



Historic England

Call for evidence: London Green Spaces Commission

07 June 2019

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Looking After Parks, Gardens and Landscapes <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/parks-gardens-and-landscapes/>

Registered Parks and Gardens <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/what-is-designation/registered-parks-and-gardens/>



Historic England is the Government's statutory adviser on all matters relating to the historic environment in England. We are a non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). We champion and protect England's historic places, providing expert advice to local planning authorities, developers, owners and communities to help ensure our historic environment is properly understood, enjoyed and cared for.

London's historic public parks, cemeteries and green spaces are important, and often the largest green infrastructure features in the capital. We enjoy an amazing inheritance, and its conservation and upkeep is critical to the liveability of the city. These parks and green spaces shape London and are part of its identity.

Many of these parks are of international significance as well as valued as local green spaces. The parks and green spaces tell the story of amenity and recreation in the city from medieval churchyards and burial grounds, the creation of the Royal Parks and London's iconic 18th century garden squares to the 19th century inner London municipal parks and garden cemeteries and late 20th century outer London country parks. The nationally important public parks, cemeteries and other public designed landscapes are designated and included in the statutory Register of Parks and Gardens¹. Appendix 1 lists the registered historic public parks, the dates they were opened, and the current managing bodies (as of 2016). The Register continues to be developed to reflect this cultural and design history and it is likely further parks and designed landscapes of special historic interest will be added in future. For example the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park will be a candidate site in the future.

There are many more public parks, gardens and green spaces of historic interest. Our report on London's Commons, Heaths and Greens² highlights the many heritage conservation challenges of these open spaces. All these and others are often important elements that create a sense of place, and some will be part of Conservation Areas. There are also parks and gardens which are managed as visitor attractions and charge entrance fees such as the World Heritage Site Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.

Designating London as a National Park City provides a real opportunity to recognise a capital city that has been shaped by a landscape of historic open spaces and places. London has also absorbed and re-purposed many valued ancient rural landscapes, such as Epping Forest and Wimbledon Common. These should all be key attributes of a National Park City and the concept is an opportunity to identify and celebrate their significance.

Historic England is pleased to have the opportunity to respond to the London Green Spaces Commission's call for written evidence as part of its remit to develop new models for the delivery and management of London's green infrastructure. We support this important work stream emerging from the London Environment Strategy, as reflected in our consultation response³. Our comments in response to the LGSC's specific questions in its call for written evidence are set out on the following pages.

¹ <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/what-is-designation/registered-parks-and-gardens/>

² Historic England Research Report 50/2014 'Commons, Heaths and Greens in Greater London Report (2005)' <https://research.historicengland.org.uk/Report.aspx?i=15282&ru=%2fResults.aspx%3fp%3d1%26n%3d10%26a%3d4789%26ns%3d1>

³ <https://historicengland.org.uk/content/docs/consultations/he-response-environment-strategy-nov17-pdf/>

- **How could public parks meet future challenges including increasing population, changing demographics and concerns over health and a changing climate?**

London's public parks and green spaces illustrate the interconnectedness of the capital's natural and historic environment. These spaces offer multiple benefits not only for their green credentials but also in their relationship with London's development over centuries. Early settlement patterns, grand Arcadian landscapes, and whole neighbourhoods designed around the interplay of landscape and townscape are all part of how London's spaces and places are experienced. London's public parks and green spaces also act as 'reserves' which protect our archaeological and ecological heritage where it can be experienced by local people. Indeed, the biodiversity value of London's parks and green spaces often relates to the history of the sites. The different dimensions are instrumental in drawing Londoners to these places, and boosting well-being through an enhanced sense of place and identity, allowing Londoners to appreciate London's historic evolution and townscapes.

London's historic public parks and cemeteries were created and laid out to benefit the health and welfare of the community. They were designed as pleasure grounds to be enjoyed for relaxation, exercise and education. There is a wealth of supporting evidence and more continues to be added. We also have research that shows heritage makes you happy⁴.

Three years ago, the national Committee on Climate Change⁵ stressed heat-related health issues and the importance of our public parks and green spaces. The Committee recommended that 'DCLG should work with local authorities to adopt and deliver a goal of reversing the decline in urban green space and publish an implementation strategy by the time of the [Adaptation Sub-Committee's] next report in 2017'.

The issue of the imbalance of parks provision across Greater London has been debated for more than a century. The proposal to create Victoria Park in 1840 for the East End communities was one example to address this issue. It was one of three new parks proposed by the government in the early-to-mid 19th century to serve the expanding population in the suburbs. Although intended as a royal park, it has always been a local authority managed asset and was even dubbed the 'People's Park' by the late 19th century. Many of London's new spaces like roof gardens, podiums and plazas make strong contributions to place-making, amenity value, biodiversity, and efforts to combat climate change; however, many allow only permissive or controlled access, proving that they are not an alternative to good quality and accessible public parks and green spaces. Therefore, there is a real need to ensure protection of our existing public parks and green spaces from deterioration and/or loss to prevent worsening future imbalances in access to open space.

