

Fairlands Valley Park

Management Plan

2018 – 2023



www.stevenage.gov.uk/about-stevenage/fairlands-valley-park

www.parksherts.co.uk/parks/view/fairlands-valley-park



Fairlands Valley Park

Six Hills Way

Stevenage

Herts

SG2 0BL

Foreword

Fairlands Valley Park is the principal green space in Stevenage. Offering a wide range of fantastic facilities and opportunities, the park is appreciated by the many visitors who use it throughout the year. We are all very proud of the park, and its continued Green Flag status.

However, we take nothing for granted and we continue to relish the challenge of adapting our service offer to ensure that Fairlands Valley Park continues to meet the demands and expectations of our residents and visitors, now and in the future. We have made great strides forward since the previous management plan, but recognise that there is still much to be done.

The ongoing financial constraints that all local authorities face have proved a challenge to our aspirations for the Fairlands Valley Park, but we have found that, in turn, this has assisted in developing our partnership working and community involvement within the Park.

We continue to strive to strengthen existing relationships, and develop new ones, with a range of local, regional and national partners with an interest in the Park. We have an ongoing programme of Green Space Volunteer activity, and more recently the development of Lead Volunteers and Volunteer Wardens operating within the Park.

Everyone involved, in whatever capacity, with Fairlands Valley Park is extremely proud of this wonderful green space, and we are confident that the Park will continue to provide a well-used resource for our community today, and into the future. This management plan sets out our ambitions, and how we intend to achieve them over the next five years.

Craig Miller
Assistant Director – Stevenage Direct Services

Statements for Key Stakeholders

Fairlands Valley Park is at the heart of Stevenage. We treasure its natural beauty and the success of the Park is the result of excellent team work involving not just the Council, but community groups, volunteers, numerous partner organisations and our residents.

We are very proud of Fairlands Valley Park. Not just for the sustained Green Flag Award status, but the way that it brings our community together, be that to make the Park the best that it can be, or to enjoy the excellent range of opportunities that it offers all visitors - wildlife, sports, play, events, or simply some peace and quiet.

By listening to our residents and working together with our partners we are able to provide a wonderful green space that continues to be valued by all. It is heartening to hear our residents telling us how much they enjoy Fairlands Valley Park.

Councillor Sharon Taylor OBE C.C
Leader of the Council

Despite being a new town, and a largely urban environment, we are very fortunate, in Stevenage, to have the benefit of such a great quantity and variety of green spaces and habitats, and Fairlands Valley Park is at the centre of it all. The Park is the green heart to our town.

Working with the Green Space Volunteers and other partners we have had great success in improving the biodiversity of the Park in recent years. We continue in our efforts to make Fairlands Valley Park attractive to people and wildlife.

Councillor John Gardner
Executive Portfolio Holder for Environment & Regeneration

We are immensely proud of Fairlands Valley Park and all that it offers to our residents and visitors. From play areas, high ropes and aqua park, to sailing, fishing and health walks, to trim trail and Park Run there is something for all ages and all abilities. In amongst all this activity there is also plenty of space for a family picnic or to simply sit back and watch the world go by.

Councillor Richard Henry C.C
Executive Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People, Culture, Sport and Leisure

Fairlands Valley Park is a wonderful resource for the whole town, with an incredibly wide range of habitats.

As a Green Space Volunteer it is very satisfying, at the end of an enjoyable session with like-minded people, to be able to see what a difference you have made to the environment, and know that it will be appreciated by the many residents of Stevenage, people, their pets and the wildlife.

Jenny & David Creed
Green Space Volunteers

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1. Introduction

This plan has been prepared to aid the efficient and effective management of the park over the next five years. In particular the plan will serve to:

- Provide one reference point for all key management information relating to the park
- Assist with continuity and capacity planning
- Aid consultation, consensus and involvement
- Help prepare for change
- Offer a framework for decision making
- Assist in setting and maintaining standards
- Support and act as a detailed five year plan of action
- Assist in securing additional internal and external funding.

2. Stevenage Borough Council

2.1 The Organisation

Stevenage Borough Council is undergoing a significant period of change and modernisation in order to ensure that we are able to work more effectively, deliver large scale change and improve community outcomes in response to the continued pressures on local government.

The council's future structure is being designed to be flatter and more adaptable, so that we're equipped to respond quickly to change and growth. Business reviews are being undertaken across the council with the aim of:

- Driving innovation in the way we work, and deliver services.
- Providing customer-focused services
- Making the best use of technology
- Ensuring we have the right people with the right skills
- Delivering collaborative working to support service delivery to our customers
- Working in a stream-lined, efficient way.

2.2 Co-operative Council

In 2011 Stevenage Borough Council formally declared itself a co-operative council and adopted five co-operative principles:

- The council as a strong community leader
- Working together with the community and other agencies to provide services based on needs
- Communities empowered to design and deliver services and play a role in their local community
- A clear understanding between the council and our communities – this is what we do, this is what we will help you to do
- Joined-up and accessible services that offer value for money and focus on the customer.

Our co-operative principles promote and support the long-standing, close working relationships the council has with the town's residents and organisations.

In Stevenage co-operative working is about community designed, community led and community delivered services.

- **Community designed:** we will include genuine input from our communities in the services we deliver.
- **Community led:** services that are led by communities and delivered in partnership with the council.

- **Community delivered:** services that are delivered directly by our communities and citizens, rather than by the council.

2.3 The Council

The Council is made up of 39 elected Members. It meets at least five times a year, including the Annual Council Meeting, each May, when the Mayor is elected and political appointments for the next municipal year are agreed.

2.3.1 The Executive

The Executive comprises of the Leader of the Council and seven Executive Members with responsibility for the specific areas of:

- Environment and Regeneration,
- Resources,
- Children, Young People & Leisure,
- Housing, Health & Older People,
- Economy, Enterprise & Transport,
- Communities, Safer Communities & Equalities, and
- Neighbourhoods & Co-operative Council.

2.4 The Corporate Plan: Future Town, Future Council

In 2015 the Council approved proposals for the 'Future Town, Future Council' (FTFC) programme.

FTFC set out nine key focused programmes that aim to deliver improved outcomes and real change for Stevenage residents. These priorities were informed through our Residents Survey and feedback from engagement activities with our community.

The Corporate Plan outlines the Council's vision and the outcomes and objectives we wish to achieve for the next five years whilst working co-operatively with and for our residents.



3. The Policy Context

Stevenage is different to its neighbouring districts. It is a medium sized town of 87,000 people set in a wealthy, semi-rural county, but unlike most other Hertfordshire districts Stevenage has the kind of needs and problems usually associated with large, urban areas.

As Britain's first new town, Stevenage is one of the outstanding achievements in urban development in post-war Britain. Today Stevenage is still very much an urban environment, but around 24% is green habitat – be that gardens, parks or woodlands. Stevenage benefits from large expanses of public open space and surviving remnants of older habitats and landscape features, such as woodlands and hedgerows.

The challenge continues to be the protection and enhancement of green spaces. The Council has a number of strategic documents that help support this. Those documents that are relevant to this management plan are:

- **Stevenage Biodiversity Action Plan**

Stevenage is the only district in Hertfordshire to have its own Biodiversity Action Plan. This is a detailed plan setting out the areas in Stevenage currently considered to be important for biodiversity and which require protection, together with sites where biodiversity can be improved through habitat creation and linkage.

- **Open Space Strategy**

The strategy is concerned with the use and protection of open space, and sets a framework for the development of planning policy.

- **Green Space Strategy**

This strategy aims to ensure that Stevenage green spaces are not only retained and meet the needs of the whole community, but actively involve our community in their future maintenance and improvement.

- **Communications Strategy**

This provides a framework to help officers ensure that we communicate clearly and consistently. It is designed to work within the relevant legal and statutory requirements.

- **Community Safety Strategy**

This document sets out a series of actions seeking to decrease crime and improving community safety.

4.0 The Historical Context

4.1 Stevenage

Stevenage was the UK's first New Town. In 1946, following the New Town's Act, six new residential neighbourhoods were planned around the old town of Stevenage. Each of these areas was to house up to 12,000 people, and was to include their own church, schools, shops and community facilities.

The first Master Plan for Stevenage was submitted in 1946, and revised in 1949. Clifford Holiday, Chief Architect and Planner for the Development Corporation, wanted to link all neighbourhoods of Stevenage through a public space network to

...form a continuous system rather than a series of isolated grounds and parks. It will be possible to pass on foot from one part of the town to another scarcely using a road by means of gardens, commons, parks and Fairlands Valley.

4.2 Fairlands – The Early Years

It is believed that Fairlands takes its name from the 'Fairlane' which used to run almost due south linking Shephall (to the South) with Pin Green (to the North).

4.2.1 Middle Ages

The earliest known documented reference to the name is found in the Westminster Abbey Survey for 1315, as Fairlane was part of the Abbot's memorial land by this date. It is considered possible that the occupants of the nearby moated homestead site in Whomerley Wood used the valley water meadows for grazing their animals, as the water table would have been much higher then.

4.2.2 Tudor Period

During the Tudor times the Hyde family, of Fayrelane, was farming the land. However, by 1684 the farm was owned by Sir William Lytton of Knebworth, and then consisted of 369 acres of land.

