



Open Spaces 2011/12



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Welcome from the Chairman

We are very pleased to present our Open Spaces Annual Report for 2011/12, with highlights of the last year.

The City Corporation's Open Spaces continue to receive national recognition, thanks to the hard work and dedication of our staff, the ever increasing support of our local volunteers and the guidance of Consultative and Management Committee Members. Last year was an outstanding year with several prestigious awards received including 15 Green Flag Awards with 8 sites also achieving Green Heritage status. City Gardens also received a gold category award in London in Bloom reflecting the high standard of floral displays in the City.

Last September the area of Open Spaces we manage reached nearly 11,000 acres, as the Open Spaces Directorate took responsibility for the City of London Cemetery and Crematorium and welcomed their staff to the Department.

Our Open Spaces serve a significant number of local communities across London and their importance to users should not be underestimated. Our sites offer something for everyone; whether enjoying the natural aspect and diversity of landscapes, or participating in sport and other activities. Most of our sites are managed as charitable trusts, with core funding from the City Corporation's own resources – see page 38. At a time when obtaining funding for our services is challenging, we thank the City Bridge Trust for the substantial grant that has been provided over three years, for a wide programme of environmental education and biodiversity services within our Open Spaces, across London.

We also continue to work closely with a range of other partners, including the Heritage Lottery Fund that is supporting us with the Branching Out project at Epping Forest. We continue to search for other forms of support and welcome any local community assistance offered.

Annual visits to our Open Spaces are currently estimated at 22.5 million and over 46,000 volunteer hours were contributed to our sites during the year, for which we are extremely grateful. This report demonstrates the wide range of services and activity taking place on Open Spaces. We hope you enjoy reading this report and would encourage you to visit, perhaps to enjoy some of the events being organised as part of a Wellbeing Festival, in support of this Olympics year.

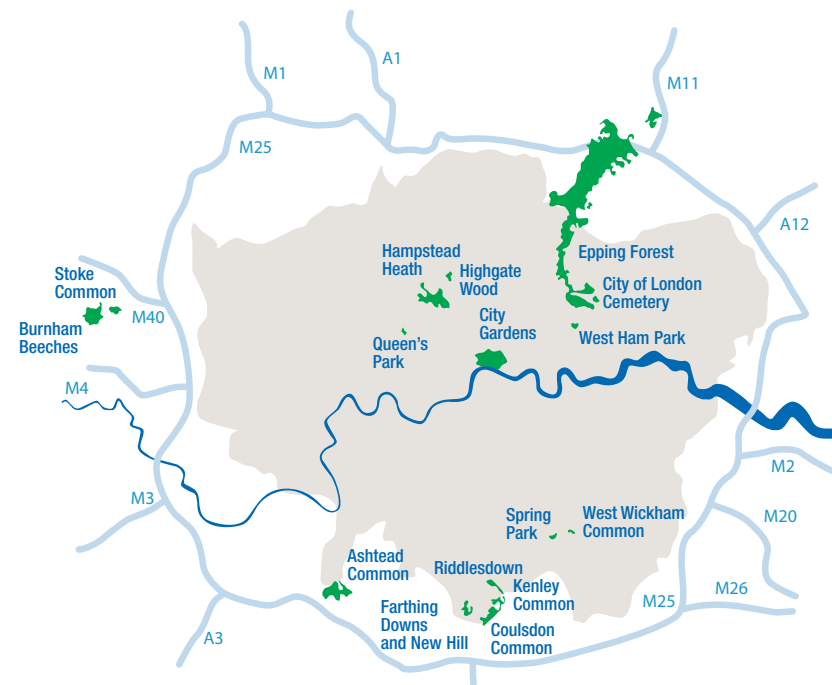
If you would like more information about any of our sites, please contact either the appropriate Superintendent or the Director (further details can be found on the inside back cover). We welcome any comments you may have on the services we provide.

Alderman Robert Hall

Chairman of the Open Spaces, City Gardens and West Ham Park Committee
June 2012



We have 22.5 million visits a year



The City of London's Open Spaces

The City of London owns and manages almost 4,500 hectares (11,000 acres) of historic and natural open space for public recreation and health. Our Open Spaces, most of which are charitable trusts, are run at no cost to the communities that they serve. They are funded principally by the City of London, together with donations, sponsorship, grants and trading income. Further details about the structure of our spaces and how they are governed and managed can be found on page 37.

We have a diverse portfolio of spaces in and beyond the Square Mile and they are enjoyed by millions of visitors each year. They include important wildlife habitats, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, National Nature Reserves and outdoor space for sport, recreation and enjoyment for the public.

The ownership of the City's Open Spaces originates from the 1870s when it promoted two Acts of Parliament, the Epping Forest Act and the City of London (Open Spaces) Act. The Acts were passed in 1878 which enabled the City to acquire and therefore protect space threatened with development over the last century.

Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common

Registered charity no: 232987

Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common are located in Buckinghamshire to the west of London. They combine the roles of scenic open spaces with internationally important wildlife habitats and provide recreation for hundreds of thousands of visitors each year. Both Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common are Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Burnham Beeches is also a National Nature Reserve and a Special Area of Conservation.

City of London Cemetery and Crematorium

The City of London Cemetery and Crematorium is a stunning Grade I listed landscape in the heart of East London, open since 1856. The 80 hectare site provides a picturesque, safe, parkland atmosphere for thousands of visitors, and offers beautiful formal gardens, well maintained roadways, tree lined avenues and local heritage.

City Commons

Registered charity nos. 232988, 232989 and 1051510

The City Commons, run by three charitable trusts, covers seven sites: Ashted Common; Farthing Downs; Coulsdon Common; Kenley Common; Riddlesdown; Spring Park and West Wickham Common. All these spaces lie on the borders of South London and Surrey and strive to achieve the cultural and natural heritage of the spaces in this area.

City Gardens

There are over 200 gardens churchyards, parks, plazas and highway plantings in the square mile of the City of London. Each open space is a unique resource managed for the use and enjoyment of residents, City workers and visitors and for the conservation of wildlife and the unique historic City of London landscape.

Epping Forest

Registered charity no. 232990

Epping Forest is London's largest open space, at over 2,500 hectares which stretches 21 kilometres from Manor Park in East London to just north of Epping in Essex. The Forest, run by charitable trust, is of national and international conservation importance. The majority of the open space is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Special Area of Conservation, and provides an unrivalled visitor destination with something for everyone.

Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park

Registered charity nos. 803392 and 232986

Hampstead Heath is one of London's most popular open spaces, situated just six kilometres from Trafalgar Square. An island of beautiful countryside, the magic of Hampstead Heath lies not only in its rich wildlife and extensive sports and recreational opportunities, but also in its proximity and accessibility to millions of people.

Queen's Park, at 12 hectares, is a fine example of a well-loved, traditional Victorian park. It was the site of the 1879 Royal Agricultural Exhibition and has been owned and managed by the City since 1886.

Highgate Wood is 28 hectares of ancient woodland owned and managed by the City since 1886. It is a haven for wildlife and provides numerous easily accessible and scenic woodland trails. It offers a sports ground, information hut and a renowned café.

West Ham Park


Registered charity no. 206948

West Ham Park, the largest park in the London Borough of Newham, has been owned and maintained by the City of London Corporation since 1874 and is held as a charitable trust.

Through the Trust, over £1m annually is provided by the City of London to support the Park. This 31 hectare Green Flag Award winning open space provides a pleasant and relaxing environment for over one million visitors a year.

Open Spaces Directorate

The Directorate coordinates the management of the Open Spaces Department led by Director, Sue Ireland. It provides support and advice to the Superintendents and their teams and works in cooperation with other departments on cross service projects and corporate initiatives. Importantly it links the City of London with regional and national partners and liaises with other green space organisations.



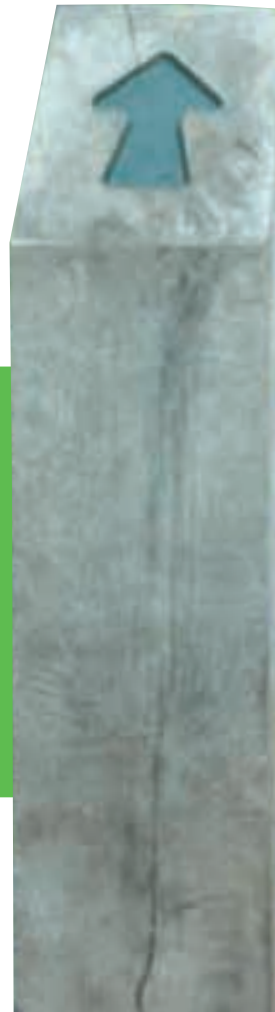
Four waymarked trails have been installed allowing people to explore deeper into the Forest without the fear of getting lost

Epping Forest

Branching Out project unfolds

The Heritage Lottery funded project is now in its third year and the major capital projects are well underway. The Visitor Centre next to Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge has had a complete transformation and will open in the summer of 2012. Returning to its former Victorian glory as a tea room, Butler's Retreat has once again opened its doors. The Retreat building has been sympathetically and imaginatively refurbished to a 21st century standard and provides Forest users the option to purchase refreshments, a slice of homemade cake and much more.

Major landscaping work has also taken place at four car parks across the Forest enhancing the visitor experience at some of the major honey pot areas. Connaught Water now boasts accessible angling platforms and an accessible track around the whole of the lake with seating and resting places along the way. Four waymarked trails have been installed allowing people to explore deeper into the Forest without the fear of getting lost. One of the most popular trails, on Wanstead Flats, forms part of Epping Forest's legacy to the 2012 Olympics as a result of the Green to Gold Wellbeing Festival. At exactly 2.5km long it is perfect for fitness and training and is successfully being used as the Forest's first Park Run route.



Memorial renovations



The City of London Cemetery has been receiving burials since 1856 and in excess of 151,000 graves have now been sold. There are approximately 90,000 memorials within the grounds, that are made from natural stone and many different types have been used: sandstone, York stone, Portland stone, slate, marble and granite.

The most popular choice until 15 years ago was marble, as it was the least expensive. Marble is not really the most suitable stone to be left outside in the UK climate as it goes soft and discolours quite quickly. Granite, which is imported in bulk from China and India, is now popular as it is significantly cheaper.

Since the Cemetery started to reclaim and reuse graves in 2003 our Memorial Management team have developed significant expertise in the renovation and cleaning of stone memorials and in 2011 the Cemetery launched a memorial cleaning and renovation service to complement our other grave care services. This new service has been popular and has produced £3,000 of income for the Cemetery.





City Gardens

New spaces, quality places

The City Gardens team has seen one of its busiest project seasons resulting in the creation of two brand new publicly accessible gardens. They are a real asset to the City's communities, not to mention the environmental enhancements they bring with them.

The leasehold on one of these spaces, St Pancras Church Garden, was acquired by the City of London in 2010 in order to turn it into a public garden. A design competition was held to create a concept for the new garden which was won by an architecture company called Studio Weave. Their proposals drew on the history of the site and represented the Romanesque architecture of the church sprouting afresh from the earth, following the Great Fire. The benches were individually carved by students of the City & Guilds of London Arts School.

The site is a Scheduled Ancient Monument, so the works were monitored by an archaeologist who found part of the wall of the Church of St Pancras exposed in the foundations when the front boundary wall of the site was removed. The existing trees were retained and the under planting is designed to provide exuberant growth reminiscent of overgrown woodland, enriched with flowers of colours inspired by Romanesque paintings.

Queen's Park

Fun in the park

A planning application for the redevelopment of the Children's Play Area was submitted to Brent Council in 2011 and approval was given to proceed with the agreed Master Plan. Equipment has been purchased for the first phase of the project and regular discussion took place with members from the local community to develop a fund raising working group to support this on-going project. The first phase will include the installation of a cable run-way, a timberwood tangle climbing structure and a pyramid tower with slide and climbing wall.

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Hampstead Heath

Dams and ponds

Last year plans for essential and costly work on the Heath's dams and ponds were announced. The City of London has been working with experts in hydrology and dam engineering to find the best way to bring the existing dams, some of which are over 300 years old, up to the required safety standard to protect local residents and services in the very rare but serious case of a major flood. The need to preserve the natural habitats and beauty of the Heath, maintaining the principles of the 1871 Hampstead Heath Act, is at the forefront of these discussions.

The existing dams are regularly inspected and are safe and stable. Hydrological studies have showed that they do not have enough spillway capacity, which means that there is no safe or controlled way of the water passing down the chain of ponds, should there be a large influx of water.

Additionally, the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 is due to amend the Reservoirs Act 1975 and this will bring higher safety standards, which the City must adhere to, to reduce the risk of floods.

The City is following best advice and is now in the process of appointing a design team to take forward the next stage of the project. Heath users and local residents will be involved in detailed discussions throughout the duration of the project.