In planning climate change adaptation, the emphasis is often on introducing new features like green roofs and walls, rain gardens, naturalised urban watercourses, and new tree planting to increase urban tree cover, with London's public parks and green spaces often identified as the locations to accommodate them. Such initiatives can contribute to place-making, and we support them where they are designed to recognise and respond to historic cityscape and landscape character, ensuring compatibility with London's sensitive heritage assets and their settings. In some cases, these new interventions have the potential to cause damage to the historic significance of sites, such as retrofitting new flood alleviation schemes ahead of improving maintenance or condition of existing water features which historically contributed comparable water management, biodiversity and amenity benefits. Similarly there is often a push for plantings to revert to native species and 'wild' management, which usually translates as relaxed or minimal

⁴ <https://historicengland.org.uk/whats-new/news/heritage-makes-you-happy/>

⁵ Committee on Climate Change June 2015 Reducing emissions and preparing for climate change: 2015 Progress Report to Parliament <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/reducing-emissions-and-preparing-for-climate-change-2015-progress-report-to-parliament/>

management in response to declining local authority parks budgets. Good horticulture can offer rich and interesting habitats for both wildlife and people, and recent research⁶ challenges urban policy and practice guidance on negative portrayal of non-native plantings. Public parks and cemeteries were designed as ornamental landscapes and this is an important aspect of their character and distinctiveness. Investing in the general maintenance and improvement of our existing public parks and green spaces can ensure we maximise their contribution from optimal management of the features they already possess.

Furthermore, street trees often run along the edges of London's public parks and green spaces and into the surrounding neighbourhoods, amplifying the environmental benefits of these spaces and making considerable contributions to the historic character of many parts of London. There is a recognised lack of research on street tree history, which needs to be addressed so that their heritage value forms part of overall valuation when they are potentially impacted by development, highways works or works associated with risk management.

Going forward, our strategic understanding of green infrastructure and all its components is critical. The local authority parks service approach would seem to offer an important contribution, and the evolution of new trusts and other management models runs the risk of making green infrastructure planning, delivery, management and maintenance more complex.

- **How should boroughs organise their parks service to meet these challenges and the needs of everyone within local communities? Are there examples of best practice in service transformation in London, other UK cities or globally?**

Good quality parks and green spaces need skilled and dynamic teams with a wide range of expertise: horticulture, arboriculture, nature conservation, culture and heritage, children's play, sports management, health and safety, community engagement and participation, events and business management, and more. Often there is great pride in the history of sites but there is more to do to support staff (and volunteers) to develop an understanding about the significance of their designed landscapes and their conservation and adaptability.

As well as looking at service transformation, it would be interesting to look at successful local authority-delivered models. There are local authorities that are continuing to deliver high quality parks services. The key is likely to be a strong commitment to parks and their parks service by political leaders and executives, and teams led by dynamic parks professionals.

- **Can natural capital accounting or other methods for revealing the economic value of parks influence the future structure and governance of a parks service?**

Historic public parks and green spaces are irreplaceable assets. Their cultural significance is often overlooked. Natural capital accounting needs to embrace these values and benefits, like health and well-being and community cohesion.

⁶ Helen Hoyle, James Hitchmough, Anna Jorgensen (2017) 'Attractive, climate-adapted and sustainable? Public perception of non-native planting in the designed urban landscape' *Landscape and Urban Planning* Volume 164, August 2017, Pages 49-63

The Greater London Authority, National Trust and Heritage Lottery Fund commissioned a natural capital account for London's public green spaces. The report⁷ was published in October 2017. The headlines are:

- 'London's public green space have a gross asset value in excess of £91 billion, providing services valued at £5 billion per year.
- For each £1 spent by local authorities and their partners on public green space, Londoners enjoy at least £27 in value.
- Londoners avoid £950 million per year in health costs due to public green space.
- The value of recreational activities is estimated to be £926 million per year.
- For the average household in London, the monetary value of being in close proximity to a park or green space is over £900 per year.
- These economic benefits are not spread equally across or within London borough'.

New tools such as ORval⁸ offer more information on the socio-economic value of recreation sites. There is more work to do to understand the cultural services of historic sites and how heritage accounting can be incorporated into valuation methodologies for parks and open spaces.

- **Are there successful examples of where third sector, community-based organisations, private sector or other partnerships have taken on a significant share of the responsibility for the management and maintenance of parks and green spaces? Or examples where local authorities have decided not to cut park expenditure?**

We have direct experience of alternative models. Some sites do warrant special arrangements. One example is Chiswick House Park. The former English Heritage collaborated with the London Borough of Hounslow to rescue and restore this iconic designed landscape by setting up the Chiswick House and Gardens Trust, a registered charity, and an associated Limited Trading Company. The charity was established in 2005. The gardens have been a public park since 1929.

Two other major historic parks: Kenwood House and Marble Hill are in the care of the English Heritage Trust. Just like local authorities, charitable trusts also face on-going challenges of raising funds and support for conservation.

