



**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

**Environment Overview and Scrutiny
Committee**

8th March 2022

Report of: Councillor Robert Reid

Cabinet Member for Housing and Property



Public Parks, Green Flag Status – update and future opportunities

This report provides an update regarding performance against the Green Flag ambitions found in the Councils current Corporate Plan and identifies opportunity to provide guidance to Town / Parish Councils who may have similar ambitions.

Report Author

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	Decision type:	Wards:
	Administrative	All Wards
Reviewed by:	Paul Stokes, Head of Corporate Operations	14 th February 2022
Approved by:	Gary Smith, Director, Commercial & Operations	16 th February 2022
Signed off by:	Councillor Robert Reid, Cabinet Member for Housing and Property	24 th February 2022
Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s)		

- 1. That the Council offers guidance to Parish and Town Councils as outlined in the report for potential ambition to attain Green Flag standard against eligible sites under their control.**
- 2. That the Council provides guidance to support a Green Flag application for Jubilee Park, Deeping St James.**

1. The Background to the Report

1.1 South Kesteven's District Council's Corporate Plan 2020-2023 contains the following key action under the 'Clean and Sustainable Environment' priority:

"Maintain and enhance our green areas across the district, aiming to secure Green Flag status for Queen Elizabeth Park, Dysart Park and other relevant areas".

1.2 This report is in response to the action notes from the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee Tuesday, 30 November 2021 whereby Members requested an update during the next meeting scheduled for the 8 March 2022:

"For the Council to investigate the feasibility to have more Green Flag Status parks in South Kesteven and to communicate with the relevant Parish Council's".

1.3 Thus far we have achieved Green Flag status for Queen Elizabeth Park and Wyndham Park, Grantham and are positioned well to secure Green Flag accreditation for Dysart Park during 2022.

1.4 It also remains an ambition of some Members and others to secure a Green Flag award in respect of Jubilee Park. It is essential that the prerequisite work and application is supported by the "Friends of Jubilee Park". SKDC are primed to provide support as follows:

- April 2022. SKDC Officers meet with the "Friends of Jubilee Park" group to evaluate their current position measured against the Green Flag assessment criteria.
- April 2022. Based on the evaluation, provide guidance to the "Friends of Jubilee Park" along with a template Management and Maintenance Plan.
- May to September 2022. SKDC officers provide ad hoc support in respect of the assessment process and community engagement.
- October to November 2022. "Friends of Jubilee Park" finalise Management and Maintenance Plan, documents, and other requirements of the Green Flag awards scheme.
- December 2022 to January 2023. "Friends of Jubilee Park" apply for Green Flag assessment.

Based on the above, realistically 2023 presents itself as the earliest opportunity for the application and assessment of Jubilee Park for Green Flag status. There is potential for park improvements to be required in order to achieve the standard and budget would need allocating in order to fulfil these works.

1.5 The Green Flag award scheme is a nationwide award scheme designed to credit well managed and high-quality public parks and green spaces. The Council values external accreditation and has identified opportunity to support Town and Parish councils – with ambition to participate in the Green Flag Award Scheme.

1.6 There are two elements to a Green Flag assessment, a desktop assessment which considers the quality of the site Management and Maintenance Plan along with the site assessment. The desk top assessment could potentially realise 30 points out of 100 and the site assessment could secure the balance of 70 points. It should be noted that to secure a Green Flag award a minimum 15 marks are required from the desk top assessment and 42 from the site assessment.

1.7 The Green Flag award scheme is a process of external accreditation intended to encourage the delivery of well managed public parks. Green Flag judges measure how well a site is managed against 27 predetermined standards as follows:

Performance measure	Detailed performance measure
Welcoming Place	<p>This section recognises the culmination of everything done well. A welcoming place is one that invites and draws people into it. This means creating a space which, through its visual appearance, range of facilities, standards of maintenance and ease of access, makes people feel that they are in a cared-for place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome • Good and Safe Access • Signage • Equal Access for All
Healthy, Safe and Secure	<p>This section looks at how well managers understand their users' needs, encouraging them to enjoy healthy activities using appropriate, safe-to-use facilities and activities, and to feel personally safe and secure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate Provision of Quality Facilities and Activities • Safe Equipment and Facilities • Personal Security • Control of Dogs/Dog Fouling
Well Maintained and Clean	<p>For aesthetic as well as health and safety reasons, issues of cleanliness and maintenance must be addressed, in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Litter and other waste management issues must be adequately dealt with • Grounds, buildings, equipment, and other features must be well maintained • Policies on litter, vandalism and maintenance should be in place, in practice, and regularly reviewed. • Litter and Waste Management • Horticultural Maintenance • Arboricultural Maintenance • Building and Infrastructure Maintenance • Equipment Maintenance
Environmental Management	<p>This section seeks to ensure that the way the site is managed has a positive impact on the environment, locally and globally, both now and for the future. Where choices can be made for future procurement, landscaping, or buildings, they should aim to minimise energy and resource consumption and waste, and design in benefits to the local and global environment. Policies should seek to eliminate the use of peat and chemicals to control pests and as fertilisers. Horticultural and arboricultural decisions should reflect an understanding of the impacts of climate change.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing Environmental Impact • Waste Minimisation • Chemical Use • Peat Use • Climate Change Adaption Strategies