In that year the tenant farmer, William Titmouse, or Tyttmus, died and the lease was transferred to his wife Rebecca and his son William for a rent of £100 per year. An inventory for the farm, dated 28 January 1685, indicates that the Titmouse family was probably one of the wealthiest in Stevenage.

4.2.3 19th Century



The Manor House, Fairlands, later known as Fairlands Farmhouse. By Henry Oldfield, 1804

copyright: Stevenage Museum

In 1812 Elizabeth Nightingall was recorded as being the tenant of Fairlawn Farm, as it was then known.

John and Jemima French were farming at 'Fairland' in 1841. By 1871, the 359 acres at 'Fairland' were being farmed by William and Mary Ann Titmus.

For about 30 years, from 1881, William and Anne Roberts were at Fairlands. They were followed by Rupert Marriott, succeeded by his son, Stanley who, with his wife Sybil, were the last to farm at Fairlands.

4.3 20th Century - The Creation of Fairlands Valley Park

In their 1949 publication, *The New Town of Stevenage*, the Stevenage Development Corporation stated,

"Fairlands Valley, which runs from north to south through the middle of the site, will remain open space".

The intention was for farming to continue at Fairlands Valley. The farm at that time was owned by Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge. The Development Corporation served a compulsory purchase order on it in 1951, but allowed the farmer to remain as a tenant until 1968.

In the 1966 Master Plan, the proposal was for Fairlands Valley to become the town's principal area of recreation, with artificially created lakes as well as green space. Consequently the land was transferred to the Stevenage Urban District Council who carried out the work with initial financial support from the Development Corporation. The major development work in the park was undertaken by Stevenage Borough Council in 1971, with the Official Opening of the Lakes, by Sir Alec Rose, taking place in 1972.

The key work to create the park included the creation of:

- The Main Lake and large dam
- The storm water lagoon (Balancing Pond) and separator tank system
- Two smaller lakes (Boating Lake and Environment Lake) with islands
- The cascades

At the time of landscaping, thousands of trees were planted within the northern section of the park. However shrub planting was kept to a minimum.



1971, Looking West across what was to become the Main Lake
copyright: Stevenage Museum

During the 1990's, the council was able to get the area known as Shackledell grassland under control after it implemented a regular maintenance programme. In the years prior to this it had been left untouched and un-manged for over 20 years.

In 1997, the maze at the entrance to the park from Fairlands way was constructed as an area in which children could play informally and safely.



You can find out more detail about the development of the park in the 20th Century in the Appendices.

4.4 21st Century

During the late 1990's the Council committed to a substantial capital programme of investment in Fairlands Valley Park to ensure that it continued to be the premier open space for Stevenage in the 21st century.

Below is a summary of all the improvements carried out from 2000 to 2012. You can read further details of these in the appendix.

1999 – 2000

To celebrate the new millennium, 2000 trees were planted by school children to create the Millennium Wood.

A further 100 oak trees were also planted along the main footpath through from Southfield car park towards the new woodland, known as The Millennium Avenue.



2000 – 2001

The former Boating Lake was drained and re-lined. New landscaping, viewing platforms and wildfowl ramps were created and the lake was officially re-named the Millennium Lake.

The bridge between the Environment Lake and Millennium Lake was also replaced to improve access.

2004 – 2005

The principal play area located near the paddling pools was extended and additional play equipment was installed to cater for a wider age range.



A larger, more attractive space was also created to the terraced gardens in the café area which greatly improved access and views of the Main Lake.



2006 – 2007

Following an ecological survey and advice from consultants, the Environment Lake was drained, de-silted, and the islands reshaped. The lake was then relined and a boardwalk and viewing platform were installed on one of the islands. This enhanced the natural flow of water, the wildlife habitats and developed educational opportunities.



2008 – 2009

Work was undertaken to carry out vital repairs to the Main Lake. The fish were temporarily moved into the Millennium Lake whilst work was carried out to repair the original liner, replace wave deflector beams and re-join the concrete surround.

The traditional paddling pools that were opened in 1972 were replaced with a new and exciting aquatic playground (Splash Park). Improved facilities were also incorporated including a kiosk and toilets. The sailing centre also underwent a full refurbishment.

2010 – 2011

Formerly undertaken by SLL, the management of the fishing activities on the Main Lake were commissioned to Welwyn Garden City Angling Club (WGCAC) who has significantly helped to improve the angling experience at the park. As a result two floating vegetation islands were installed to provide a refuge for fish and aquatic invertebrates. You can find out more about the partnership between WGCAC and SBC and how this has improved the fishing by heading to section 7.3.

A series of signage improvements were delivered in the park, including replacement of damaged signs and installation of finger pointers.

Shackledell Grassland was extended under the two year Wild Stevenage project in partnership with Herts Middlesex Wildlife Trust. A new hedge and fence were erected to form a boundary.



Volunteers planting the new hedge to protect the extended section of Shackledell.

2012

At Shackledell, improvements were made to link the original part of the grassland to the new extended section. This improved access for both visitors and wildlife.

Within the sailing centre compound a new high ropes facility was constructed.

The smaller play area located next to the café car park was completely replaced with a new adventure trail and some additional play equipment was installed in the principal play area.



The green link between the original & extended areas of Shackledell

4.5 Recent Improvements

4.5.1 2013

Trim Trail

The trim trail within the park benefitted from improvement. Worn or damaged parts were replaced; surfacing was installed beneath the equipment to protect the ground from erosion and wear through usage; new signs were installed to provide users with clearer instruction of how to use the equipment safely.



Bird Feeders

In partnership with the RSPB, bird feeders were introduced to the Millennium Lake island in November. They are intended to enable visitors to the Park to have a closer experience of some of the birds that are found here.

Cycle Route

For the safety of visitors to the park, signage was installed to improve the classification of footpaths, cycle tracks and shared routes.

Aeration

The old air pump, in the Millennium Lake, was replaced in 2013 with a larger and more effective aerating fountain. This has helped to improve the overall water quality in the lake and discourage stagnation during the warmer months. Improved water quality has been beneficial to the flora and fauna living in / around the lake as well as making it a more pleasant experience for visitors.

4.5.2 2014

Shackledell Grassland

In accordance with the Stevenage Biodiversity Action Plan, and in liaison with Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust (HMWT), a programme of works to extend the grassland was started. Green Space Volunteers (GSV's) began clearance of the trees & scrub.

Memorial woodland

A new woodland was planted in the northern section of the park to commemorate the centenary of the start of World War 1.

The Green Space Volunteers applied to the Woodland Trust for trees that will benefit wildlife as they mature – silver birch, blackthorn, hawthorn, rowan, hazel and oaks.

Volunteers, Councillors local representatives of the Royal British Legion, and council officers helped to plant this new acre of Memorial woodland.



This successful partnership working has provided Stevenage with a lasting legacy to those who gave their lives in the Great War.

Northfield

The most northerly entrance to the park is through a short, low valley, and this was becoming overgrown with scrub and vegetation. Early in 2014 GSV's carried out improvements to open up the entrance to make it feel more inviting and welcoming to enter the park.



Before



After

Carp fishing boost

In memory of the late, local, angler Terri Lauezzari, WGCAC raised £3,000 to fund the purchase 2 specimen Mirror Carp – later named Terri and Amy. When they were introduced to the lake Terri weighed 33lb 8oz and Amy 18lb 8oz.

The addition of these two large fish has given a significant boost to angling (particularly for carp) at Fairlands as enthusiasts are keen to prove their skill by attempting to catch Terri or Amy.



4.5.3 2015

Angling protection fencing

Following some previous conflict between various park users and the angling activities, SBC worked in partnership with WGCAC to resolve some of the issues. This involved the enclosure of the southern bank of the Main Lake with stock fencing. This has helped to give anglers protection (i.e. from dogs and visitors damaging their equipment) and in return has provided safety to passers-by from anglers casting their lines.

4.5.4 2016

Establishment of marginal vegetation on the Main Lake

Working in close partnership with WGCAC and the Environment Agency (EA), the Council was able to secure funding, from the EA, for the installation of coir rolls around part of the Main Lake. A section of coir rolls planted with Iris and *Phragmites* were secured in place on the margins of the west bank with protective caging to discourage grazing by waterfowl. Each section of coir was then backfilled with soil to encourage gradual encroachment of the vegetation up the bank.

Marginal vegetation was introduced to help improve the ecosystem of the Main Lake, by providing a suitable habitat for insects, invertebrates, aquatic species and birds. The marginal habitat also helps to provide a refuge for smaller fish. As well as benefits to the wildlife, the visual appeal of the lake was improved as it broke up the sterile concrete banks of the lake.



During installation, gaps were intentionally left between the coir rolls to enable WGCAC to install fishing platforms, or swims. The platforms serve to improve fish health by discouraging 'dragging' of fish onto the bank.

Parks furniture improvements

Over the years the type of bench installed in the park had varied. To bring some uniformity to the Park, a number of new benches and bases were installed in 2016 to replace some of the old style benches. This consistent approach improves the appearance of the Park to users, but also assists in the maintenance and management of the furniture.

4.5.5 2017

Entrance signage improvements

Two additional entrance signs were identified for Fairlands Valley Park. New signs were installed at the entrance near the boat yard and another from the entrance at Chells Way. These new signs provide information about the Park, along with the opportunity to display posters about upcoming events, campaigns and initiatives.