Our own Chief Executive, Duncan Wilson has first-hand experience as the former head of the Alexandra Park and Palace Charitable Trust which manages 196 acres of park (informal woodland, open grassland, formal gardens and attractions such as the boating lake, cafes and the pitch-and-putt course).

In the 2000s Historic England (then English Heritage) ran the 'London Squares Campaign' to restore London's iconic gardensquares. We worked with individual Boroughs, and we have also been involved in Lottery-funded projects across London, and over the last 20 years we've been helping to tackle individual parks and cemeteries through our Heritage at Risk programme⁹. Although the issues facing historic public parks and green spaces are diverse, commonalities arise, such as: a lack of long-term, well-informed conservation strategies; complex conservation and

⁷ https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/11015viv_natural_capital_account_for_london_v7_full_vis.pdf

⁸ <https://www.leep.exeter.ac.uk/orval/>

⁹ Heritage at Risk <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/>



funding challenges with heritage structures on site; inappropriate development pressures, including a growing number of commercial events; cuts in budgets; and long term wear-and-tear which is not being addressed and leading to decline and dysfunctional green infrastructure.

Historic public parks and green spaces are an important part of our place-making agenda and we are keen to bring heritage into mainstream cultural life. In the past we have undertaken projects such as the re-landscaping of Hyde Park Corner in 2002 to coincide with the opening of a major exhibition of Indian culture at Wellington Arch and the Queen’s Golden Jubilee, and there are projects ahead with High Street Heritage Action Zones.

Although there are alternative funding and management models, the 150-year history of public parks shows that the most lasting and successful stewardship was by local authorities (see Historic England research report 20/2016 ‘History of Public Park Funding and Management (1820 – 2010)’ by Dr Katy Layton-Jones¹⁰. In numerous cases local authorities stepped in to ensure public parks survived management changes. It would be interesting to review the long-term financial robustness of the current charitable trusts that are managing London parks. For many trusts, more staff time is probably spent on fund raising than gardening or landscape maintenance. Many trusts do not have much financial head room and a major cost could be crippling. For example the Charities Commission’s records for the Chiswick House and Gardens Trust:

Income £1,208,259 ⁱ		Spending £1,332,901 ⁱ	
Income item	Income £	Expenditure item	Expenditure £
Voluntary	86,339	Generating voluntary income	0
Trading to raise funds	637,456	Governance	7,300
Investment	284	Trading to raise funds	0
Charitable activities	398,930	Investment management	0
Other	85,250	Charitable activities	846,990
Total	1,208,259	Other	0
		Total	1,332,901
Investment gains	0		

Assets, liabilities & people ⁱ		Charitable spending ⁱ		
Assets & liabilities item	Asset value £	Spending type item	Value £	% of total spending
Own use assets	221,204	Income generation and governance	485,911	36
Long term investments	0	Charitable spending	846,990	64
Other assets	520,038			
Total liabilities	-300,913			

Financial and administrative issues can lead to a decline in the condition of sites, and there are examples in London of local authorities having to take back control of sites previously managed by Trusts.

The best local authority teams are drawing in funding from a variety of sources and in turn building new partnerships and stimulating fresh interest in local assets. This is working well for the management of many historic parks and green spaces; however, there are examples in London of investment and capital projects being driven not by the

¹⁰ Historic England Research Report 20/2016 ‘History of Public Park Funding and Management (1820–2010)’ <https://research.historicengland.org.uk/Report.aspx?i=15442&ru=%2fResults.aspx%3fp%3d1%26n%3d10%26a%3d4782%26ns%3d1>

genuine and specific needs of individual sites but by the income-generating opportunities and targeted funding packages secured by the local authority's commercial teams. Such opportunistic investment can impact on the significance, accessibility and future management and maintenance liabilities of historic parks and green spaces while not addressing fundamental issues which could deliver greater public benefit.

The National Lottery Heritage Fund's Rethinking Parks¹¹ programme aimed to stimulate new ideas and capture good practice, and their current initiative with the National Trust, the Future Parks Accelerator¹² has been set up to 'develop and implement bold and innovative funding and management solutions for all their green spaces across, against a challenging backdrop of financial uncertainty'.

As discussed above, local authorities also have a special role in delivering a public park service across their whole area offering a range of parks and recreation services and this strategic approach is critical in climate change adaptation.

The volunteer-led London Parks & Gardens Trust¹³ champions the city's historic parks and gardens and has made significant contributions to our understanding of our heritage through their Inventory of Historic Green Spaces¹⁴ and also raising awareness through the annual highly successful Open Garden Squares Weekend¹⁵. Groups such as this trust and Parks for London¹⁶ need assured long term funding to continue their work.

The Metropolitan Gardens and Park Association¹⁷ has a venerable 130-year history. It was established in 1882 for 'the protection, preservation, safeguarding and acquiring for permanent preservation for public use, of gardens, disused burial grounds, churchyards, open spaces, areas of land likely to be used for building purposes, strips of land adjoining roads and footpaths, or any land situated within the Metropolitan Police District or in its vicinity'. It is good to see the MGPA represented on the Mayor's London Green Spaces Commission. Unlike other Victorian infrastructure improvement organisations like the (former) Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (formerly a Standing Commission and then a non-departmental government body), the Association has remained a volunteer group. The status of the MGPA perhaps reflects the ambiguity of public parks as a non-statutory service, and no statutory definition for a public park and its role in society.

