



Downhills Park Management Plan 2006 – 2010 Executive Summary *(Reviewed January 08)*

Introduction

The 12 hectare Downhills Park, was first opened in 1903 when the Tottenham Urban District Council took on the remains of the originally 117ha estate to protect it from development. The park was further extended in 1904 by the purchase of 1.6ha from the Great Eastern Railway Company. The original 1789 manor house was demolished in 1902. The site has been managed by the London Borough of Haringey since its formation in 1965.

Downhills Park was originally seen as two separate sites: Downhills Park and Downhills Recreation Ground. These two halves are now seen as one and referred to as Downhills Park. The park provides a wide variety of facilities for users, from sports usage to relaxation. There are marked sports pitches in the western half of the park and the eastern half of the park contains a large play area, two tennis courts, a basketball court and a large formal garden. The remainder of the park is made up of recreational grass areas, meadows, woodland areas and shrubbery.

Park Management

Downhills Park is managed by the Parks Service, a division of Recreation Services in the Directorate of Adult, Culture and Community Services in the London Borough of Haringey. A Parks Service Neighbourhood Manager, responsible for all sites in the east of the borough, oversees the maintenance and management of Downhills Park. He is assisted by a Neighbourhood Officer and the site itself has a permanent gardener, who uses a dedicated mess-room and staff yard located in the park on Keston Road. The grounds maintenance team for the area is also based in this staff yard and, along with agency staff where necessary, provide assistance at peak periods. Grass cutting of the main areas is carried out by the borough gang-mowing team who cut the grass on a fortnightly basis as required. Events, marketing and other administrative tasks are carried out by the Parks Service in-house administrative team.

Our Vision for Downhills Park

To provide a horticultural oasis of scent and colour to enhance the local urban environment for the benefit of all, whilst providing suitable recreational facilities to encourage a range of healthy, educational and leisure activities within a clean and safe environment.

To achieve this vision we aim to follow the eight Green Flag Award criteria in creating a welcoming, well used park, which is clean and well maintained.

A Welcoming Place

The Parks Service aims to place welcome signs at each entrance to the park detailing the name of the park, contact details for the Parks Service and Friends group, as well as symbols detailing 'good' behaviour in the park. Current signage tends to be more negative and these signs will gradually be replaced over time.

Downhills Park also has a notice board located at the Philip Lane entrance. The notice board displays the bye-laws, environment policy, a map of the park, and any relevant information regarding events and activities in the park.

We aim to ensure that the park is accessible to all members of society and undertake audits and user surveys on a regular basis to monitor this provision. An accessibility audit was carried out in 2005 and the majority of recommendations arising from this have been addressed. All the entrances to the park are wheelchair accessible.

Cleanliness, Health and Safety

The Parks Service takes a very serious approach to Health and Safety on its sites. Staff are given relevant training and are provided with relevant safety clothing and appropriate equipment for the task they are undertaking. Any accidents or incidents that occur on site to either staff or members of the public are reported to the management team and are followed up.

The Parks Service maintains two mobile hygiene teams; one based in the west of the borough and the other in the east at Downhills Park. Litter is collected from Downhills Park on a daily basis and the on-site gardener works alongside them to litter pick the park. Dog bins are emptied at least once a week by a mobile hygiene operative. Graffiti is removed within 24 hours by the on-site staff member.

Safe and Secure

The Parks Service has a Parks Constabulary which regularly patrols the boroughs parks and open spaces in the borough.

Security in the park is boosted by the presence of the on-site gardener, who walks the park every morning to carry out safety checks on all facilities, particularly in the playground.

Maintenance of Buildings, Equipment and Landscape

In September 2003 the London Borough of Haringey launched the Better Haringey Improvement Programme, the primary objective to make Haringey Cleaner, Greener and Safer. Through this programme £1m in 2005/06 was provided to allow for major improvements in many of the Council run parks and open spaces. The Parks Improvement Programme, run since 2005/06,

has received £250,000 from the Haringey Capital Fund as well as monies from numerous other funding agencies.