Water rescue cabinets

The prior life rings around the Main Lake became subject of many criticisms relating to safety, as repeatedly the rings were being thrown into the lake. This meant that it was not always possible to guarantee that a life ring would be available for use in an emergency. During icy conditions, SLL staff and 'do-gooders' were putting their lives at risk in order to retrieve them and their usability was also flawed, as they were cumbersome and only one throw could be made to help the person in trouble.

In order to address these growing concerns and issues we undertook research and discussions with Bath City Council (who first trialed the river rescue cabinets on the River Avon), a manufacturer and the emergency services. As a result, the existing life buoys were removed and replaced with two Water Rescue Cabinets.

They work on the same principles as AED units whereby in order to gain access, the 'rescuer' must first dial 999 to retrieve a code to open the unit. Inside each cabinet is a floating buoy attached to a throwline, so the rescuer can attempt as many re-throws as required. Each cabinet also has a flashing light on top so they can be easily identified in at night.



Campshill Bridge renovation

Capital funding was provided to undertake renovation of the large bridge on Campshill Lane. This involved stripping and replacing the old wooden footboards and handrails, repainting the iron work and re-laying a damp proof membrane. New 'poly deck' boards were laid to increase longevity of the bridge.

Main Lake vegetation Phase II

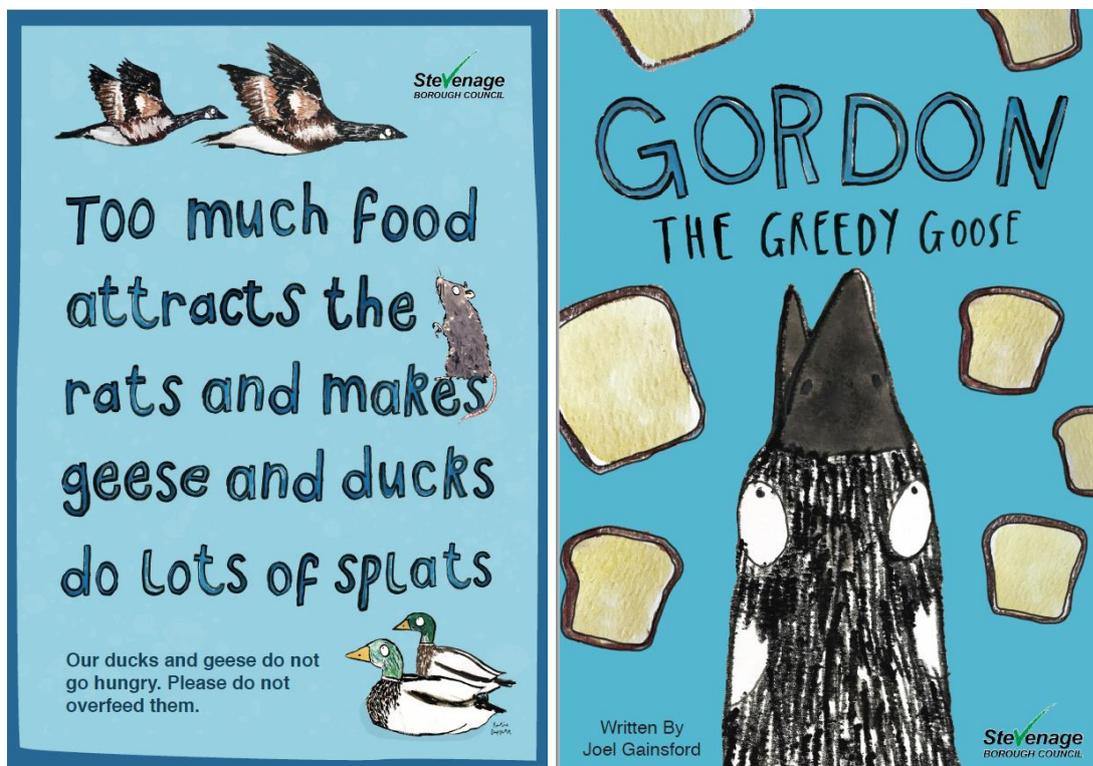
Further funding was provided by the EA to carry out coir roll installation around the Main Lake as in 2016. The funding enabled the entire fishing bank of the Main Lake to be completed. This has also enabled WGCAC to continue their installation of swims between the coir rolls. A gap was left at one point on the bank to enable safe access and egress for dragon boats.

Wildfowl feeding campaign

To address the growing issues and concerns over the amount of goose poo in the park, an innovative campaign was launched in the form of a children's book called 'Gordon the Greedy Goose'. The campaign encompassed many of the issues associated around feeding ducks and geese bread, from poo, angel wing, aggressive behaviour and rats. The book is aimed at educating children and visitors in a fun way of the effects of feeding bread and suggests alternative healthy foods.

As a by-product from this campaign, a fun and colourful poster was also created using the book's illustrations. This was to help address the issues that overfeeding the birds attracts vermin and causes more droppings. The posters were placed into the park's noticeboards and erected at key feeding points.

The book and campaign will continue to be rolled out to various schools and children's groups over the years and has also received international recognition.



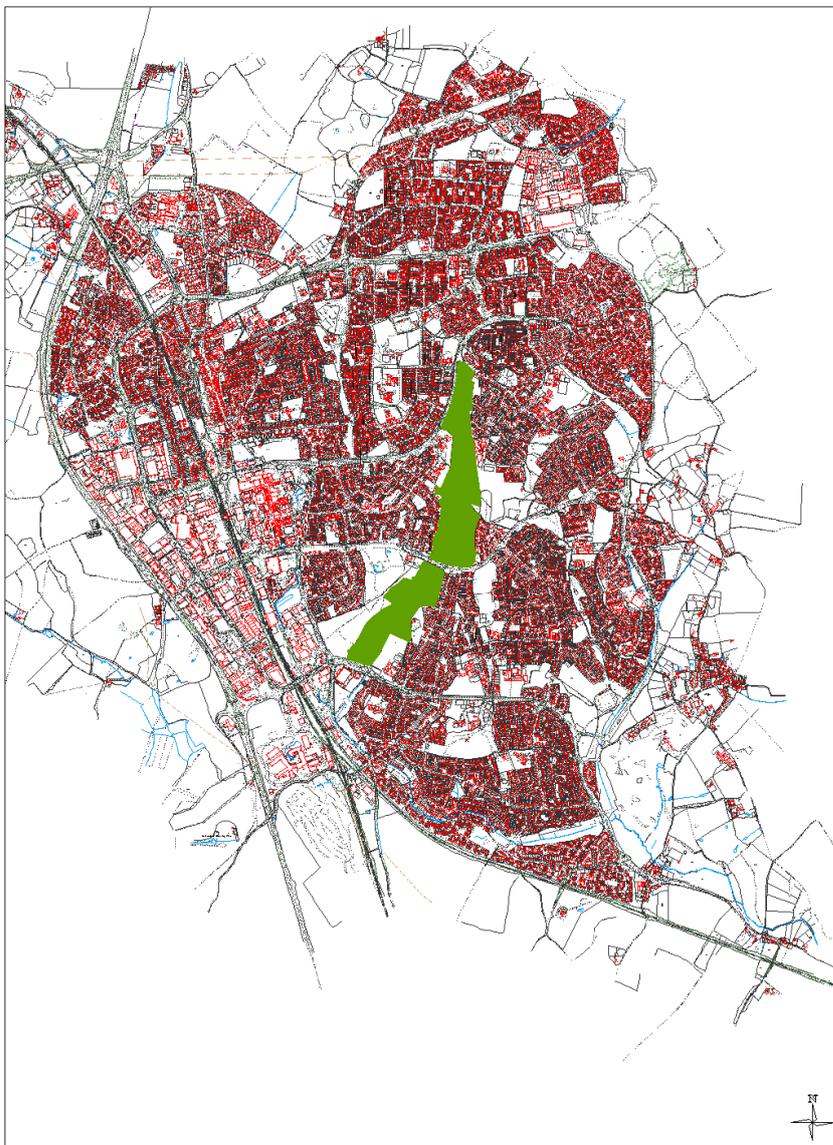
5.0 Site Description

5.1 Location

Grid Reference: TL 253 242

Fairlands Valley Park is situated in the centre of Stevenage, and falls within the Bedwell Ward. It runs from Chells Way, to the north, to Broadhall Way, to the south. Six Hills Way transects the centre of the Park, in an east/west direction. The area shaded green in Figure A indicates the full extent of the Park.

Fairlands Valley Park



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Figure A

The Park is bordered by housing, school sites and woodland.

5.2 Access

There is good access to the whole park for visitors, whether they come on foot, on bicycle, by car, or using public transport – see Figure B. All pedestrian and public vehicular accesses are open 24/7.