In our evidence to the 2017 Parliamentary Select Committee inquiry on public parks, we discuss some of the issues raised by the London Green Spaces Commission and we offer this as Appendix 2.

Historic England would be interested to work with the London Green Spaces Commission on protecting our historic public parks and green spaces.

¹¹ <https://www.nesta.org.uk/project/rethinking-parks/>

¹² <https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/news/hlf-and-national-trust-join-forces-improve-parks>

¹³ <http://londongardenstrust.org/>

¹⁴ <http://www.londongardensonline.org.uk/>

¹⁵ <http://www.opensquares.org/>

¹⁶ <https://parksforlondon.org.uk/>

¹⁷ <https://www.mpga.org.uk/>



APPENDIX 1 London's registered public parks (including country parks as listed in Mary Waugh, 1981 'The Shell Book of Country Parks' Newton Abbott: David & Charles (Publishers) Ltd, and excluding squares such as Trafalgar Square). Data from Historic England's National Heritage List for England (NHLE).

Public parks	Borough or managing organisation (as of 2016)	Register grade	Approx. hectares	opening date as a public park or date taken on by local authority as a public park (or approx.)	Designation date	Notes on past public park management	National Heritage List for England web link
CHISWICK HOUSE	Chiswick House & Gardens Trust	I	26	1929	1 October 1987	London Borough of Hounslow	http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=100011
GREENWICH PARK	Royal Parks Agency	I	74	1900s	1 October 1987		http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=100017
ST JAMES'S PARK	Royal Parks Agency	I	32	1827	1 October 1987		http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=100048
HYDE PARK	Royal Parks Agency	I	130	late 18C	1 October 1987		http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=100081
KENWOOD	English Heritage Trust (charity)	II*	45	1928	1 October 1987	Greater London Council	https://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1000142
FULHAM PALACE	Fulham Palace Trust charity company limited by guarantee	II*	14	1975	1 October 1987	Hammersmith and Fulham Borough Council	http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=100013
VICTORIA PARK	London Borough of Tower Hamlets	II*	87	1845	1 October 1987		http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=100017
WANSTEAD PARK	City of London	II*	129	1882	1 October 1987		http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=100019
THE HILL (INVERFORTH HOUSE OR HAMPSTEAD PERGOLA & HILL GARDENS)	City of London	II*	3	1963	1 October 1987		http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=100024
BATTERSEA PARK	London Borough of Wandsworth	II*	80	1854	1 October 1987		http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=100028
CRYSTAL PALACE PARK	London Borough of Bromley	II*	80	1854	1 October 1987		http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=100037
GROVELANDS PARK	London Borough of Enfield	II*	40	1913	1 October 1987		http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=100039
CANNIZARO PARK	London Borough of Merton	II*	13.5	1948	1 October 1987		http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=100079
GREEN PARK	Royal Parks Agency	II*	20.6	early 19C	1 October 1987		http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=100080



GUNNERSBURY PARK	London Boroughs of Hounslow and Ealing	II*	75	1926	1 October 1987	http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=100080
ST GEORGE'S GARDENS	London Borough of Camden	II*	1	1884	1 October 1987	http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=100083
VICTORIA EMBANKMENT GARDENS	City of Westminster	II*		1870	1 October 1987	http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=100084
WATERLOW PARK	London Borough of Camden	II*	10	1891	1 October 1987	http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=100084
WIMBLEDON PARK	London Borough of Merton	II*	60	1914	1 October 1987	http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=100085
BROOMFIELD HOUSE	London Borough of Enfield	II	21	1903	1 August 1990	http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=100051
ADDINGTON PALACE	London Borough of Croydon	II	9.9	1951	1 October 1987	http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=100079
BELAIR	London Borough of Southwark	II	10.6	1947	1 October 1987	http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=100079
BROCKWELL PARK	London Borough of Lambeth	II	50	1892	1 October 1987	http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=100079
CLISSOLD PARK	London Borough of Islington	II	21	1889	1 October 1987	http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=100080
FINSBURY PARK	London Borough of Haringey	II	46	1869	1 October 1987	http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=100080
HOLLAND PARK	Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea	II	22	1953	1 October 1987	http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=100081
HORNIMAN GARDENS	Horniman Museum charity, company limited by guarantee and Non-Departmental Public Body	II	5	1901	1 October 1987	http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=100081
ISLAND GARDENS	London Borough of Tower Hamlets	II	1	1895	1 October 1987	http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=100081
KENNINGTON PARK	London Borough of Lambeth	II	15	1854	1 October 1987	http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=100081
MANOR HOUSE GARDENS	London Borough of Lewisham	II	3	1902	1 October 1987	http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=100082
MYATT'S FIELDS (CAMBERWELL PARK)	London Borough of Lambeth	II	6	1889	1 October 1987	http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=100082
NORWOOD GROVE	London Borough of Croydon	II	14	1926	1 October 1987	http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=100082
PECKHAM RYE PARK	London Borough of Southwark	II	20	1894	1 October 1987	http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=100082
THE ROOKERY	London Borough of Lambeth	II	1	1913	1 October 1987	http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=100082
RUSKIN PARK	London Borough of Lambeth	II	15	1910	1 October 1987	http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=100083