West Ham Park

Doctor Fothergill's explorers

The playground at West Ham Park is currently undergoing a major refurbishment with the existing equipment being either upgraded or replaced. Further funding from Newham's Aiming High for Disabled Children programme has enabled the Park to complete another phase of this playground refurbishment.

A major part of this new play landscape is the mound. This feature provides opportunities for formal play via integrated equipment and informal role play via the paths, steps and ramps that are accessible by ambulant and wheelchair disabled, with one route down being a large double slide. The equipment is set in a new play landscape of hard features and planting beds that creates a structured setting in line with the proposed Masterplan concept; Doctor Fothergill's explorers.



Burnham Beeches

Meeting the challenge of budget cuts

The 12.5% reduction to the budget in 2011 left the Burnham Beeches team with a difficult choice but rather than cut services, the decision was made to introduce weekend and bank holiday car park charges. There were two elements to the project; ensuring the infrastructure was right and employing the services of an enforcement company which understood the sensitivities and requirements of setting up a car park charging scheme on a National Nature Reserve (NNR).

The closure of two under used satellite car parks brought further financial and time savings. Three additional parking machines were installed in the remaining parking areas, adding to the existing four machines which had, until now, been used for donations only.

District Enforcement (DE) were chosen due to their ethical business model and understanding of the special needs of the site and we now work in close partnership with them.

It was important that everything was done for visitors to smooth the transition to charging. Consequently, signage was designed to exceed minimum size and quantity requirements, whilst ensuring that it was not visually intrusive; Rangers greeted visitors and handed out flyers to increase awareness; and additional disabled spaces (free for those with a blue badge) were created. The result is that since August 2011 parking charges raised £47,000 (after VAT) avoiding the threat of reduced services.



Highgate Wood

Ten year management plan

We are in the process of drafting a Conservation Management Plan for Highgate Wood. It considers all aspects of the management of the Wood and aims to present a clear list of objectives for the site, along with a statement of significance. The Plan is the product of consultation with the Highgate Wood Advisory Group, the management team and the Highgate Wood staff.

The Plan will provide guidance for the next ten years and will also serve as a strategic policy document which will be available for public reference purposes. The new plan when approved will replace the existing Management Plan drafted in 2001.

Highgate Wood staff spent a full day determining what issues the Conservation Management Plan should cover. A similar exercise was held with our partners from the local community, including representatives of sports users, the Museum of London, Haringey Council's Conservation Officer, the Friends of Queen's Wood, Highgate Wood Consultative Committee and a local entomologist.

The draft plan is now in place, although we recognise that further changes and amendments will be necessary before the final version is made available for public circulation in Autumn 2012.

The plan will provide guidance for the next ten years and will also serve as a strategic policy document which will be available for public reference purposes

West Ham Park

Apples and pears, plum and cherry! A new orchard for West Ham Park



Traditional orchards in London have been gradually disappearing over the years, lost and forgotten in increasing urban development. In order to preserve our food heritage, encourage new habitats and promote community spirit, a new orchard has been planted in West Ham Park. With the help and enthusiasm of the 11th Newham West Scout Group, a variety of apple, plum, damson, pear, apricot and cherry trees were planted together with a cobnut hedge on a cold but bright Saturday on the 11 February 2012, even snow on the ground couldn't deter the volunteers!

The project was gratefully funded by the City Bridge Trust. William Dove, Chairman of the City Bridge Trust, Alderman Robert Hall, Chairman of the Open Spaces, City Gardens and West Ham Park Committee and other Committee members came along to give a helping hand on the day.

With support from Martin Rodman, Superintendent, Geraldine King, West Ham Park Manager and their team: Ricky O'Garro; Chris Graat; Maciej Smaruj; Deane Neech and William Hesse, the day was a great success with 66 fruit trees planted and at the end of all that digging the scouts were able to enjoy the snow which had fallen during the week!

Heathland restoration at Stoke Common

Progress on the heathland restoration at Stoke Common continues with dramatic improvements achieved through the use of machinery, mostly operated by contractors, and management with hand tools by staff and volunteers. By taking this approach large areas can be cleared effectively and efficiently whilst small pockets of old heathland, which are important for the heathland reptiles, invertebrates and plants can be protected.

In 2011-12, half a hectare (ha) of scots pine was felled and around 6ha of birch removed. The larger logs are chipped and sent to Slough power station for use as fuel whereas the smaller pieces were turned into invaluable habitat piles for reptiles and invertebrates. Cleared areas are then mulched to remove stumps and rotovated to expose buried heathland seeds, stimulating germination.

In addition, 0.3ha of open land had the top few millimetres of soil scraped off, again with the goal of exposing the buried heather seed. We also replaced 400 metres of fencing and removed a further 290 metres of redundant fencing. The resurfacing of the formerly wet and muddy bridleway near Frame Wood was completed by volunteers. Additionally on West Common, work continued with opening up overgrown footpaths to improve visitor access as well as habitat value.

Volunteers can tackle areas which are not suitable for heavy machines



City of London Cemetery and Crematorium

Burial space – a Cemetery Manager's challenge

Most of London's Cemeteries will be full to capacity within the next 10 years and due to a lack of political attention this problem falls to Local Authorities and Cemetery Managers to deal with. Local Authorities, interestingly, do not have to legally provide burial space for their residents.

The City of London Cemetery is the largest municipal cemetery in the country but even on this large site space is an important issue.

The site has been in operation since 1856 and has received over 500,000 burials and it too is running out of land for burial. One of the ways that we have been creating further space is by developing areas of the Cemetery such as the lawn sections, where the original landscape plan used space very generously.



Queen's Park


Sustainable and attractive planting schemes

Staff designed a new planting scheme using perennial plants in one of the beds adjacent to the Queen's Park Café. It has established itself very well and received many positive comments. Plants were chosen to attract bees, butterflies and other wildlife.

A new planting scheme for the Quiet Garden in the Park has been designed with sustainability specifically in mind. Previous schemes have largely been made up of annual bedding plants. Existing evergreens such as the clipped box, Photinia 'Red Robin',

Yuccas and Trachycarpus Palm Trees will be retained in order to form the main structural elements of the scheme. The new plantings will still provide a high impact and colourful display from early to late summer. However, unlike many of the double flowered and highly bred bedding plants used previously, the new ornamental perennial plantings will be rich in nectar and far more attractive to bees, butterflies and other insects. Many of the plants will hold their seed-heads right through the winter months, providing further food for birds and habitats for invertebrates.





We are able to draw up to 4,400 gallons of water daily without the need to use mains water supplies thereby substantially reducing our costs.