Fairlands Valley Park: Accessibility

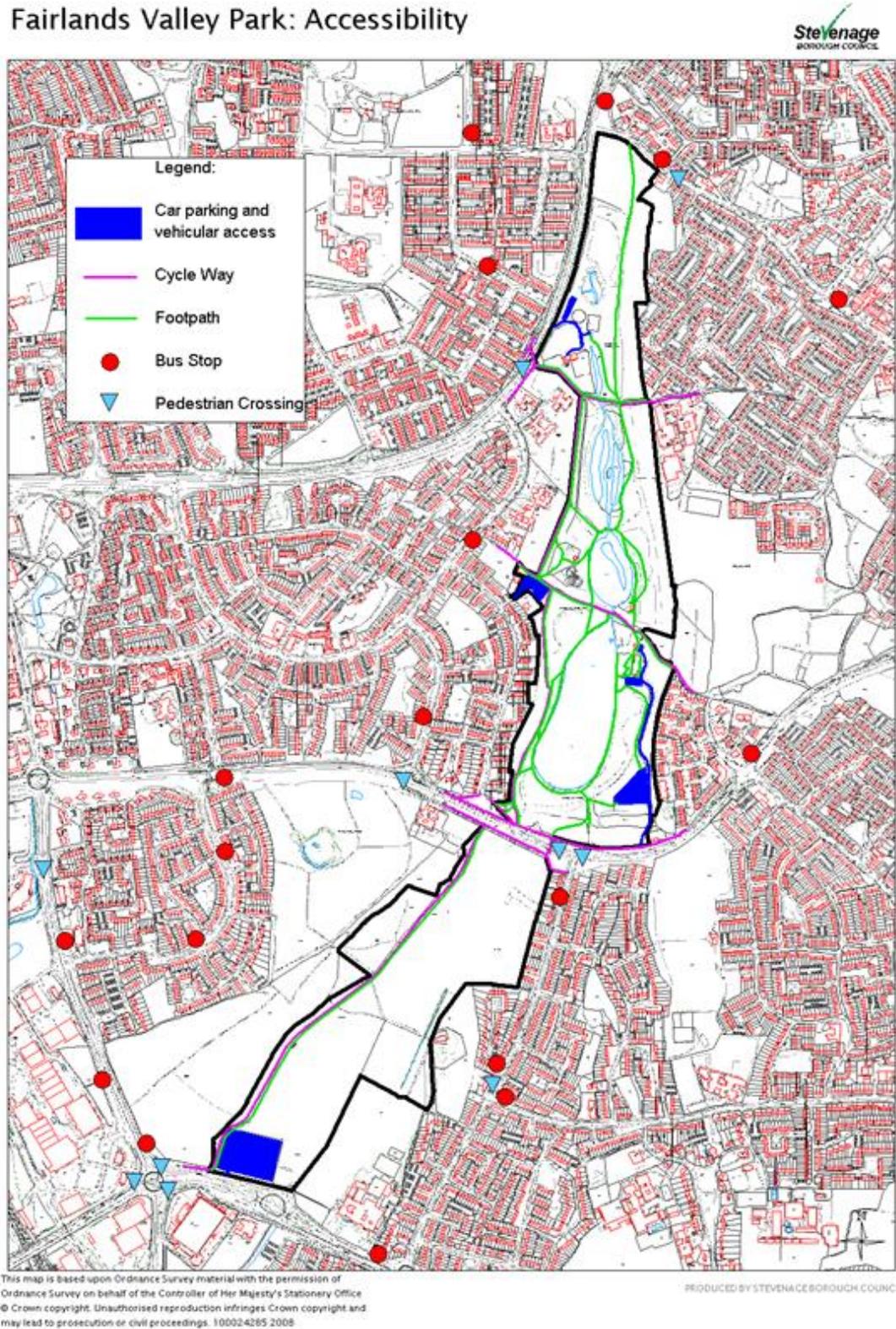


Figure B

Vehicular access is possible from Broadhall Way, Six Hills Way, Shephall View and Fairlands Way, with car parking facilities at all entrances. The vehicle access road, footpath from Shephall View to the sailing Centre and Campshill Lane has street lighting.

Pedestrian access is possible from eleven points around the periphery of the park and there is an excellent network of paths throughout the whole park. There is also good, and safe, pedestrian access for those wishing to take in both the north and south sections of the park via two underpasses in Six Hills Way. In 2013 signage was installed to improve the classification of footpaths, cycletracks and shared routes.

The park benefits from two sections of cycletrack within the northern section, and another that runs the length of the South Field.

There is also a horse and pony route through the whole of the park, most of which runs on the western boundary from South field up to Campshill Lane, where it crosses over to the Eastern side of the park to join Chells way.

5.3 Ownership

The Council is the freehold owner of Fairlands Valley Park.

Stevenage Leisure Ltd currently has a 25 year lease of the Sailing Centre, boat compound, boat house and aqua park from the Council. The existing lease terminates in 2023. The lease is managed through the Council's Leisure section.

There is also a 99 years lease (dated 1st May 1972) granted to the Eastern Electricity Board for the sub-station adjacent to the Sailing Centre.

Fairlands Farmhouse is currently unoccupied and the Council has the property on the market. The Farmhouse, and its future, is managed independently from the rest of the Park.

5.4 Description

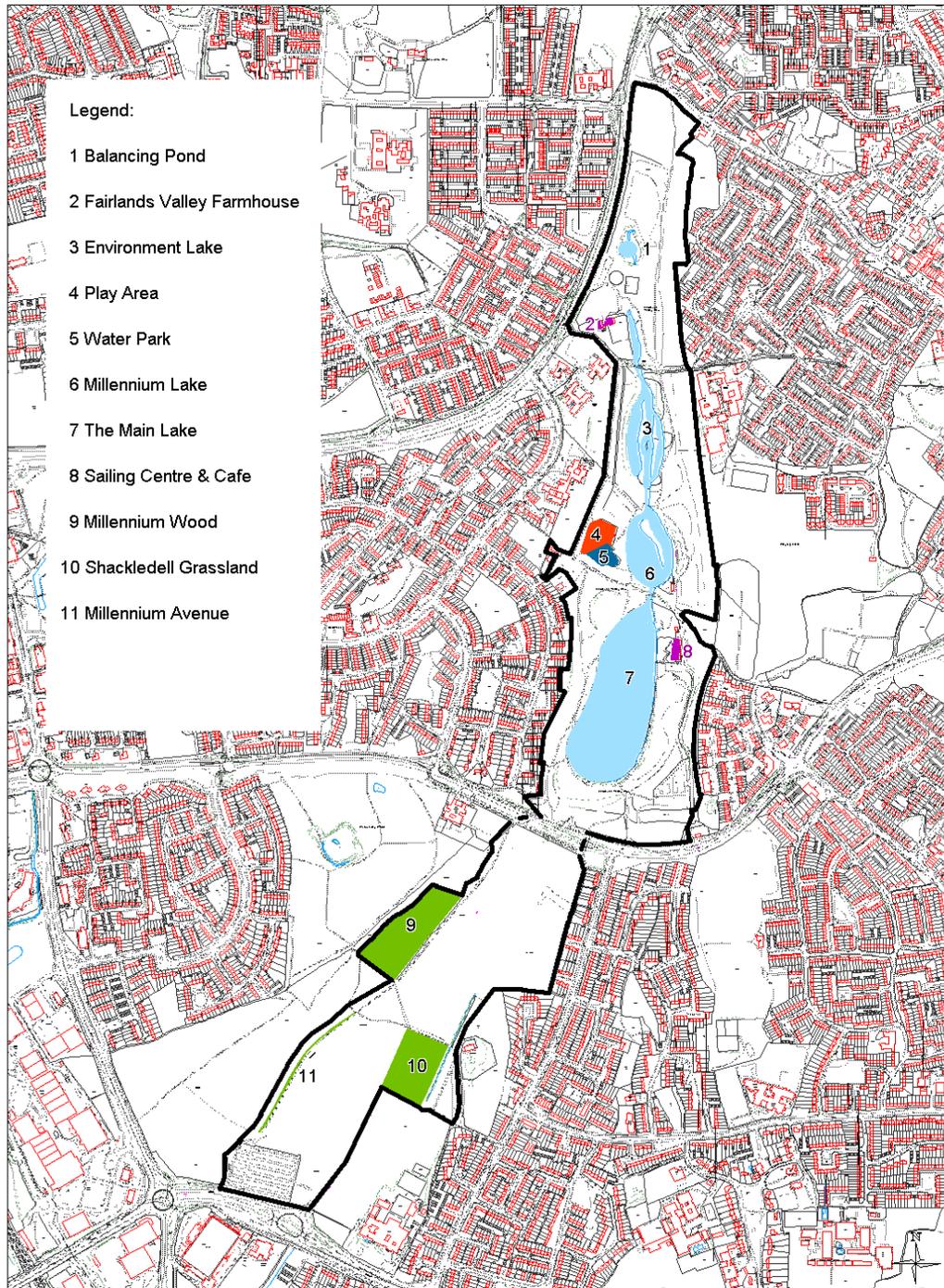
Fairlands Valley Park consists of 120 acres of parkland situated within the heart of Stevenage. Built in the early 1970's the Park has over 20 acres of open water across five linked bodies of water:

- The Balancing Pond
- The Farmhouse Channel
- The Environment Lake
- The Millennium Lake
- The Main Lake



The park also has 2 equipped children’s play areas, water play facility, showground, woodland, grassland, section of town-wide horse & pony route, nature trail, sailing centre and café, orienteering trail and trim track. See Figure C below.

Fairlands Valley Park: Primary Features



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Figure C

5.4.1 Balancing Pond

The Balancing Pond is the first in the chain of the Fairlands Valley Lakes, although there is not a permanent pond/lake here. The pond is fed by water from the storm drain network, and therefore only truly resembles a pond after substantial rainfall.

As the water collects here much of the sediment is deposited before the water is then diverted to the separator tanks. However, during particularly wet weather, water from the storm drains may be diverted directly to the Farmhouse Channel in order to prevent the Balancing Pond from flooding the adjacent residential area.