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ST LUKE'S GARDEN	Royal London Borough of Kensington & Chelsea	II	1.5	1881	1 October 1987		http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=1000834
ST PETER'S SQUARE	London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham	II	1	1915	1 October 1987		http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=1000837
SOUTHWARK PARK	London Borough of Southwark	II	26	1869	1 October 1987		http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=1000838
SPRINGFIELD PARK	London Borough of Hackney	II	13	1905	1 October 1987		http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=1000839
VALENTINES PARK (CRANBROOK PARK)	London Borough of Redbridge	II	50	1899	1 October 1987		http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=1000843
VICTORIA TOWER GARDENS	Royal Parks Agency	II	2.5	1879	1 October 1987		http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=1000845
WALPOLE PARK	London Borough of Ealing	II	12	1902	1 October 1987		http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=1000847
WELL HALL PLEASAUNCE	London Borough of Greenwich	II	5	1933	1 October 1987		http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=1000850
ALEXANDRA PALACE	Alexandra Palace and Park Trust (1900 Act of Parliament)	II	76	1863	9 May 1995		http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=1001253
FINSBURY CIRCUS	City of London	II	0.5	1900	1 October 1987	1815-17	http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=1001259
ARNOLD CIRCUS, BETHNAL GREEN	London Borough of Tower Hamlets	II		1900	7 April 1994	London County Council	http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=1001300
TERRACE AND BUCCLEUCH GARDENS	London Borough of Richmond upon Thames	II	5	1887	24 August 2001		http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=1001551
ROUNDWOOD PARK	London Borough of Brent	II	11	1892	24 September 2001	Hunger Hill Common	http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=1001556
BETHNAL GREEN GARDENS	London Borough of Tower Hamlets	II	1.1	1875	3 September 2003		http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=1001673
BISHOP'S PARK	London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham	II	10.5	1893	20 October 2003		http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=1001677
WEST HAM PARK	City of London	II	30	1887	17 February 2004	fund raising campaign	http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=1001685
ST PANCRAS GARDENS	London Borough of Camden	II	2	1875	10 January 1987	churchyard	http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=1001689

APPENDIX 2

**COMMUNITIES & LOCAL GOVERNMENT SELECT COMMITTEE
PUBLIC PARKS INQUIRY****Evidence submitted by Historic England**

Historic England is the Government's statutory adviser on all matters relating to the historic environment in England. We are a non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). We champion and protect England's historic places, providing expert advice to local planning authorities, developers, owners and communities to help ensure our historic environment is properly understood, enjoyed and cared for. Our submission focuses particularly on the historic and cultural value of our public parks, lessons from the past, and starts by providing some context.

Summary

- Our public parks and open spaces are an important part of our urban heritage and infrastructure¹⁸. They are very diverse but many date back to the 1850s and 1860s. Over 300 historic public parks are designated for their national importance. The historic and cultural significance of public parks is often underestimated. However 80% of people think local heritage makes their area a better place to live¹⁹. Our urban heritage is also important to the economy and tourism.
- The historic public parks are often large and complex landscapes. They are the major elements in our Green Infrastructure and critical to climate change adaptation in our towns and cities. The opportunity to create new large scale urban parks is rare. Existing green spaces need investment and protection. It is vital we both maximise their Green Infrastructure benefits and manage the climate change risks facing these cultural assets.
- Historic England's new research report on the history of public park funding models shows local authority management over 170 years has ensured parks have survived even through late 20th century funding crises. More recently local authorities have delivered a host of highly successful Heritage Lottery Fund projects to restore public parks. Historically all other funding models have failed. Since Victorian times public parks have been dogged by lack of recognition as an essential infrastructure and service as local authorities have no statutory duty. It is critical that the status of public parks is resolved.

Context

¹⁸ International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA) 2013 *Canberra Declaration on Historic Urban Parks* 'Historic urban public parks are an essential and inalienable part of the traditions and plans of many towns and settlements ... they must be safeguarded as historic sites for the use and enjoyment of future generations'. <http://landscapes.icomos.org/index.php/en/canberra>

¹⁹ HLF 2015 *20 years in 12 places* www.hlf.org.uk/about-us/research-evaluation/20-years-heritage

Historic England is responsible for the Register of Parks & Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England, which identifies designed landscapes of national importance.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)²⁰ recognises registered parks and gardens as designated heritage assets. It requires local planning authorities to take account of ‘the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; (and) the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring’.