West Ham Park

Nursery borehole and Jubilee food garden

In May 2011 the Nursery installed a borehole which enables us to extract water from an underground layer of water-bearing rock. A long vertical pipe placed inside maintains stability and prevents contamination entering the borehole. Water is pumped back to the surface and stored in a 50,000 gallon header tank. We are able to draw up to 4,400 gallons of water daily without the need to use mains water supplies thereby substantially reducing our costs.

With an irrigation system that uses water from a groundwater borehole we are flying the flag for a green way to grow vegetables in our new food growing area, the creation of which was partly funded by a grant from the City Bridge Trust. In addition, a sensor detects whether it has rained so the irrigation system does not activate to water the plants. Community involvement is a key aim of the food growing project. In addition to starting a regular Gardening club, involvement from local schools and community groups is an essential part of the project.

Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common

The business of volunteering

Volunteers are an essential part of conservation work at the Beeches and on Stoke Common, often carrying out important roles which may otherwise take years to complete, but it's not just individuals who volunteer; increasingly corporate volunteers and groups from organisations are making a big impact.

In 2011/12 volunteers gave well over 6,000 hours of their time and over a third was given by visiting groups and corporate volunteers. Groups included under 18s such as Cubs, Guides, Duke of Edinburgh Award, college students, school groups such as Activate and Skillforce and Landlink and Acorn (adults with special needs).

In 2011/12 groups from Timberland, PriceWaterhouse Coopers, Computer Associates and Honda contributed over 440 hours of volunteer work. They arrived at 9.30am, excited at the prospect of a day away from the desk and departed at 4.30pm, looking a little muckier than when they arrived but eager to come back! The larger volunteer groups do bring the challenges of finding a suitable task and enough tools so the work is often limited to scrub clearance of which Stoke Common has lots.



Epping Forest

Conserving the Forest

Volunteering in Epping Forest continues to go from strength to strength with over 200 individuals now giving their time to help manage the Forest within 22 different defined roles. This year projects specifically targeting young people were held for the first time in the Forest.

Partnership organisations such as Orange Rockcorps and The Challenge have proved a vital link providing inroads into this often difficult to reach section of the community.





“

I really enjoyed the outdoor life and hope to study countryside management when I leave school and maybe, one day, become a Ranger!

City Commons

Work experience on the Commons

Two pupils from Ashcombe School in Dorking, Callum Ritchie and Ed Newman, joined the Rangers on Ashtead Common for a week of patrolling, practical conservation work with local volunteers and looking after cattle and sheep. Callum said: “We had a really good, if tiring week but it was brilliant learning about the work of the Rangers and the Common.”

William Burr from Riddlesdown Collegiate got a wider experience across the Coulsdon and West Wickham Commons fitting benches and notice boards, felling trees and helping Rangers run work with younger pupils. William said: “I really enjoyed the outdoor life and hope to study countryside management when I leave school and maybe, one day, become a Ranger!”

Volunteer wins Team London award

Local volunteer, Phil Rathbone, was rewarded for 10 years voluntary work across City Commons by the Mayor of London, Boris Johnson. Phil was given his Team London certificate personally by the Mayor during a reception at City Hall. Phil said: “I am extremely proud to receive this award and I accept it on behalf of all the volunteers I work with.” Team London leads the initiative to boost volunteering across Greater London.





Hampstead Heath

Events on the Heath

Swimmers from across London dived into action in July 2011 at the Parliament Hill Lido to raise money for the Lord Mayor's Appeal. The City Dip is a 4,000 metre charity swim completed either by teams or individuals. The event was closed by Lord Mayor Michael Bear after he had enjoyed a swim in the Lido. He said "The City Dip is a terrific event that brings together people from across London for two inspirational charities which have joined forces under the banner of my Appeal to create Bear Necessities."

The City of London and the Hampstead Heath community gained a new Guinness World Record at our Heritage Festival in October 2011 when 395 people competed in the largest ever conker championships.

This was a fantastic, enjoyable event where people of all ages relived their youth in informal, although often rather competitive matches.

The first great national sporting event of the Olympic year took place at Parliament Hill in February 2012, as cross country running returned to its spiritual home. The English National Cross Country Championships 2012 took place in perfect weather and with a record number of participants. A total number of 4,622 athletes finished all races creating a new record by some margin, the previous best being 4,303 in 2010. As many as 1,688 competed in the Senior Men's race alone. This was a memorable day and the perfect way to kick-start the Open Spaces Green to Gold campaign and Wellbeing Festival 2012.



Epping Forest

VAQAS victory

The three Forest Centres at Epping Forest were awarded the VAQAS (Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Scheme) which is an important, national award scheme run by Enjoy England.

Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge received the award for the third year running (this year including Butler's Retreat), the Epping Forest Visitor Centre received the award for the second year running, and The Temple received the award for the first time. The VAQAS report for The Temple stated: 'The Temple contains a wealth of interesting information regarding Wanstead Park, especially considering its finite space.' Whilst the assessment for Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge says: 'The visitor is provided with a very warm welcome on arrival with friendly, informative staff, ambient music and an attractive entrance space.'

There were over
903,000 visits to City
Commons this year



City Commons

Visitor surveys

Volunteers from across all seven City Commons came together with Rangers to hear the findings of their visitor surveys. The group looked at graphs, maps and tables, which showed patterns of use during the 903,400 casual visits made to our open spaces last year.

Riddlesdown came out as the busiest site, with the number of visits estimated at 214,000 each year. Unusually, most of our commons experience little or no increase in visits over the weekends, with the exception of Ashted Common, which has 2-3 times more visits than during the week.

All seven of the City Commons are popular as sociable locations that people choose to visit with friends or family. Every site had higher numbers of people visiting in groups than alone. The most popular site for people to sit down and take in the surroundings was Farthing Downs.

Generally, the Commons seem to cater well for the local people living within 2km of the site when comparing our observations with the local census data. Surprisingly for us, Spring Park had the highest percentage (72%) of visits with dog walking as the primary activity.

The most popular site for people to play on is Kenley Common, with the flat terrain and tarmacked track being ideal for young children. The survey data is proving useful, as a bid for Heritage Lottery Funding required us to provide estimates of our annual number of visitors.

It is still early days in the survey but as more data is collected over the years we will have a better picture of our visitors. Without the dedicated work of our volunteers and Rangers, we wouldn't have had an accurate answer to this.



City Gardens

Blooming wonderful

It has been an extremely busy but successful year for the City Gardens team gaining awards in London in Bloom, London Garden Society awards and Green Flag.