The Balancing Pond and separator system is regularly inspected and cleared to ensure that risk of flooding is kept to a minimum. The separator tanks are cleaned out annually.

5.4.2 Fairlands Farmhouse

In January 2009 the Farmhouse was registered as a listed building.

Formerly the farmhouse was occupied by the Digswell Arts Trust. The rooms provided workshops for a number of local artists, and the grounds have provided, in the past, an attractive backdrop for some of the larger sculptured pieces.

The Farmhouse is now currently unoccupied and the Council has the property on the market. The Farmhouse, and its future, is managed independently from the rest of the Park and therefore forms no further part of this management plan.

5.4.3 The Farmhouse Channel

This body of water was relined and re-landscaped as part of the larger project to improve the Environment Lake, which it feeds into. This channel has an almost riverine feel and acts as a quiet area for relaxation and contemplation.



5.4.4 Environment Lake

Marginal, native planting, trees and log piles provide attractive habitats suitable for a wide range of wildlife, from wildfowl to raptors, from amphibians to insects, and squirrels to foxes. Relining of the lake allowed us to reshape the islands thus providing secure habitats.

A new boardwalk, constructed from recycled plastic was installed in 2008, and provided a safe opportunity for visitors to be at the heart of this wildlife haven. Local schools, and other interested groups, were encouraged to use this site for educational purposes.

Unfortunately, in 2012 and again 2017 the boardwalk was lost to fires. The Council is now considering a re-design of the enclosed environment lake area.

5.4.5 Children's Play Area

The play area is situated immediately adjacent to the water park, providing varied play opportunities within the site.



Following completion of the improvements, in 2005, the equipped play area now makes provision for all ages from toddlers through to teenagers, and is extremely well used throughout the year.

The play areas are inspected for defects and safety weekly, and independently inspected annually.

5.4.6 Water Park

Since 2009 visitors to the Park are able to enjoy safe, interactive water play, with equipment which sprays, squirts, mists or sheets water, providing fun play for youngsters in a safe and interactive environment.

The site also includes facilities for children and families using this area of the Park, including a refreshment kiosk and public toilets.

5.4.7 Millennium Lake

This lake is used primarily for model boat activities by Stevenage Model Boat Club (SMBC). Following substantial capital investment during 2000/01 the lake also now provides viewing platforms for visitors wishing to watch the boating activities or wanting to be close to the water to feed the wildfowl.



The island to this lake is a breeding area, providing nesting grounds for wildfowl.

The park is the setting, each November, for a free firework display. The fireworks are set off from the island of the Millennium Lake and from the adjacent east bank with attendance to the event of approx. 10,000 - 20,000 people.

5.4.8 Main Lake

The Main Lake is used for a wide range of activities including fishing, sailing, wind surfing, kayaking, power boating, and dragon boat racing.



Local schools use the facilities to provide pupils with alternative sports opportunities. In addition to ad-hoc private use and tuition, the Main Lake also plays host to a number of annual events, including fund raisers.

The water sports are run from the Sailing Centre by Stevenage Leisure Ltd (SLL).

5.4.8 High Ropes

The high ropes facility was introduced to the Park in 2012, and has proved popular ever since. The facility makes provision for low ropes activities as well as the high ropes, and is accessible to all.

5.4.9 Trim Trail

The trim trail is located around the Millennium and Environment Lakes. Each station has clear signage explaining how to use the item, and a guide of how many repetitions to aim for.

It continues to be well used by individuals and clubs, including Fairlands Spartans and the Fire & Rescue Service.

5.4.10 Sailing Centre

The Sailing Centre comprises changing rooms and toilets, a workshop, a class/meeting room, offices, and café. The water sport activities, operating out of the Sailing Centre, are managed by Stevenage Leisure Ltd.

The Centre is recognised by the Royal Yachting Association and the British Canoe Union as a training centre. The fleet consists of Wanderers, Wayfarers, Comet Duos, Oppies, Laser, Laser Picos, Topper Topaz, 420 and windsurfers, all of which are available for training and hire.



Within the Sailing Centre complex there is a café, which is currently leased by SLL to Costello's Café. The Café provides an opportunity for Park visitors to enjoy hot and cold food and drinks, seven days a week throughout the year.

5.4.11 Millennium Wood

Since being planted in November 1999, to commemorate the new millennium, the wood has suffered only limited vandalism, and is now thriving.

The Green Space Volunteers assist with the maintenance and management of the wood.

5.4.12 Shackledell Grassland

This is one of the most important wildlife sites in Stevenage. It is home to six of the county species of cricket and grasshopper, and the only known site in Hertfordshire to the Great Green Bush Cricket (*Tettigonia viridissima*), the UK's largest insect.

Visitors can follow the Grasshopper Nature Trail by following the trail markers that were designed by the pupils at St Nicholas school.



5.4.13 The South Field & Showground

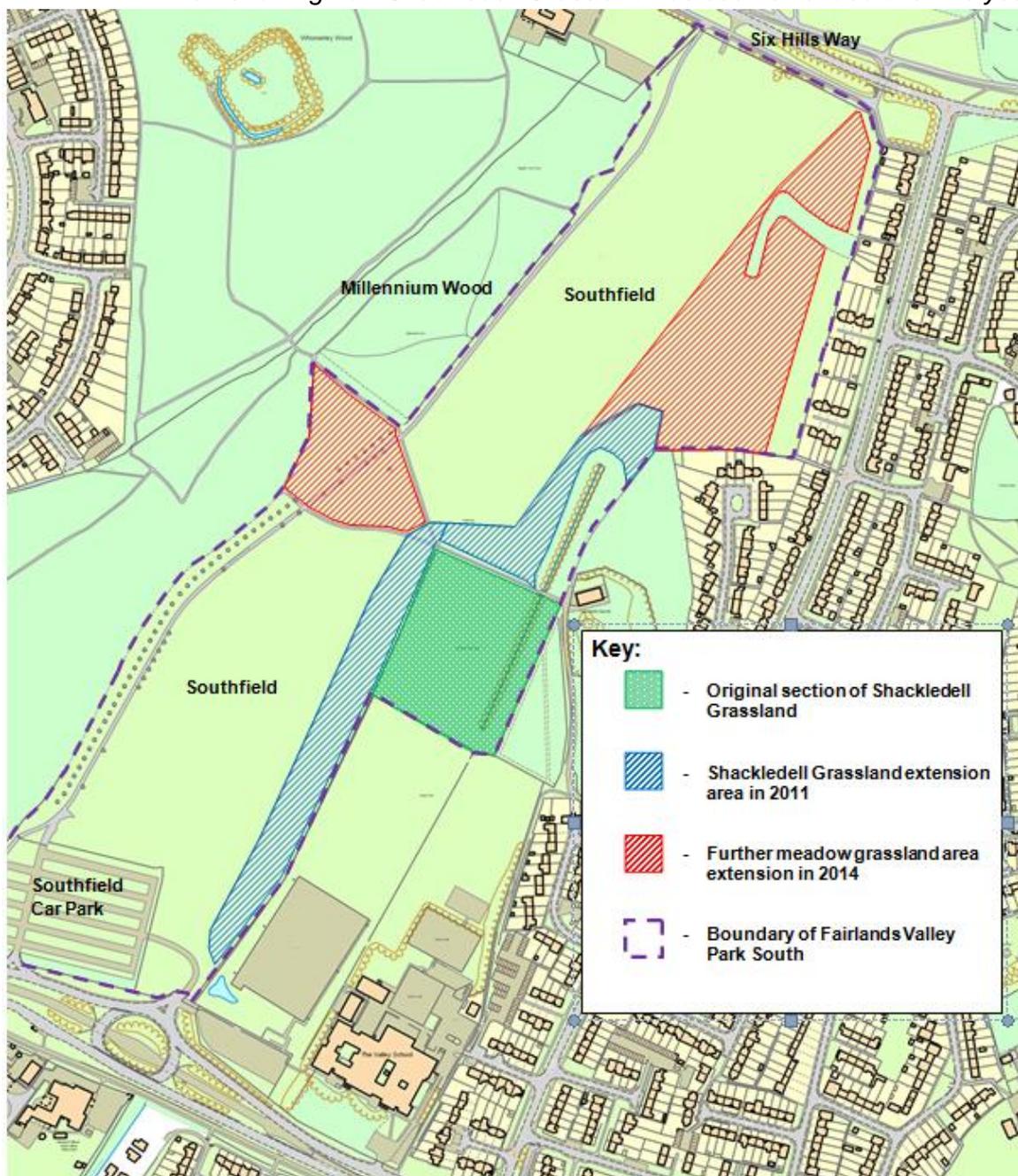
The South Field is the more naturalised area of the Park, providing links to three conservation areas. Shackledell Grassland and the Millennium Wood are situated within the South Field, and Whomerley Wood/Monks Wood runs immediately adjacent to the western boundary of the South Field.



The southernmost part of the South Field is locally referred to as the Showground. The Council holds a Premises Licence (see Appendix) that enables a range of events throughout the Park. The larger events such as circuses, fairs, horse shows, and motor shows, take place in the each year.

In 2014 the whole of the Eastern gradient to the north of Shackledell was left to develop into a wildflower meadow. As well as increasing biodiversity, this area is designed to act as a further extension to Shackledell and promote pollinators.