Since the Committee’s 1999 inquiry, Historic England has reviewed its Register and there are now over 300 public parks (including country parks) on the National Heritage List for England (NHLE)²¹. These parks have been selected because of their age or rarity, influence, status as early or representative examples, association with significant designers or others and historic events, or importance for their group value with other heritage assets. The majority of registered public parks are designated because they are relatively early and the landscaping and structural planting has survived well²². The three date bands are:

- Sites developed between 1833 (the date of the Select Committee on Public Walks) and 1875 (Public Health Act) where enough of the landscaping survives to reflect the original design
- Sites mainly developed between 1875 and the Second World War where landscaping is notable and survives intact or almost intact
- Sites laid out post-1945 but more than 30 years ago where the design is of exceptional note and the key elements survive essentially intact.

We continue to add to the NHLE and recent examples are several war memorial parks and gardens. As well as registration, many public park buildings and structures like gates, railings and statues are designated as listed buildings, and there are also scheduled monuments such as castles and ruins in some parks. Public parks and green spaces often also shape Conservation Areas.

The NHLE also includes other registered public green spaces such as pleasure gardens, seaside gardens, botanic gardens, 20th century landscaping, town squares and public walks, and cemeteries and crematoria.

As well as the registered public parks, there are hundreds more of local interest (many of which are formally identified by local planning authorities and also subject to a degree of protection under the NPPF). Historic England has encouraged research and recording through Local Lists²³ and the Parks & Gardens UK

²⁰ National Planning Policy Framework

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf

²¹ The National Heritage List for England (NHLE) can be searched to find the entries for all listed buildings, scheduled monuments, protected wrecks and registered parks, gardens and battlefields. The National Heritage List is the official and up to date database of all nationally protected historic buildings and sites in England. <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>. Approximately 20% of all registered parks and gardens.

²² English Heritage (now Historic England) 2013 *Register of Parks and Gardens Selection Guide: Urban Landscapes* <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/drpgsg-urban-landscapes/>

²³ Local Listing <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/what-is-designation/local/local-designations/>



database²⁴; carried out our own studies on the archaeology and history of commons²⁵, and histories of public parks²⁶; and worked with the Green Flag Award scheme²⁷ to champion well-managed parks and green spaces. Our own research review²⁸ work highlights the need to do more to raise awareness of the historic and cultural significance of our public parks.

Who uses parks and open spaces, how often and for what?

Britain was the first country to develop public parks and the concept was adopted across the world. The Victorians' 'People's Park' branding clearly expresses the role of the new parks. Parks in Halifax, Luton, and Banbury are still called 'People's Park' and around the world there are others like Shanghai, Berkeley (California) and Jersey.

Generations have since used and enjoyed our public parks and open spaces and continue to do so. Different types and sizes of parks and green spaces offer different experiences, and many people will use more than one park or green space during any year. DTLR (now DCLG) 2002 research²⁹ found that nearly 70% of people use their parks frequently, and many go every day. This was corroborated by Keep Britain Tidy³⁰ in 2010. From our own Heritage Counts³¹ research we know the second most popular type of heritage site visited by the public is a historic garden or park. Heritage Lottery Fund's (HLF) new *State of UK Public Parks*³² report confirms that 57% of UK adults who use their parks do so at least once a month or more. HLF³³ estimates that 34million people make regular visits to parks making parks one of the UK's most heavily used public services and we also know found people view green space as a key service, alongside housing, education and policing³⁴. GreenSpace's 2010 report³⁵ summarises the considerable body of evidence on who uses parks.

²⁴ www.parksandgardens.org

²⁵ Bowden, Mark et al *A Fair Field Indeed. An Archaeology of Town Commons in England* Swindon: English Heritage (now Historic England) and Lambert, D and Williams, S 2005 *English Heritage Research Report: Commons, Heaths and Greens in Greater London Report*
<http://research.historicengland.org.uk/Report.aspx?i=15282&ru=%2fResults.aspx%3fp%3d1%26n%3d10%26a%3d4789%26ns%3d1>

²⁶ Examples include:

Lambert, D 2005 *The Park Keeper* <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/the-park-keeper/>

Layton-jones, K and Lee, R 2008 *Places of Health and Amusement: Liverpool's historic parks and gardens*

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/places-of-health-and-amusement/>

Lambert, D 2012 *Jubilee-ation! A History of Royal Jubilees in Public Parks* <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/jubilee-ation/>

²⁷ Green Flag Awards and Historic England's sponsored Green Heritage Sites <http://www.greenflagaward.org.uk/awards/>

²⁸ Historic England Research Report 04/14 *National Review of Research Priorities for Urban Parks, Designed Landscapes and Open Spaces* (Dr Katy Layton-Jones) <http://research.historicengland.org.uk/>

²⁹ Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions 2002 *Improving Urban Parks, Play Areas and Green Spaces* <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120919132719/http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/131021.pdf>

³⁰ Keep Britain Tidy 2010 *People, Places and their Green Spaces*

³¹ English Heritage (now Historic England) 2009 *Heritage Counts 2009: England*

³² Heritage Lottery Fund 7 September 2016 *State of UK Public Parks 2016* www.hlf.org.uk/state-uk-public-parks-2016

³³ Heritage Lottery Fund 2014 *State of UK Public Parks 2014* www.hlf.org.uk/state-uk-public-parks-2014