Friday 16 September 2011 saw the London in Bloom Awards and the City Gardens had another very successful year in the competition. The In-Bloom judges visited and awarded the City an overall Gold medal, the highest award available. Recognising the high horticultural standards across the City, we were also awarded first place in the London in Bloom Floral Display Discretionary Award. The judges commented on the horticultural areas in regard to the very high quality. Particular note was taken of this year's colourful, imaginative, exuberant and visually interesting displays that "were a pleasure to behold" and had punch.

In addition to the overall awards, the City also won seven individual prizes, including, West Smithfield Garden winning the Small Park of the Year Category (Gold award), Cleary Gardens, St Dunstan in the East and Tower Hill Gardens (Silver gilt awards).

Bunhill Fields won the Cemetery up to five acres category (Gold award) and discretionary awards were given to St Brides Tavern for second place in Pub and Restaurant of the Year and Inner Temple awarded third place in the Business Premises of the year. Bunhill Fields received a Green Flag and a Green Heritage award for its excellent quality and management practices.

Fair attracted over
15,000 visitors

Hampstead Heath

Affordable Art Fair secures money for Heath Charity

The Affordable Art Fair came to Hampstead Heath for the first time in October 2011. The fair allowed thousands of people to view quality contemporary art in a fun, inspiring and informative environment, offering hundreds of works of art to view and buy. More than 90 galleries exhibited work priced between £40 and £4,000. Visitors enjoyed free workshops, talks, activities, a crèche and a café with a spectacular view over the Hampstead Ponds.

In these difficult financial times we are obliged to seek increased income and the Hampstead Heath Charity gained financially from hosting the Affordable Art Fair. Most visitors found this temporary attraction an interesting addition to a day out and complementary to their Heath visit. The Fair attracted over 15,000 visitors and proved to be a popular addition to the cultural timetable of Hampstead, so much so that it will return in November 2012.





Sustainability Audit System

The Open Spaces Department has created and piloted its own Environmental Management System – the Sustainability Audit System (SAS). The system takes a holistic approach towards taking a snapshot of environmental performance within each division. As a result of the SAS, the Open Spaces Department is able and delighted to state that we have reduced our energy use in 2011-2012 by 11% compared to 2010-2011. Some of our sites have invested in renewable energy technology, which contributes greatly to the reduction of carbon emissions, and some have invested in other technologies such as electric bicycles and vehicles and LED lighting.

Green to Gold Wellbeing Festival

The Open Spaces launched the Green to Gold campaign in June 2011 to encourage, engage and inspire communities to use their open spaces. The Olympic and Paralympic Games gave Green to Gold a unique opportunity to harness the potential in the run up to the Games of promoting health and wellbeing in our spaces. We were delighted to receive the Inspire Mark from the London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games for the positive contribution our campaign has made to the Games.

City Bridge Trust

The City Bridge Trust is providing £3m funding over three years for development across four of our open spaces under the following themes to inspire: people; schools; communities; visitors; landscapes and communication. The project achieved a great deal in 2011, here are some highlights:

- Over a thousand students in Newham receiving outdoor education sessions from West Ham Park
- 46 new young people attracted to the Rookie Rangers Wildlife club at the Hampstead Heath Education Centre
- A weather recording station installed at Epping Forest, which is now part of the Environmental Change Biodiversity Network
- Epping Forest contributed 8% of the records that furnished the Woodland Trusts mapping of the 100,000 trees across the UK in 2011. 1,568 veteran pollards have since been added to the Epping Forest Veteran Tree Register





Highgate Wood

Management for wildlife

A new wildflower meadow has been sown on the edge of the Highgate Wood sports field. We are very hopeful that this will prove a successful addition to the biodiversity and to the aesthetic appeal of the Wood.

Planning ahead, a site has been chosen for the next 'conservation area' in the Wood. This is part of the woodland management and coppicing programme that helps create variety and regeneration and provides new glades that attract many plants, invertebrates and birds. This programme is represented by draft policies in the Conservation Management Plan: 'Continue to manage existing coppice areas and seek opportunities to expand these areas or create new conservation areas,' and 'Promote the importance of coppice woodland to the local community and site users'. This next site will be close to the Bridge Gate. To allow for undisturbed regeneration, the area will be 'dead-hedged' and this will have the added bonus of protecting an important area of old earthwork from trampling.



Hampstead Heath

New wildflower meadows and reedbeds reap dividends

We have created areas of species-rich meadow and plan to do the same over the next year, using generous funding from the City Bridge Trust. These meadows add to the biodiversity of the Heath, not only its flora, but also its fauna, by for example providing food plants for the common blue butterfly and nectar for invertebrates.

The locations of the new meadows include several areas around Parliament Hill, part of the Hockey Field, the Tumulus Field and the Heath Extension. The method involves stripping soil or inverting the soil profile and then sowing with wildflower seed.

A bittern (type of heron) visited the Heath, staying for a couple of weeks, during the cold snap at the end of the winter.

Several water rails also stuck around at that time. Now, unusual birds can turn up anywhere from time to time, but the fact that these birds lingered shows that the habitat was very much to their liking. The habitat – the new reedbeds on the chain of Highgate Ponds – was designed and created by our conservation staff and is just one example of how such carefully planned work can reap dividends.

A dozen Heath Hands volunteers have been trained in reptile survey techniques. The subsequent monitoring that they have carried out has produced hundreds of sightings of grass snakes and confirmed that we have a healthy population along the Highgate Pond chain, centred on the Bird Sanctuary Pond.



The cows came home

The Forest is now the permanent home to a herd of English Longhorn cows. The cattle, that have been grazing the Forest and the Buffer Lands in previous years, were owned by a local farmer and former Verderer who retired. The cows were bought to continue the vital conservation work within the Forest. Thirty-six mature heifers joined the Epping Forest staff as ladies who like to munch, and are now helping to manage our habitats.

They will be looked after by Roger Beecroft who was appointed as grazier for three years. Roger has many years of experience in using livestock to look after natural habitats, and has his own herd of Red Poll cows and Hebridean Sheep. He is assisted by Robert Faber, stockman, who is discovering that each cow has a different personality!

Across spring to autumn the cows will graze on grassland, wood-pasture and heathland sites. At some of these sites a new 'invisible' fencing system is being trialled.

The system is composed of a buried wire in the ground and collars worn by the cows. A detector in the collar gives a signal to the cow that she is approaching the fence line. Milder than an electric fence the cows soon learn which way they can go. By having no fence line above ground the Forest will keep its natural look and the invisible fencing will allow visitors to move unhindered across the Forest. This project is a first for the UK and has the potential to revolutionise conservation grazing as we know it.



