervising volunteer of any group working party is expected to monitor the standards of work and conduct of the members of their working group. Their group may have their own procedures to deal with any issues that may arise; the Council accepts this and will support the group's findings and conclusions, unless their resolution falls below what would be expected from the Council's procedures.

7. Volunteers Grievance Procedure

If a volunteer feels aggrieved with a situation at work, they should bring it to the attention of their supervising officer. The majority of situations can be resolved through an informal discussion. If the issue is with the Council's supervising officer, then the issue should be raised with their line manager. The person hearing the grievance should provide a response to the volunteer within one week of the discussion.

Grievances between members of independently constituted groups should be dealt with by their respective group committees. Grievances regarding Council staff should be brought by Group members or committee to the Countryside and Green Spaces Manager.

8. Health and Safety

Parks and countryside sites can be difficult to manage, and all volunteers should be aware of the potential hazards presented by the site's physical attributes and the potential risks involved in the tasks they will be performing. The site manager/supervisor is responsible for ensuring that volunteers are appropriately briefed in respect of the potential hazards and risks involved in undertaking an activity and the control measures in place to manage these.

In the case of an independently constituted group, the group's activity coordinator should provide this briefing (unless otherwise agreed with the site manager/supervisor.)

Controlling risks

Generic risk assessments for most day to day tasks will be provided by the Council, and specific risk assessments should always be carried out for tasks falling outside of normal procedures.

Independently constituted groups should have their own generic risk assessments in place.

Safe Working Procedures

A safe working procedure will be put in place for any activity that presents a risk of harm. The SWP must be followed, and if training is required to ensure compliance with the SWP it will be provided by the Council.

Training and safe use of equipment

Groups or individuals should ensure that they have received appropriate training to allow them to undertake the tasks they are delivering and in the use of any hand tools they are using. If volunteers consider any activity may put their health and safety at risk, they should not undertake the activity, but should first consult with and seek advice from the Council's site manager.

Should a group or individual wish to operate any mechanical hand tools or plant on site it is essential that appropriate training has taken place and recognised accreditation is in place for all those operating the machinery. No mechanical tools should be used by any volunteer on a council site until such training and accreditation has been completed, evidence provided to the site manager, and suitable risk assessments are in place.

Any necessary protective clothing will be provided for the volunteer.

Lone working

There may be instances where staff or volunteers are on site alone. Where possible, especially in the case of volunteers, this should be avoided through careful planning of activities. Most countryside sites are exposed sites, and persons working at them should be mindful of their own personal safety. If, through unavoidable circumstances, lone working occurs, then the following steps should be taken:

- The volunteer should nominate an appointed person before working on site alone. This may be the site officer/manager, another volunteer, or a family member.
- The volunteer should notify the appointed person that they will be on site alone in advance and should arrange to "check in" once safely off site.
- If the volunteer has not "checked in" by within 30 minutes of the specified time, then the nominated person should first aim to contact the volunteer, and then contact the police.

Reporting accidents and incidents

An accident/incident report log will be maintained by the Council's site manager and any instances of injury to staff or volunteers should be logged immediately. Also any incident involving members of the public should be logged, including any action taken, notes on any incident involving the police or emergency services should be written up as soon as possible to avoid inaccuracies on the log sheets and signed and dated by the volunteer and site manager. If more than one volunteer or member of staff were involved, every person should complete a log sheet.

Independently constituted groups should also maintain an incident log for their own volunteers, as well as reporting incidents to the site manager.

Insurance

Volunteers working on behalf of, and under the direct supervision of a Council officer on sites are covered by the Council's public liability insurance.

Independently constituted "Friends of" groups working on sites would be similarly covered by the Council's public liability insurance when working under the direct supervision of a council officer but would be required to take out their own public liability insurance cover when working on a site independently, and not under the direct supervision of a council officer. Such groups may also wish to consider employers liability insurance.

Ten Steps to Grounds Maintenance Safety

The 'Ten Steps' Guide (see Appendix B) is a summary of the Council's Neighbourhood Services 'Health and Safety at Work Codes of Practice'.

9. Safeguarding and Child Protection

Safeguarding is a term used to describe measures to protect the health, wellbeing and human rights of individuals, which allow people – especially children, young people and vulnerable adults – to live free from abuse, harm and neglect.

Safeguarding is everybody's business. We all need to know what to do if we are worried that someone may be at risk of harm.

If you believe an individual is at immediate risk of harm, you must contact the police then inform the site manager/supervisor. If your concern is non-urgent, you must inform the site manager/supervisor at the earliest possible opportunity and your concern will be dealt with in line with the Council's safeguarding policy

All staff, volunteers and people undertaking either paid or unpaid work at a park, countryside site or LNR should adhere to following guidelines. Failure to do so may result in action being taken under the disciplinary procedures.