Biodiversity, Landscape and Heritage	<p>Attention should be paid to the appropriate management and conservation of natural features, wildlife, and flora; landscape features; and buildings and structures. Their character and requirements should be identified, and appropriate management strategies put in place to conserve and enhance them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of Natural Features, Wild Fauna and Flora • Conservation of Landscape Features • Conservation of Buildings and Structures
Community Involvement	<p>This section examines the extent to which the managing organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands the community it seeks to serve • Actively and appropriately involves members of the community in making decisions about the site's development • Provides opportunities for active participation in site projects; and • Ensures that there is appropriate provision of recreational facilities and activities for all sectors of the community. • Community Involvement in Management and Development • Appropriate Provision for Community
Marketing and Communication	<p>This section seeks to examine the ways that managers understand the key benefits of the site and how they use this information to promote it appropriately. They should understand who the main user groups are, could be or should be, and use a fitting range of interpretation and engagement techniques to communicate with them. This basis ensures that appropriate facilities, events, and activities can be offered and most effectively promoted and forms a solid foundation for development now and in the future.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing and Promotion • Appropriate Information Channels • Appropriate Educational and Interpretational Information
Management	<p>This section evaluates how well the management plan is implemented on site.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of Management Plan

1.8 The Award is open to any freely accessible park or green space. The space must be easily identifiable or made clear by providing a map of the space at the site.

1.9 Application and assessment process (summary)

- Prepare for an application – sufficient time will be required to prepare the Management and Maintenance Plan, engage with the community, prepare the site, and ensure that processes and procedures compliment the assessment requirements
- Complete application – window open November until January
- Judges allocated and desk top assessment completed – February until April

- Judges site visit and assessment – April onwards
- Notice of award and site report – October onwards

1.10 Costs: the application fees are (2022 current prices):-

- Under 20 hectares = £339 + VAT
- Over 20 hectares = £389 + VAT
- Green Heritage Award = £113 + VAT
- Green Flag Community Award = FREE

1.11 As the Council is now experienced in the development and delivery of Green Flags status parks there is opportunity for the Council to provide guidance to Parish and Town Councils where ambition exists to attain Green Flag status against eligible sites. This support could be achieved by:

- A. Sharing best practice
- B. Providing examples of site Management and Maintenance Plans
- C. Support/guide the associated community engagement
- D. Provide management guidance around the attainment of Green Flag Status
- E. Support communications

1.12 SKDC would seek to provide general advice, sharing of best practice, sharing of example plans/templates and other enabling type support. More support may be possible if only one or two parish/town councils seek to progress but this would need to be managed within existing staff resources, there will be some opportunity cost in terms of their time for other duties, projects or priorities.

1.13 Further information on the Green Flag award scheme is available at:
<https://www.greenflagaward.org/>

2. Consultation and Feedback Received, Including Overview and Scrutiny

2.1 This report is in response to the action notes from the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee Tuesday, 30 November 2021,10:00.

2.2 The Committee requested an update at the 8 March 2022.

3. Available Options Considered

3.1 Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee asked for proposals to be developed to consider the feasibility of further Green Flag status parks, in liaison with relevant parish and town councils. Proposals for this are outlined above.

3.2 The Council could decide not to undertake any further work beyond the existing Corporate Plan targets for Green Flag status for Wyndham Park, Queen Elizabeth Park and Dysart Park.

4 Preferred Option

4.1 For the Committee to provide a steer on the recommendations of this report and note the resource implications as identified under 1.12-1.13.

5 Reasons for the Recommendation (s)

5.1 As outlined in the report.

6 Next Steps – Communication and Implementation of the Decision

6.1 Dependent on the steer from the Committee.

7 Financial Implications

7.1 Any resources required to support this will need to be met from existing budgets which may require resources to be diverted from other projects.

Financial Implications reviewed by: Alison Hall-Wright, Head of Finance & ICT

8 Legal and Governance Implications

8.1 There are no legal implications of this report.

Legal Implications reviewed by: Graham Watts, Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer

9 Equality and Safeguarding Implications

9.1 No significant issues have been identified.

10 Risk and Mitigation

10.1 The main risk is that SKDC could be overwhelmed by applications for support. However, based on feedback from Parish Councils to date this is unlikely. An appropriate control would be to vary the level of support or the number of Parish / Town Council applications supported per year.

11 Community Safety Implications

11.1 No significant issues have been identified.

12 How will the recommendations support South Kesteven District Council's declaration of a climate emergency?

12.1 By their nature, Parks support biodiversity, nature, and ecology. Parks and green spaces act as carbon sinks, removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store it away.

13 Background Papers

13.1 Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee (30 November 2021) - Green Flag Status at Council Parks including Jubilee Park, Deeping St James:

<http://moderngov.southkesteven.gov.uk/documents/s31756/Green%20Flag%20Status%20at%20Council%20Parks%20including%20Jubilee%20Park%20Deeping%20St%20James.pdf>.

Report Timeline:	Date of Publication on Forward Plan (if required)	N/A
	Previously Considered by: Environment Overview and Scrutiny committee	30 November 2021
	Final Decision date	N/A