City Commons

Kenley Common and Airfield

Renowned as an important Battle of Britain site Kenley Common and Airfield has been subject to a lot of research over the last year. Work by consultants from Wessex Archaeology has identified a wide variety of important features on the site, including networks of military trenches and defensive earthworks.

Following this research we are agreeing with Natural England and English Heritage a programme to clear shrubs, and ideally trees, to protect these earthworks. The information we are collecting is helping the Kenley Airfield Friends Group prepare its Heritage Lottery Fund application for funds to conserve the important historic features.

Important features include networks of military trenches and defensive earthworks





City Commons

Ashtead Time Team

The story of the Common's past is slowly being revealed by Surrey Archaeological Society as they continued their sixth year of an archaeological dig on the Roman villa complex. Last year these enthusiasts provided about 1,000 volunteer hours excavating around the tile kiln, other buildings and a triangular earthwork nearby.

They believe the pits provided enough clay to make tiles for 50 villas in Southeast England. The buildings surrounding the villa are thought to be workshops, which yielded lots of pottery.

All this information adds to our understanding about what the Romans did for us in Ashtead.

A trench excavated through the ditch of the triangular earthwork has revealed that it had different phases of construction. Pottery was found from the Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman occupation confirming at last that this earthwork is at least 2,500 years old. We hope to find the funding to share all we've learnt with a wider audience, especially local schools.

City Gardens

New management plan

The City of London is home to around 200 areas of planting and green space that provides the City's community with much needed oases of calm in this densely developed heart of London. This maze-like array of secret gardens, churchyards, plazas and highway plantings in turn supports over 2,600 trees and an annual influx of over 200,000 bedding plants. School children helped us with the planting projects during the year.

In order to maintain the high quality of these green spaces for today and in facing the future challenges, a five year management plan has been produced. The plan contains a broad strategic and aspirational approach to guide the long term management of the City Gardens. It acts as a delivery mechanism for the Open Space Strategy and provides continuity in management across the City Gardens.

Its purpose is to balance the priorities, policies and pressures that apply to the City Gardens and to establish a time scale for putting the objectives into practice.

The production of such a document allows the contribution that each site makes to the local community to be measurable and monitored against key objectives. Following public consultation and some minor revisions the management plan was agreed by Committee in April 2012.

There are over 2,600 trees and 200,000 bedding plants in the 200 gardens in the City of London Square Mile







Burnham Beeches

Encouraging donations

Burnham Beeches has for some time encouraged visitors to make a donation towards the upkeep of the nature reserve but after recently adopting a more proactive approach, income from information linked donations increased in some cases by over 40% last year.

The donation box at the information point has supplemented other donations in a modest way but the erection of a simple sign last year, asking visitors to donate a modest 50p per leaflet, resulted in a rise from an average of just over £700 per annum to over £1,000 per annum.

The Ranger team have used the same approach for a variety of family oriented events over the past year, reminding visitors of the Reserve's charitable status and asking for donations.

Events have included bird box and bird feeder building, half term and holiday activities and a self-guided Easter trail, the latter raising £150 on its own. Cash raised in this way amounted to around £800 in 2011-12.

In 2011 visitors were treated to live promenade productions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Baba Yaga Boney Legs* from the Skewbald Theatre Company. Both productions were hugely popular with audiences and the 20% of ticket sales arrangement netted another £850 with minimal input required from the Rangers. All these are modest sums but, when added to the combined newsletter and map sponsorship of £1,900, the total income from these projects amounted to around £4,500 which was ploughed back into the production of newsletters, fact sheets and events to help improve visitor understanding of and respect for the National Nature Reserve.

Aims and objectives

The Open Spaces Department has established specific strategic aims and improvement objectives in support of the overall themes in the City Together Strategy and its Corporate Plan.

Our Strategic Aims are to:

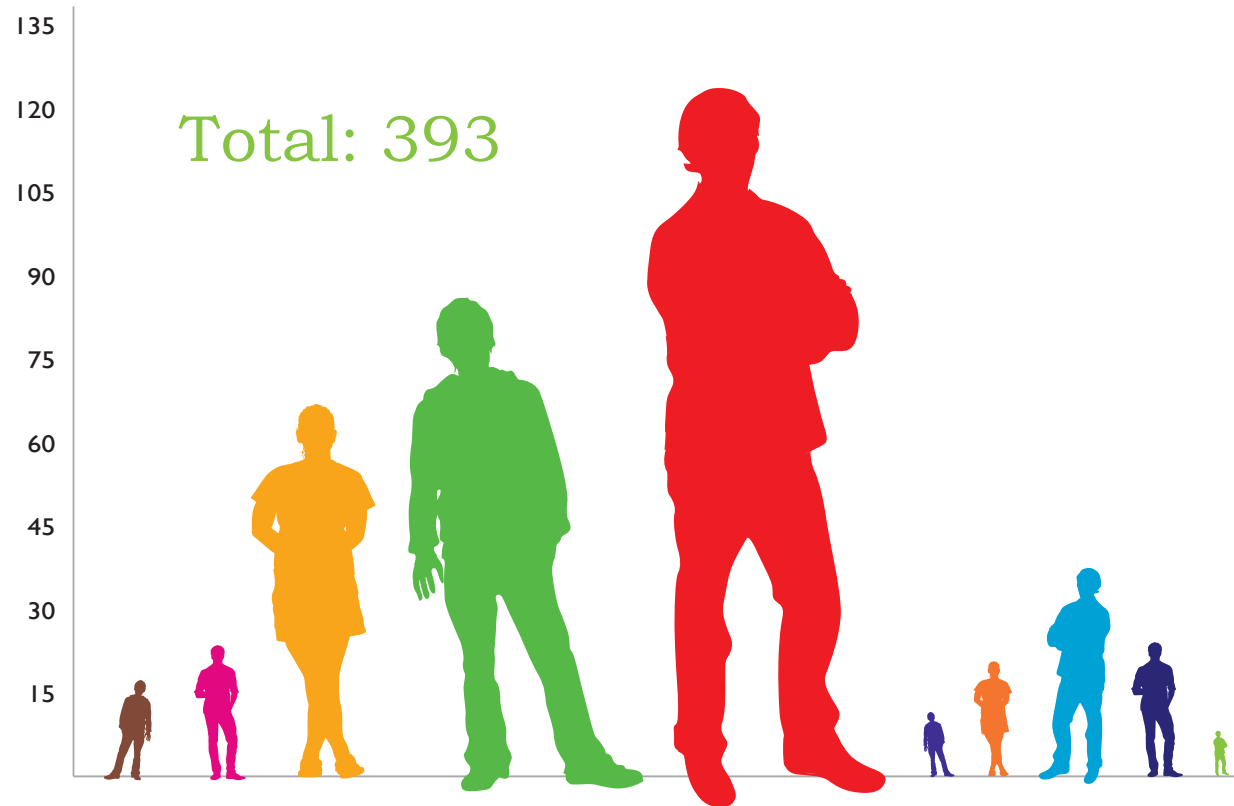
1. Provide safe, secure and accessible Open Spaces and services for the benefit of London and the nation.
2. Involve communities and partners in developing a sense of place through the care and management of our sites.
3. Deliver sustainable working practices to promote the variety of life and protect the Open Spaces for the enjoyment of future generations.
4. Promote opportunities to value and enjoy the outdoors for recreation, learning and healthy living.
5. Manage, develop and empower a capable and motivated work force to achieve high standards of safety and performance.