³⁴ CABESpace 2010 *Community green. Using local spaces to tackle inequality and improve health*

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110118095356/http://www.cabe.org.uk/publications/community-green>



The contribution of parks to the health and well-being of communities

Public parks were created to offer healthy recreation for all, and especially the working classes. The seminal *People's Parks The Design and Development of Victorian Parks in Britain* (1991)³⁶ describes the desperate physical need in the 19th century for open space as towns and cities grew in density, and 'the 'problem' of working-class recreation'. The Victorians saw recreation as offering mental and physical well-being, and social benefits; literally a 're-creation'. The Victorians also understood that parks could serve as 'The Lungs' of the cities. The development of public parks is very much interrelated with the emergence of the working day, working week and statutory holidays, the welfare of employees and civic consciousness, and the Public Health Acts.

125 years on there is a re-awakening about the health and well-being role of public parks. GreenSpace's 2010 *Understanding the Contribution Parks and Green Spaces can make to Improving People's Lives*³⁷ includes findings such as:

- 91% of people believe that public parks and open spaces improve quality of life
- Play patterns established in childhood are linked to adult health and health behaviour, and in particular playing creatively as a child predicts a healthier diet and more active play is associated with generally better health
- People living on a low income in deprived urban areas are more likely to experience worse health and be less physically active
- Living near parks, woodland or other open spaces helps to reduce health inequalities, regardless of social class
- Where people have good perceived and/or actual access to green space they are 24% more likely to be physically active
- A daily walk in the park reduces the risk of a heart attack by 50%
- More contact with the outdoors reduces stress and can prevent and reduce depression and anxiety.

Keep Britain Tidy³⁸ reported people used parks 'to enhance our closest relationships, to chill out, to interact with our communities and to have a good time'. In CABESpace's 2010³⁹ research 60% of interviewees thought pleasant local green spaces would improve their overall physical health, 48% thought it could improve their mental health, and 46% thought it would make them feel better about their relationships with family and friends; and improving the quality of spaces can encourage more active use and exercise. Historic England's

³⁵ GreenSpace 2010 *Understanding the Contribution Parks and Green Spaces can make to Improving People's Lives*
<http://en.calameo.com/read/00087401259cc61bceeaf>

³⁶ Conway, Hazel 1991 *People's Parks. The Design and Development of Victorian Parks in Britain* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

³⁷ GreenSpace 2010 *Understanding the Contribution Parks and Green Spaces can make to Improving People's Lives*
<http://en.calameo.com/read/00087401259cc61bceeaf>

³⁸ Keep Britain Tidy 2010 *People, Places and their Green Spaces*

³⁹ CABESpace 2010 *Community green. Using local spaces to tackle inequality and improve health*

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110118095356/http://www.cabe.org.uk/publications/community-green>



own research shows that the well-being value of visiting heritage sites is the equivalent to £1,646 per person per year⁴⁰.

In May 2016, the King's Fund⁴¹ added even more evidence with their report on the impact of gardens and the role of gardening in the health and care system. A new Preventative Medicine Journal paper concludes green spaces are worth £2.2bn to public health in England⁴². The Culture White Paper⁴³ reports that local health and care commissioners are increasingly interested in the beneficial effects of culture on health and well-being; and a new charter on the lifestyle and community 'big impacts' of horticulture and public parks was proposed at this summer's Health and Horticulture conference⁴⁴. Yet, the evidence base is only described as 'expanded exponentially' and 'strengthening'⁴⁵.

The Committee on Climate Change also stressed the importance of urban parks and green spaces in managing heat-related health issues as temperatures in built-up areas increase due to climate change, and the need to reverse the decline in parks⁴⁶.

Funding and management models and alternatives

- **The impact of reductions in local authority budgets on parks**
- **What the advantages and disadvantages are of other management models, such as privatisation, outsourcing or mutualisation**
- **What additional or alternative funding is available and what scope is there for local authorities to generate revenue from park users**

The three issues identified by the Committee have been the focus of discussions amongst the public park sector as the consequences of the 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) have been implemented.

Our research report *History of Public Park Funding and Management (1820 – 2010)* was commissioned to contribute to this debate and to achieve better public policy through an understanding of the history, and also to inform our own work. The report is included with this submission (see appendix).

In exploring the relationship between the physical environment of parks, their buildings and amenities and the funding and management models, the researcher looked at the roles of central and local government,

⁴⁰ Fujiwara, D et al July 2014 *Heritage and Wellbeing* <http://hc.historicengland.org.uk/content/pub/2190644/heritage-and-wellbeing.pdf>

⁴¹ <http://www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/gardens-and-health>

⁴² Mathew White et al (University of Exeter's European Centre for Environment and Human Health) 20 September 2016 'Recreational physical activity in natural environments and implications for health: A population based cross-sectional study in England' *Preventive Medicine* journal http://www.exeter.ac.uk/news/research/title_543531_en.html

⁴³ DCMS 2016 *The Culture White Paper* <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/culture-white-paper>

⁴⁴ hosted by Lord Crisp, former NHS Chief Executive

⁴⁵ Horticulture Week 22 July 2016 page 10 <http://www.hortweek.com/horticultural-health-programmes-need-show-return-investment/landscape/article/1402743>

⁴⁶ Committee on Climate Change June 2015 *Reducing emissions and preparing for climate change: 2015 Progress Report to Parliament* <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/reducing-emissions-and-preparing-for-climate-change-2015-progress-report-to-parliament/>

benefactors (spanning philanthropy to self-interest and developers), funding bodies like the HLF, the historic role of the community as subscribers and volunteers, the history of the transfer of parks to local authority control and stewardship, and the funding models for the establishment, landscaping and management (including income generation) of the new parks and new park features.