You should:

- Treat all children, young people and vulnerable adults with respect
- Provide an example of good conduct you wish others to follow
- Approach any child who is in apparent distress and ask if you can help
- Be aware of the possibility of dangers from others, and question any situations that you find suspicious
- Avoid any situations which might appear compromising
- Be aware that any physical contact with a child can be misinterpreted

- Recognise that special caution is required when discussing sensitive issues with children
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations or suspicions of abuse
- Report any suspicious adult, especially if you are aware of them photographing children without their knowledge.

You should never

- Allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate behaviour or make any suggestive or derogatory remarks to or in front of children
- Engage in any “rough and tumble” or horseplay
- Use foul or abusive language
- Physically restrain a child, except in exceptional circumstances, e.g. to prevent injury to themselves or others or to prevent theft.
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any kind
- Do things of a personal nature for a child that they can do for themselves or that a parent/leader can do for them, including taking a child to the toilet
- Avoid working alone with a child wherever possible, make sure you can be clearly seen and observed by others.
- Travel in a vehicle with an unaccompanied child
- Invite a child to contact you off site or when you are not working for the site.

Any volunteers working with children as part of an Education or Events Programme may be required to undergo a Disclosure and Barring Service check

10. Use of Photographs

Photographs and film footage of activities at Parks, Countryside sites and LNRs may be taken for recording and promotional purposes, and may be reproduced in print, in displays, or digitally.

Permission to store and use such images must be sought from any individual who is identifiable in a still or moving image. Permission does not need to be sought when individuals are not identifiable, for example images of the back of an individual’s head. If images include children or young people, permission must be sought from the parent/guardian or person responsible for the child. Permission should be recorded on a Consent Form, preferably prior to any event or activity where photography or filming is likely to take place. Completed Consent Forms will be stored securely by the site manager. No volunteer should take photographs or make moving images without the prior permission of those in the pictures/film, and the prior consent of the site manager. Noncompliance with this could result in serious action being taken, and police involvement.

11. Site Security and Security of Buildings

As site volunteers you may be entrusted with keys for buildings and gate/barriers. As a key holder you will be responsible for the buildings and site security when you are lone working or acting as key holder on site.

Volunteers must ensure that all procedures for site and building security and safety are correctly followed.

12. If you do not want to continue Volunteering

If you no longer want to volunteer it is important you let your site manager know. We wouldn't want you to go without showing our appreciation for your contribution and would be interested in your views and any opinions you can offer on your experience.

The completion of Feedback and Equal Opportunities Forms is optional, but your answers will help in the future management of volunteers. All data will be used in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation.

Appendix A.

Volunteer Agreement

Name.....

Address.....

.....

.....

Postcode.....

Date of Birth.....

Contact telephone numbers

Home: Mobile:.....

Email address.....

Preferred method of contact Email / Postal

Organisation/Friends of Group (if applicable):

Interest in the site and its activities:

Do you have any health problems that may affect you volunteering on site?

Training required (to be completed in conjunction with the Site Manager):

DBS Check in place Yes/No Date.....

I have read the Council's Volunteer Policy, and agree to adhere to the procedures outlined in the Northumberland County Council 'Parks, Countryside Sites and Local Nature Reserves Volunteer Good Practice Guide'.

Signed..... Date.....

Print.....

Date Received.....signed.....
Site Manager/Officer

Appendix B

TEN STEPS TO GROUNDS MAINTENANCE SAFETY

It is the responsibility of every NCC employee and volunteer to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and others.

- Always ensure you are working safely and that you feel safe.
- Always ensure that co-workers and members of the public who may be affected by your work are protected.
- Always ensure that you and your colleagues are aware of site hazards and their controls. Report any unsafe operations or methods to the site Manager. (You have a duty in law to do so).
- Always follow the risk control procedure. Read all appropriate risk assessments and comply with all recommended precautions.
- Always read and adhere to the NCC Safe Working Procedures relevant to your work
- Always wear the appropriate or required Personal Protective Clothing and Equipment.

- Always be aware of the location of the First-Aid box and know your First-Aider.
- Always use the correct tools and equipment and have received appropriate training for the job.
- Always report any accident or near miss to your site Manager who will complete the accident form ACC1. Remember: you have a duty in law to do so.
- Be safe not sorry. When in doubt ask.

The 'Ten Steps Guide' is a summary of Northumberland County Council Neighbourhood Services 'Health And Safety at Work Codes of Practice'. The guide does not replace or supersede any certificated training which may be required as a prerequisite of carrying out an operation.

Appendix 6 Overall signage & Posters winner





The plaque for the 'Queen Beth' Avenue planted by the 'mini' police

Winning Posters Designs