Our Improvement Objectives are to:

1. Achieve nationally recognised standards and deliver value for money in providing our Open Space service.
2. Extend partnership-working within the community and continue to develop closer links with local authorities, to improve the way we involve people in decision making.
3. Ensure that measures to promote sustainability, biodiversity and heritage are embedded in the Department's work.
4. Market our services and provide events and opportunities to learn for all within our communities.
5. Provide focused learning opportunities for staff and volunteers to feel confident in meeting the changing needs of the organisation.



Staffing resources



Staff allocation by site*

Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common	12	Highgate Wood	9
City Commons	22	Queen's Park	13
City of London Cemetery and Crematorium	66	City Gardens	32
Epping Forest	85	West Ham Park	20
Hampstead Heath	128	Directorate	6

* Based on full time equivalents

Epping Forest & Commons Committee

Open Spaces, City Gardens & West Ham Park Committee

Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Committee

Port Health & Environmental Services Committee

Organisational structure (as at 31 March 2012)



Barbara Newman CBE, Chairman



Alderman Robert Hall, Chairman



Michael Welbank, Chairman



John Tomlinson, Chairman

Town Clerk

Director of Open Spaces

Open Spaces Directorate



Director of Open Spaces
Sue Ireland



Epping Forest!
Paul Thomson, Superintendent
Staff 85, Hectares 3,217



City Commons?
Bob Warnock, Superintendent
Staff 22, Hectares 479



Burnham Beeches & Stoke Common
Andy Barnard, Superintendent
Staff 12, Hectares 302



City Gardens & West Ham Park
Martin Rodman, Superintendent
Staff 52, Hectares 40



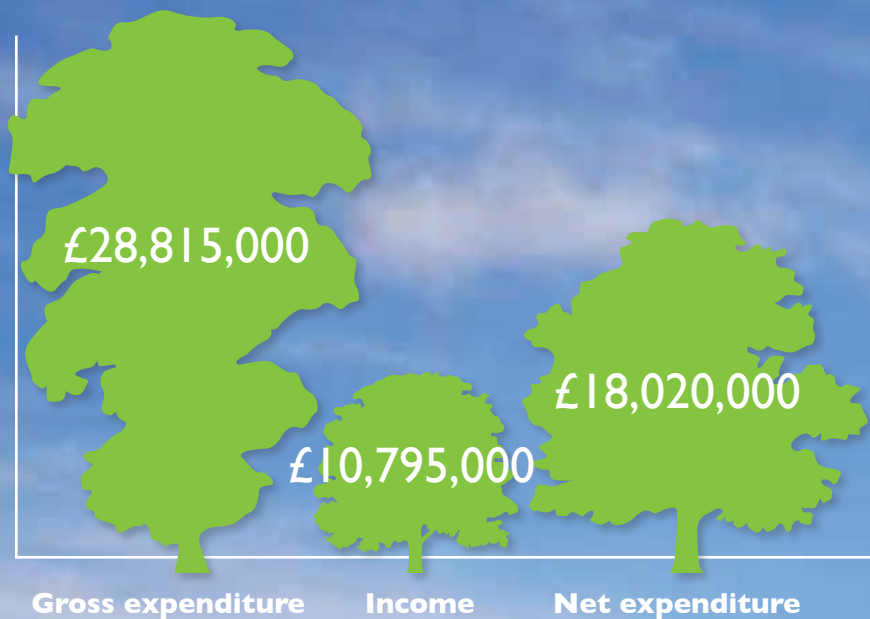
Hampstead Heath, Highgate
Wood & Queen's Park
Simon Lee, Superintendent
Staff 150, Hectares 315



City of London Cemetery and
Crematorium
Gary Burks, Superintendent
Staff 66, Hectares 81.

1. Epping Forest: includes Woodredon and Warlies Estate, two Grade II* listed parks at Copped Hall and Wanstead Park and the Buffer Lands.
2. City Commons: includes Ashted Common, Coulsdon Common, Farthing Downs, New Hill, Kenley Common, Riddlesdown, Spring Park & West Wickham Common

Total Open Spaces approved budget 2011/12



Gross expenditure (£)	28,815,000
<i>comprising</i>	
Employees	14,291,000
Supplies and services	2,986,000
Premises related expenses	1,852,000
Transport	743,000
Repairs and maintenance	4,038,000
Other payments	286,000
Recharges	4,619,000

Approved budget by site

	Gross expenditure £	Income £	Net expenditure £
Directorate	840,000	840,000	0
Epping Forest	5,670,000	1,009,000	4,661,000
Heritage Lottery Fund	458,000	455,000	3,000
Chingford Golf Course	271,000	323,000	-52,000
Wanstead Flats	277,000	88,000	189,000
Woodredon & Warlies	105,000	105,000	0
Burnham Beeches	805,000	107,000	698,000
Stoke Common	53,000	31,000	22,000
City Commons	1,878,000	183,000	1,695,000
West Ham Park	1,300,000	200,000	1,100,000
Nursery	321,000	321,000	0
City Gardens*	1,827,000	327,000	1,500,000
Bunhill Fields	299,000	0	299,000
Hampstead Heath	8,924,000	2,622,000	6,302,000
Queen's Park	853,000	128,000	725,000
Highgate Wood	572,000	98,000	474,000
City of London Cemetery & Crematorium*	4,362,000	3,958,000	404,000
Total	28,815,000	10,795,000	18,020,000

Position as at 31 March 2012

* All the Open Spaces are funded from City's Cash (the City's own investment funds) apart from those marked with an asterisk.