Plan showing how Shackledell Grassland has been extended over the years



6.0 Community

6.1 Current Use

It is estimated that there are over 250,000 visits to Fairlands Valley Park each year.

We broadly know that the park serves a number of functions, meeting the needs of various local groups within the community including: young people, parents with children, older people, residents, dog walkers, sports clubs, the fire brigade and local/national charities.

The top five reasons listed, in the Customer Satisfaction Survey (to December 2013), for visiting Fairlands Valley Park are:

- For a walk
- To enjoy the green space
- To relax
- To get some fresh air
- Picnic

6.2 Fairlands Valley Park User Groups

Stevenage Borough Council prides itself on the good relations it has with the various park user groups.

Due to the popularity of the park and concerns about the management of a huge 'Friends' group, representatives from the organisations who have a regular role in the park were invited to come together in October 2010. As a result the 'Fairlands Valley Park User Group' was created. The group consisted of representatives from:

- Welwyn Garden City Angling Club
- Stevenage Leisure Ltd
- Stevenage Model Boat Club
- The Police
- Stevenage Dogwatch
- Health Walk Volunteers

At first the Group identified that work was required to help promote the park, and the facilities / opportunities that it provides, to Stevenage residents. Subsequently, a leaflet with information about the park was produced and the User Group organised the annual Open Day events.

It was hoped that the group would collaboratively help inform the way that Fairlands Valley Park was managed and developed in the future – helping to make the park an even better place for people to visit and enjoy. However, the group wanted to focus their attention on the promotion of the park. As a result, a parks leaflet was produced and an annual open day held.

The annual Open Days were a great success, and some of the member groups saw increased membership as a result. However, after six years, and with the loss of key representatives, interest in the formal meetings, and the Open Day had waned

Despite this, the close partnership between the user groups has remained, albeit less formally. The Council attends regular meetings with SLL and Welwyn Garden City Angling Club, along with ad hoc meetings and communication with the other interested user groups. Many of the user groups now deliver events of their own annually with support from SBC and SLL.

6.3 Green Space Volunteers

These volunteers work alongside the Council to undertake works to a range of green spaces throughout the town. Most activities take place at the weekend. There are currently around 60 volunteers who take part in activities during the year.

In 2017 the Green Space volunteers gave over 180 hours to Fairlands Valley Park. Their involvement over the past few years has included:

- Assisting in the on-going management of Shackledell Grassland
- Acting as wardens for Shackledell Grassland
- Assisting with habitat works and management to the Environment Lake
- Marginal vegetation management
- Installing bank erosion control systems
- Working with the Council and partners in the delivery of community events and activities
- Wildlife surveys



There continues to be an exceptionally positive relationship between the Council and the Green Space Volunteers. The Council fully acknowledges and appreciates the great benefits that both parties provide to each other and continues to commit each year to developing a programme of volunteering opportunities in the park.

Every year the Council organises a Green Flag BBQ event. The event is held at the sailing centre and acts as a celebration and thank you for the continued work and efforts all the individuals or groups involved in making Fairlands Valley Park a green space of fantastic quality.



6.3.1 Lead Volunteers

All Green Space Volunteer activity had had to be supervised by a Council officer. However, in response to the growing demand for volunteering opportunities, both mid-week and at weekends, officers were able to gain approval, from the Council's insurers, that appropriately trained and supported volunteers could lead activities independently. In early 2015 Green Space Volunteers were invited to apply to become Lead Volunteers. Lead

Training for the first Lead Volunteers was delivered during summer 2015, and included:

- Emergency First Aid
- Manual Handling and Back Care
- Needle sticks
- Leading Volunteers

The Lead Volunteers liaise closely with Council officers to agree the scope and extent of works that may be undertaken without direct Council supervision. The works undertaken are monitored by Council officers to ensure adequate standards of work are being maintained, and that the site continues to be safe for use by the general public.

To date we have trained six people as Lead Volunteers. They help to deliver activities independently and also provide additional support and supervision to Council officer run sessions in the park.

6.3.2 Community Events

Each year the Council commits to organising and assisting with the delivery of a range of events throughout the principle parks in Stevenage. Events are generally delivered during school holidays, with the help and support of the Green Space Volunteers, and often with other volunteer organisations.

The events help promote the park and also provide the opportunity to educate children and visitors.

Past community events in Fairlands Valley Park have included: 'Love Food Roadshow', 'Give Nature a Home', 'Make some Music' and 'Spring into Nature'. Some example event posters can be found in the appendices.



6.4 Customer Satisfaction

Prior to 2013 the Council had used GreenSTAT to gather user feedback about the Park. This survey was very comprehensive, but few people were willing to spend the time to complete the lengthy questionnaire.

In an attempt to seek meaningful feedback the council developed its own, shorter, customer satisfaction survey (see appendices). Initially the survey was well used and feedback indicated that:

96% of visitors rate the ease of getting around the park as good or excellent
79% rate the cleanliness of the park as good or excellent,
82% rate the wildlife as good or excellent,
68% of visitors rate the play area as being good or excellent
72% rate the events and activities as good or excellent
93% thought the overall impression of the park was good or excellent,

However, in recent years the response rate has not been sufficient to provide any meaningful data. The council wants to encourage feedback from its park visitors to help inform the performance, future developments and priorities for Fairlands Valley Park.

Therefore during 2018 we will be reviewing and improving the satisfaction survey once more.

7.0 Management & Maintenance

SLL currently manage the water sport activities, parks events, aqua park, high ropes and extreme sports within Fairlands Valley Park.

The fishery management within the park is managed by Welwyn Garden City Angling Club on behalf of, and in partnership with, Stevenage Borough Council.

With the exception of these activities the park is currently managed and maintained by Stevenage Borough Council. Management of all public parks and open spaces, within Stevenage, is undertaken by Stevenage Direct Services (SDS).

7.1 Stevenage Leisure Limited (SLL)

SLL was established on 1st March 1998, as a private company, limited by guarantee. The Council granted a 25 year lease for SLL to operate four of the Council's leisure facilities, including functions within Fairlands Valley Park.

The Council provides a grant to SLL to operate these facilities, under a contract which will conclude in 2023. The contract is managed by Council Leisure officers.

Uniformed SLL staff are on site five days a week (Tuesday – Saturday). This changes to seven days a week during the school summer holidays. As such this provides an information point and first aid facilities to all park visitors.

Their core activities within Fairlands Valley Park relate to the:

- Provision and teaching of water sports
- Provision and teaching of dry sports, including high ropes, mountain bikes and kiting
- Management of the Sailing Centre
- Management of the lease with Costello's Café
- Management of the aqua park.

Monthly liaison meetings take place, at park management level, between the Council's Environmental Performance and Development Team, Leisure officers and SLL. As appropriate other colleagues join these meetings to discuss park issues relating to their areas of operation – Sports Development Officer, Licensing Officer, operations managers, Welwyn Garden City Angling Club and Environmental Health.

Working closely with Hertfordshire County Council colleagues, in both youth and school sports development, a large part of the ongoing, and future business, is dependent on close liaison with the Stevenage Sporting Futures Team and Hertfordshire School Sailing and Canoeing Association.

7.2 Stevenage Borough Council

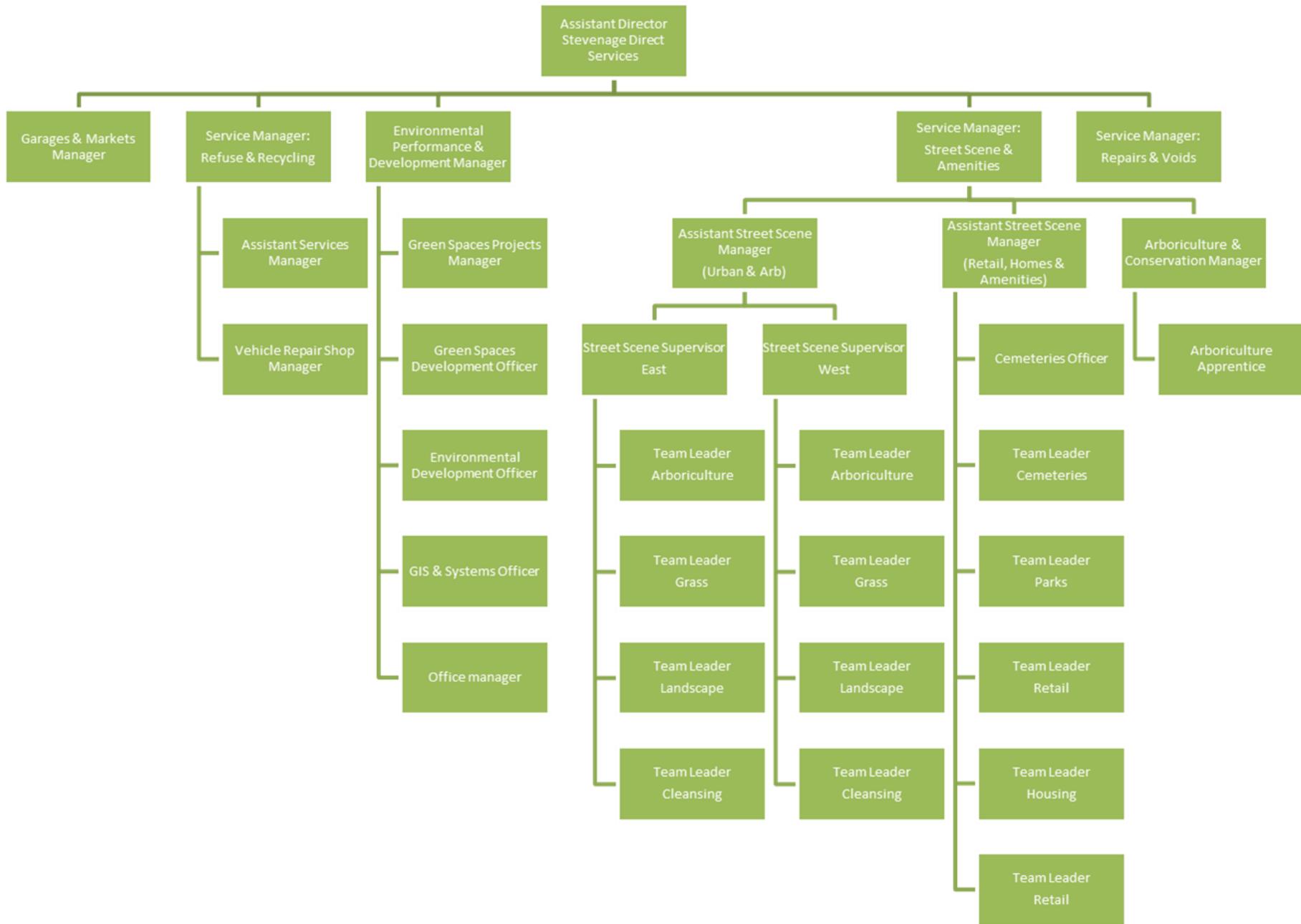
The Council's Leisure team manage the contract with SLL.