The research challenges assumptions about past management and funding. It shows that the foundations of today's funding problems, and those in the 1970s/80s, lie with how the parks were originally set up and the lack of adequate means to ensure long term maintenance. Past private and community sector funding failed to generate a continuous, consistent and long term income stream, and ultimately failed. By the 20th century nearly all had been taken on, and often rescued, by local authorities. The Victorian parks survived largely intact until the 1970s. Local authorities have delivered over a century of sustainable management.

The future of parks

- **What the administrative status of parks should be in light of declining local authority resources for non-statutory services**
- **How new and existing parks can best be supported**

It takes many years for parks to mature and fully develop. A long term management approach is needed for each park and the overall Green Infrastructure.

By the mid-1980s, many parks were unfit for use and no-go areas. It has taken £850+million⁴⁷ of Lottery funding and 20 years to see parks restored, fit to use and enjoy, and to reveal their historic significance. In re-thinking funding for public parks, the Government needs to be cautious that this investment is not wasted and the historic significance of these parks put at risk.

The survival of public parks, in some cases for over 150 years, demonstrates their on-going value to communities. In particular the large parks have proven adaptable incorporating new features and facilities, but there have also been problems. The 2001 Public Park Assessment⁴⁸ showed huge losses in park features and facilities from gardens, cafés and toilets to paddling pools, tennis courts and boats.

Our public parks vary from small sites to spacious areas. Southwark's 1973 Burgess Park (56 ha), Liverpool's 1978 Everton Park (40 ha) and the 2012 Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park (226 hectares) are examples of the 'once in a generation' opportunities to create large parks in built-up city centres. The last major period for large urban public parks development was in the 1920s/1930s⁴⁹. Our public parks should therefore be treasured as the opportunity to enrich and green our towns and cities at this scale is unlikely to happen again.

⁴⁷ Heritage Lottery Fund 2016 *State of UK Public Parks* www.hlf.org.uk/state-uk-public-parks-2016

⁴⁸ DTER, HLF, English Heritage, Countryside Agency 2001 *Public Park Assessment*

⁴⁹ For example Waterloo Park in Norwich

As discussed in our report the lack of a statutory duty has haunted public parks for more than a century⁵⁰. Recommendations⁵¹ to establish a new duty to provide and maintain parks have been resisted several times, but the lack of recognition of parks as an essential service or element of local infrastructure does need to be resolved in some way if the multiple benefits of public parks, especially as Green Infrastructure, are to be realised. The investigation by the Committee into how parks can be integrated with local authorities' other strategic roles and services would be most interesting in this regard, specifically in relation to public health, welfare and social justice, environmental protection, education and culture; and also a focus on 21st century style local authority leadership and coordination; and innovation in delivery of parks services, fund-raising, and partnerships especially with local communities.

The Inquiry is welcomed by Historic England. We need a secure future of our public parks many of which are of historic and cultural importance. They are critical as 'Lungs', and for the mental and physical well-being of urban communities. We will be tracking historic public parks through our Heritage at Risk programme⁵².

APPENDIX Historic England Research Report 20/2016 *History of Public Park Funding and Management (1820-2010)* (Dr Katy Layton-Jones) (overleaf) published online at <https://historicengland.org.uk/research/research-results/research-reports/>

⁵⁰ This is explained in the City of Liverpool's Neighbourhood Select Committee report August 2016 <http://councillors.liverpool.gov.uk/documents/b39517/SUPPLEMENTARY%20AGENDA%2002nd-Aug-2016%2017.00%20Neighbourhoods%20Select%20Committee.pdf?T=9> 'In light of continuing reductions of local government finance, the City Council continues to face the challenge of how to fund services in the coming years. The Mayor has referred to the fact that in future years the City Council is only likely to have budget to provide only statutory services. In light of this it is fundamental that the City Council explores new and alternative ways to manage and fund the maintenance and operation of the city's parks, which is a discretionary service'.

⁵¹ For example House of Commons ODPM: Housing, Planning, Local Government and Regions Committee 2013 Living Places: Cleaner, Safer Greener See Conclusions and recommendations paragraphs 30 and 31 'We therefore recommend that local authorities should be given a new statutory duty'.

⁵² The Historic England Heritage at Risk programme protects and manages the historic environment, so the number of 'at risk' historic places and sites across England is reduced. <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/>



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