Sports facilities

	Ashead Common	Burnham Beeches	Cemetery and Crematorium	City Gardens	Coulston Common	Epping Forest	Farthing Downs & New Hill	Golders Hill Park	Hampstead Heath (inc. extension)	Highgate Wood	Kenley Common	Queen's Park	Riddlesdown	Spring Park	Stoke Common	West Ham Park
Athletics track									◆							
Bowling Green									◆							
Cricket enclosure/square									3	◆						2
Cricket nets									4	2						3
Croquet lawn								2								
Cross-country running	◆				◆	◆	◆		◆		◆					
Cycling	◆	◆	◆		◆	◆	◆		◆		◆		◆	◆	◆	
Fishing						20			6							
Football - five-a-side pitch																3
Football pitch						60			5	2						2
Golf course						◆										
Golf nets								2								
Hockey pitch									◆							
Horseriding	◆	◆			◆	◆	◆		◆		◆		◆	◆	◆	
Model boating									◆							
Netball court				◆												
Orienteering		◆				◆		◆	◆							
Outdoor gym equipment																5
Petanque									◆			◆				
Pitch and putt												◆				
Putting green								◆								
Rounders diamond									6							2
Rugby									2					2		
Softball pitch									◆							
Sports tracks for schools (summer only)									◆	◆		◆				◆
Swimming									4							
Tennis courts								6	10			6				12
Tennis coaching									◆			◆				◆
Trim trail									◆	◆		◆				◆

N.B. A green diamond indicates one facility at a site, unless a greater number is shown.

Site details & visitor facilities

City Commons

Ashtead Common

Site of Special Scientific Interest, National Nature Reserve, 2 Scheduled Monuments, candidate Area of Special Historic Landscape Value, Registered Common Land, Site of Nature Conservation Importance, Green Belt, horse rides. Network of public Rights of Way, information outlet.

Farthing Downs & New Hill

Part Site of Special Scientific Interest, Part Scheduled Monument, Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation, Green Belt. Car park, toilets, horse rides.

Coulsdon Common

Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation, Green Belt. Roadside parking, horse rides.

Kenley Common

Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation, Part Conservation Area, Part Scheduled Monument, Green Belt. Roadside parking, wheelchair-friendly track, horse rides.

Riddlesdown

Site of Special Scientific Interest, Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation, Part Scheduled Monument, Green Belt. Car park, wheelchair-friendly track, bridleways.

Spring Park

Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation, Green Belt, permissive ride beside Addington Road. 2 car parks.

West Wickham Common

Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation, Green Belt. Car park & wheelchair trail.

Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common

Burnham Beeches

Special Area of Conservation, National Nature Reserve. Site of Special Scientific Interest, Public Open Space, three Scheduled Ancient Monuments. Car parking, public & disabled toilets, café, information point, easy access paths for pushchairs / wheelchairs, sensory trail and boardwalks. Electric all-terrain vehicle and audio guide equipment available for free loan. Car free zone providing tarmac roads for cycling, walking and horseriding.

Stoke Common

Site of Special Scientific Interest, Green Belt, Network of public Rights of Way, bench seating. Limited parking available.

Epping Forest

Site of Special Scientific Interest, Special Area of Conservation. Wanstead Park (which is part of Epping Forest) is a Grade II* landscape on English Heritage's register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest. 3 Scheduled Monuments (Loughton Camp, Ambresbury Banks and the Temple). 2 Tree Preservation Orders. 4 Grade II Listed Buildings (Butler's Retreat, a milestone at Gregson's Ride, the Ordnance Survey Obelisk in Chingford, The Temple, The Grotto), a Grade II* listed building (Warren House) and 2 Grade II* landscapes Copped Hall and the Warren House grounds. 6 refreshment facilities, 50 car parks, 3 Visitor Centres (with toilet facilities) located at High Beach, at Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge at Chingford and at the Temple in Wanstead Park. One meeting room at Harrow Road pavilion and numerous fishing lakes.

Hampstead Heath

Metropolitan Open Land, Statutory Obligations set out in the London Reorganisation (Hampstead Heath) Order 1989, several Listed Buildings, Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation. Golders Hill – formal park with ornamental gardens. 2 bandstands, children's zoo, butterfly house, Education Centre, fair sites, children's play areas, 3 car parks, a small parking area specifically for Blue Badge holders is available at Golders Hill Park (not weekends and Bank Holidays), toilets, One O'Clock club, adventure playground, over 30 ponds (including 3 bathing ponds), 2 cafés, Pergola walkway, children's shows, paddling pool, mobility buggy scheme.

Queen's Park

Within Local Conservation Area. Gardens and facilities including 2 children's playgrounds (suitable for all ages to 15 and with specially adapted play items to allow access for all), and a small children's farm. Paddling pool and children's shows in the summer, music on the restored bandstand (which is now a Listed Building), café, toilets.

West Ham Park

Grade II status on the English Heritage register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest. Formal parkland with seven acre ornamental gardens and glasshouses which provide bedding to all of the City's Open Spaces. Changing rooms, children's play area, paddling pool (summer), bandstand, children's shows, picnic area, ice cream van, plant nursery and toilets.

City of London Cemetery and Crematorium

Grade I listed status. Eight Grade II listed buildings. 80 hectares of formal landscaped gardens including: 13 hectare rose garden, woodland burial site; seven miles of accessible road; water points; ample parking; café; florist; visitor reception; waiting rooms; bus service, accessible toilets; onsite funeral reception facilities.

City Gardens

Finsbury Circus Garden and Bunhill Fields Burial Ground are listed in English Heritage's register of Parks & Gardens of Special Historic Interest. Bunhill Fields is a Grade I listed landscape and is also a Site of Borough Importance for Nature Conservation. Several of our 1,300 trees are protected with Tree Preservation Orders and many more lay within Conservation areas. Parts of the ancient City Wall and numerous Scheduled Monuments lay within or adjacent to the City's Open Spaces which include a mixture of 38 gardens and green spaces, 38 Churchyards and burial grounds, 78 areas of highway planting and 43 other sites. Our gardens also house 3 children's play areas.

Highgate Wood

Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation. Toilets, information centre, café, playground.

Open Space contacts

The City of London Corporation is a uniquely diverse organisation, in that it not only promotes and supports the City and provides it with a full range of services, but also provides wider services for London and the nation as a whole. The City of London protects, funds and manages almost 11,000 acres of historic and natural open space, by charitable trust, for public recreation and health.

If you require more information, or have any further comments, please contact the individual site. If you would like to receive this publication in an alternative format, please contact the Open Spaces Directorate.

For general enquiries about the City of London Corporation's Open Spaces, please call: 020 7332 3505



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