Stevenage Direct Services (SDS) comprises of a number of teams delivering both operational and developmental works within the environment – see next page for a structure chart.

With the exception of weed control, all grounds maintenance and cleansing activities are carried out by the in-house Street Scene & Amenities team. A summary and table of maintenance operations for the park can be found in the Appendices.

Within the Park the Environmental Performance and Development team are responsible for developing environmental strategy/policy, delivering improvement projects, promotion of facilities, and developing community engagement through volunteering, events and activities.





7.3 Welwyn Garden City Angling Club

Prior to 2010, SLL were responsible for the management of fishing activity at Fairlands Valley Park whom were required to simply sell day tickets. The Council received growing complaints about:

- Night fishing
- Fishing litter
- Unauthorised fishing
- Lack of enforcement for the purchase of day tickets
- No proper bailiffing
- Continuation of the closed season (March – June)

In response to feedback, the Council sought to improve the management of fishing activity to the Main Lake by contracting the works to a third, and specialist, party. Following a tendering process, Welwyn Garden City Angling Club (WGCAC) was appointed to work in partnership with the Council.

The club provides:

- Bailiffing (day and night),
- enforcement with the Environment Agency
- A programme of matches and tuition
- Regular inspections to the other lakes to deter unauthorised fishing elsewhere in the park
- A presence in the park at night, which in turn has helped to reduce anti-social behaviour.
- Advice on stocking levels



Working in partnership with WGCAC has vastly helped to improve the fishing experience for people wanting to fish at Fairlands Valley Park, and significantly reduced the number of complaints relating to fishing. The club are proactive, and SBC are currently working with them to:

- Assess and carryout improvements to the swims
- Assess the vegetation establishment to the Main lake
- Undertake restocking of the fish levels
- Improve publicity and promotion of the fishing at Fairlands Valley Park
- Encourage more competition and matches
- Educate anglers around responsible fishing
- Provide angling tuition and advice
- Monitor Canada goose populations
- Investigate expansion of the fishable waters in the park.

7.4 Sustainable Management

7.4.1 Compost

Each year the Councils' grounds maintenance teams produce in excess of 1000m³ of green waste. This waste is primarily generated through pruning operations to shrub beds and hedges in residential areas, parks and open spaces, cemeteries and allotments, but also includes annual plants from the seasonal bedding displays.

In 2000 Stevenage Direct Services constructed a purpose built compost-holding area. Since then all the green waste is shredded and composted at the Shephalbury Park Nursery site.

The compost produced is:

- distributed to the allotment sites throughout Stevenage, where it is a highly prized commodity
- used as a soil conditioner throughout the town.

7.4.2 Mulch and Wood Chippings

All cord wood and small branches are chipped on site, to allow for easier transport, and transported to the main operational depot, where they are currently stored.

The resulting woodchip is used in a number of ways:

- Mulching of shrub beds in parks and residential areas
- Surfacing of woodland paths
- Biofuel

7.4.3 Horticultural Management

All the planting, within Fairlands Valley Park, is perennial, there is no annual planting in the park. The use of permanent planting removes the need for regular watering, which is more sustainable. The Council endeavour to source plant stock from nurseries who are committed to operating and working in a manner that protects the environment.

During past improvement works to the Environment Lake, all material from the clearance of the islands was chipped on site and used as a mulch. Larger sections of wood, from the thinning of trees, was retained on site and stacked for habitat creation.

7.4.4 Energy Efficiency

During the refurbishment carried out to the Sailing Centre and Café, in 2008, the following measures were designed into the scheme:

- A new boiler installed complete with new controls which allow the building to be operated more efficiently.
- New heating system fitted with local control in the form of room thermostats and thermostatic radiator valves to allow individual control to each area.
- Gas fired water heater has been installed, to replace the old cylinders, which is a more energy efficient way of heating the hot water.

- New showers are push button time controlled to prevent water being wasted
- Ventilation has local pir / humidistat control to ensure fans only operate when required.
- All windows are double glazed.
- Insulation to the plumbing / heating pipe work.
- Luminaires specified with high frequency control gear, t5 / compact fluorescent lamps and switching with Passive Infra-Red (PIR).
- Emergency lights with auto test, so no manual testing required.
- Smart office lights - with PIR, and day light, control.

7.4.5 Pesticide Use

Herbicide application is limited to three occasions per annum, by direct application to emergent weed growth.

Non-chemical, best horticultural practice is employed to control any occurrences of plant pest and disease, and weed growth within planted areas.

The Council's Environmental Health Officers are responsible for control of rats in the Park. Contractors under their instruction currently use poison in bait boxes. They are governed by the Control of Pesticides Regulations 1986 and the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949. Owl boxes are installed to suitable locations. If successful in attracting Tawney owls, these birds may provide a non-chemical solution to controlling rat numbers within the Park.

Following the advice of maintenance colleagues, an area of self-set invasive trees was felled and the stumps treated with EcoPlugs during the winter of 2016. Application was undertaken by drilling holes into the cambium (growth) layer and inserting the plugs. The use of the plugs means that pesticide is applied directly to the stumps very little / no risk of affecting the aquatic environment or other plant species. The resulting low level of emergence the following year meant that the EcoPlugs were also very effective.

7.4.6 Canada Geese and Wildfowl

In recent years there has been a significant increase in the number of Canada Geese in the park. Some are resident, but 50+ geese regularly fly into the park each day from roosting areas outside of Stevenage.

The growing number of geese has led to a significant increase in the amount of goose faeces on the paths around the lakes, which has caused maintenance difficulties and led to complaints from the public.

The Council have trialled a variety of non-lethal methods to try and control numbers. Annually during the



nesting season, the eggs of the resident geese are treated by coating them in a mineral oil which prevents the embryo from developing. This is an extremely effective, non-lethal and humane method of controlling the numbers of resident geese in the park.

In 2017 an innovative approach to dealing with the issues surrounding wildfowl was launched in the form of a children's book. You can find out more information about the book in section 4.5.5. The book will act as a platform for a longer term educational campaign regarding feeding the ducks and geese in the park.

7.4.7 Blue Green Algae

Algae occurs naturally in in-land waters and when conditions are right, algal blooms can appear. Blue Green algae can produce toxins which can have adverse effects on wild animals, pets and people. SBC continues to work closely with the Environment Agency, SLL and the parks user groups to help monitor the algae in the lakes.

Former blooms that have occurred in the lakes have been treated using ecologically friendly treatments that starve the algae of the essential nutrients required to grow. Shading agents can also be applied to the water to deter onset algal blooms.

7.4.8 Ethical Purchases & Practices

Stevenage Borough Council has a policy of purchasing sustainable goods and services such as:

- Products made of recycled materials – the former boardwalk and bank revetments of the Environment Lake are composed of recycled plastics.
- Product from renewable sources – Fairlands Valley Park Millennium (Dutch) bridge
- Longer lasting products – the Park is furnished with seating constructed from stainless steel.
- Products that need less upkeep – The Park furniture is powder coated or stainless steel so that it does not require painting.
- Chemicals that are less harmful to the environment – see 7.4.5 Pesticide Use.

7.5 Biodiversity & Conservation

7.5.1 Stevenage Biodiversity Action Plan

Stevenage is the only district in Hertfordshire to have its own biodiversity action plan. In 2016 Herts Middlesex Wildlife Trust were commissioned to review the previous Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP). A copy of the BAP (2017-2022) can be found by following this link:

www.stevenage.gov.uk/content/15953/24701/24704/Biodiversity-Action-Plan-2017-2022.pdf

Due to the size and nature of Fairlands Valley Park there are numerous habitat actions that relate to the Park, including those for the lakes, grasslands, hedgerows and surrounding woodlands. A large number of these actions are supported and implemented with the help of the Green Space Volunteer programme.