From both internal and external Capital funds £73,300 in 2005/06 was spent in Downhills Park and the following works were undertaken:

- replacement of shrub beds around staff yard and in the park
- removal of the old gate and fence around the staff yard
- installation of palisade fencing around the staff yard
- installation of new benches and bins in the Italian Gardens
- installation of new hoped fencing in the Italian Gardens
- resurfacing and painting of the tennis courts
- installation of notice boards
- removal of the Midnight Alley park railing

In 2006/07 a further £33,000 of Capital funds was spent on:

- installation of hoped fencing around shrub beds running along the staff yard fencing
- soft landscaping
- new bins and benches
- new shed doors for the staff yard
- fencing for the basketball area
- demolition of the bowling green pavilion, fence removal and tree work

In 2007/08 a further £137,500 of capital funds were spent on:

- pathway removal and resurfacing along the Italian Gardens
- further work around the demolition of the bowling green pavilion
- resurfacing of the basketball court
- new bins and benches
- TfL funded works on resurfacing the pathway around the western boundary of the park and re-edging the Midnight Alley pathway

For the remaining two years (April 2008 – March 2010) of this management plan further maintenance works will be undertaken, subject to receipt of funding, and will largely comprise of the following:

- rolling program of repair and re-paint of the boundary railings and wall
- enhancement of each entrance to increase welcoming feel
- replacement of benches and bins as they come to the end of their life
- rolling program of renewing shrub beds around the park
- rolling program of tree planting to replace vandalised / old / diseased trees
- rolling program of repair to play, tennis and basketball fencing as required
- rolling program of pathway resurfacing
- installation of a trim trail
- subject to receipt of major specific funding:
 - o refurbishment of the play kit and installation of wet pour
 - o new build of a café and community centre on the site of the old bowling green

The London Borough of Haringey runs an In Bloom competition and Downhills Park has been successful in achieving awards such as Best Park and Best Bedding on several occasions.

Environment and Sustainability

The Parks Service aims to reduce its impact on the environment and as such:

- uses bedding plants grown in peat-free soil as supplied by Faith Nursery
- requests plants to be grown in peat-free soil when supplied by other contractors
- does not use chemicals unless all cultural (manual) methods have failed
- aims to reduce transport emissions through better scheduling of work
- reduces transport emissions through recycling green waste on site instead of taking it to North London Waste
- procures materials and furniture made from sustainable or recycled sources
- uses drought resistant plants to cope with climate change and reduce water use
- aims to ensure machinery procured has low emission levels
- continues to assess ways of reducing our impact on the environment

Conservation of Nature and Heritage

Downhills Park contains two areas of particular nature conservation interest. A woodland area, adjacent to the Italian Gardens, has a range of mature trees; and a wildflower area south of the sport pitches. Due to recent sightings of the rare stag beetle further efforts have been made to provide suitable habitat in the form of leaving logs and dead trees in situ.

The park is currently undergoing a program of shrub bed replacement and renewal and the new shrubs being planted will be local wildlife friendly and also drought resistant where possible. A continuing program of tree planting is undertaken throughout the park, with extensive assistance by the Friends group.

Marketing

The Parks Service carries out extensive borough wide marketing of its parks and open spaces. Downhills Park is advertised in the following ways:

- a specific leaflet on Downhills Park with a map and details on its facilities
- through the quarterly Recreation Services stakeholder newsletter
- through articles in the Haringey People monthly magazine
- events are listed on the 'what's on' page of the Haringey website

Downhills Park is also advertised beyond the borough boundaries through:

- the Haringey website under parks and leisure
- the Good Parks Guide
- the 'YourLondon.gov.uk' website
- on the 'VisitLondon.com' website with a special article in 2007

The Parks Service will continue to assess ways in which to further advertise Downhills Park to the local and wider community.

Community Involvement

Downhills Park is strongly supported by the local community with an active 'Friends' group, the chair of which is also positively involved in the Boroughs Friends Forum. The Friends have been instrumental in helping to improve the park, organising community events and taking positive actions towards reducing any anti-social behaviour in the park.

The Parks Service also carries out an annual park user survey through which they can gauge the improvements desired by the local community and whether the direction the park is heading is satisfactory.

Tell us what you think or get involved

Users of Downhills Park can tell us what they thought of their visit to the park by:

- going online and completing the 'yourvisit' survey found on the Parks Service pages
- calling the Parks Service Customer Care line on 020 8489 5662
- by emailing the Parks Service at parks@haringey.gov.uk
- or by writing to us at Parks Service, 1st Floor, Contract House, Ashley Road, Tottenham, N17 9AY

Users of Downhills Park can also get involved in the maintenance, management and future vision for the park by joining the Friends group. They can be contacted by visiting <http://www.downhills.org.uk/>.

Summary

Downhills Park continues to provide a number of facilities for the local community who may wish to exercise, relax or just visit the museum. The vision is to keep the Green Flag Award and thus maintain the high standard within the park.

The full management plan can be viewed on the Councils website at www.haringey.gov.uk/greenflag