7.5.2 Education & Interpretation

Of paramount importance to the success of biodiversity and conservation, is educating parks visitors and users. Through the use of various communication tools, the Council is dedicated to providing useful and interesting information about the wildlife and conservation in Fairlands Valley Park.

Community events provide a great platform to engage children and local residents to make them aware of wildlife conservation and environmental issues. Other platforms of interpretation and education are through the use of the park's notice boards, signage and interpretation panels. The Council's Design and Print Team are able to design colourful and attractive posters, signs, notices etc. to display in the park. Further support can also be provided by the use of the Council's website and social media pages.

7.5.3 Conservation & Partnerships

Stevenage Borough Council has a strong network of partners and local conservation groups that provide advice on managing Fairlands for improving the flora and fauna. Recently the Council has worked with:

- **Butterfly Conservation** – each year some of the Green Space Volunteers participate in butterfly surveys at Shackledell. The council commissions Butterfly Conservation to provide training on how to carry out the survey. The results each year are forwarded to Butterfly Conservation to help inform their local, regional and national monitoring.
- **Herts Middlesex Wildlife Trust (HMWT)** – HMWT are the Council's primary partner for advice on conservation and habitat management in the park. In the past, we have worked in partnership with HMWT in the delivery of a two year Wild Stevenage project. Within Fairlands Valley Park this project delivered improvements to interpretation at Shackledell Grassland, the extension to this important wildlife site and the grasshopper nature trail.
- **Environment Agency (EA)** – provide the Council with advice on fisheries management, the lakes and the aquatic ecosystems. The EA provided funding to help establish marginal vegetation on the Main Lake. The EA also assists in local wildlife and habitat improvement schemes such as Stevenage Brook, which is linked to Fairlands.
- **Welwyn Garden City Angling Club (WGCAC)** – As well as promoting safe and responsible angling, WGCAC also provide the Council with advice on management of the waters for fishing, and assist with the monitoring of Canada geese in the Park.
- **Green Space Volunteers (GSV's)** – the volunteers undertake a wide range of habitat management activities in the Park. In the past volunteers have helped to install bird boxes, carryout surveys, act as wardens, carryout vegetation management and much more. You can find out more about the GSV's in section 6.3.
- **Local Bird Recorders & Enthusiasts** – within Fairlands Valley Park are a number of birding enthusiasts who frequently visit the park. One of these enthusiasts provides the Council with regular feedback and records of birds that are spotted in

the park and provides advice. Recent and past sightings can be found by visiting twitter account <https://twitter.com/fairlandsbirds> (not a council monitored account).

- **Herts Middlesex Bat Group** – each year we work in partnership with the Herts and Middlesex Bat Group to provide guided bat walks around Fairlands Valley Park. The walks are extremely popular with residents of all ages, and many attend year after year. These walks help to highlight the extent of wildlife in Stevenage (a largely urban environment) if people know when and where to look for it. The bat group has also attended community events to educate children and visitors about bats.

8.0 Marketing

Communications is at the centre of everything we do. Through successful communication, we are able to deliver the services that are important to our residents, and develop good working relationships with many of our partners in the public, voluntary and private sectors.

SBC Corporate Communications Strategy

8.1 Customer Satisfaction Surveys

As per section 6.4, the Council continues to pursue meaningful feedback from its park visitors to help inform the performance, future developments and priorities for Fairlands Valley Park. A review of the survey is planned to be undertaken in 2018 as a tool for public consultation.

Copies of the survey shall be available from the Sailing Centre, the Council's Customer Service Centre, and also available on line. The surveys may also be promoted through the Council's magazine, Chronicle.

Findings from the reviewed survey may help show if there is a shortfall in the marketing and signage of the park and where improvements can be made.

8.2 Web Pages & Social Media

The Council's website for the park provides information on:

- The history of the park
- Events and activities
- Feeding the ducks and geese
- Contact details
- Reporting form
- Links to Green Space Volunteer pages

The website additionally includes links to the fishing and WGCAC website, SLL and the satisfaction survey. A copy of this management plan is also available on the Council's website.

Social media plays an important part in communicating relevant messages and promotion of the park. The Council has two main social media pages on Facebook and Twitter. Social media also provides a platform for people to raise concerns or issues that they may have found in the park. One safety notice put up on Facebook regarding the park attracted 33 comments, 24 likes and 266 shares – this highlights the usefulness of social media in communicating messages to potential park visitors.

Both the Councils web pages and social media are managed and monitored by the Communications Team.

The Action Plan identifies the need to regularly review and improve the provision of information relating to the park.

8.3 ParksHerts Web Application

ParksHerts is an innovative, mobile-first website application acting as a single information point for over a hundred of Hertfordshire's parks and green spaces, irrespective of administrative ownership.

It provides a way for people to discover and enjoy sites they know and those that they haven't yet discovered.



Funding for the project was secured from Hertfordshire County Council Public Health, all ten Hertfordshire District/Borough Councils and one Parish Council.

Hertsmere Borough Council led the project on behalf of the partnering authorities and SBC received training from Hertsmere officers in 2017 on its use and how to update and add information onto the application.

With help from Hertsmere, SBC now holds information about 11 of its parks on the ParksHerts application including Fairlands Valley Park. A screenshot of the landing page for Fairlands can be found in the appendix. The Environmental Performance and Development Team are responsible for keeping the information about the park up-to-date through the simple back office administration system. The application also shows useful visiting information which may be used to assist future management decisions for the park.

The ParksHerts project is a clear demonstration of successful cross-county working to provide a great tool to encourage and promote park use.

<http://www.parksherts.co.uk/parks/view/fairlands-valley-park/>

8.4 Event Promotion

The Council, SLL and WGCAC work together to ensure that all events and activities are promoted as widely as possible within the local community. A range of opportunities are available for promotion of events, including:

- Notice boards
- Social media: the Council uses Facebook and Twitter to keep residents advised
- Chronicle: a free Council magazine delivered to every household in Stevenage five times a year
- Local press: provide coverage of community events and activities
- Banners and flyers
- ParksHerts events page
- Local radio
- Watch This Space: an in-house SLL magazine circulated to all SLL employees
- Link: an in-house Council magazine circulated to all Council employees

- School Holiday leaflet: the Council produces a leaflet, ahead of each school holiday, that is distributed to every school child in Stevenage, which promotes all family events and activities delivered by the Council for that period.

8.5 Signage

Brown and white tourist attraction signage provides directions to the park from the major routes in Stevenage.

The two entrances to the park from Six Hills Way and Fairlands Way have large prominent signage to clearly signify the entrance to the park from the road. Also at the main entrance from Six Hills Way are flag poles which display the Green Flag Award, and Royal Yachting Association etc.

There is a prominent suite of signage at each entrance to the park via the footpaths / cycle paths, and at the entrances to key features within the park. Each sign has a map and summary of the park, regulations (dos and don'ts) as well as notice boards in which to display relevant posters and information notices. There is also a collection of notice boards on the wall of the sailing centre building. Notice board information is reviewed frequently by SBC and SLL to ensure the information is up-to-date, relevant and interesting to visitors.

We also make use of interchangeable banner signage to our notice boards. Throughout the year these inform visitors that Fairlands Valley Park is a Green Flag site, but we also use them to make visitors aware of the danger of thin ice on the lakes during the winter.



Finger post directional signage is also provided at key points to help visitors find their way around the park. This is also complimented by bollard signage identifying cycle tracks, footpaths and shared routes.

Within the original Shackledell grassland unit is an interpretation board that provides information about the site and grasshoppers. You can also find a series of way-markers to designate the grasshopper trail.

9.0 The Action Plan

The Green Space Strategy 2010-2020, published by Stevenage Borough Council, sets out the following vision for parks and gardens:

A welcoming, clean, safe and well-maintained open space providing a wide and varied range of organised and informal leisure, recreational and enriched play opportunities and events for people of all ages and abilities to enjoy.

Stevenage recognises that improvements to its green spaces, and the engagement of local people, can have significant benefits to health and education, can reduce crime, and increase pride.

9.1 Aims & Objectives

The community and professional consultation, undertaken to date, has identified a number of detailed aims and objectives for Fairlands Valley Park. For the purpose of this management plan these have been grouped together as follows:

9.1.1 A Welcoming Place

Fairlands Valley Park already provides an extensive range of opportunities for visitors. However, through structured improvements, as set out in the action plan, the park will continue to develop and evolve to ensure that it continues to be an inviting place for all sectors of the community.

9.1.2 Healthy, Safe & Secure

Stevenage recognises the importance, and benefits, of working closely in partnership with all sectors of the community, including providing opportunities for those who might otherwise feel excluded from community activities.

9.1.3 Well Maintained & Green

Stevenage Borough Council is committed to providing cleaner, safer and greener spaces, and as such is dedicated to ensuring that Fairlands Valley Park continues to provide high quality facilities for future generations

9.1.4 Sustainability

Stevenage Borough Council is fully committed to improving the way in which it operates its services within Fairlands Valley Park, and other sites.

9.1.5 Conservation & Heritage

Despite being a little over 40 years old, Fairlands Valley Park provides a wide variety of habitats, which are strengthened by the neighbouring ancient woodlands. There is a desire to educate through the use of interpretation boards at appropriate locations throughout the park.

9.1.6 Community Involvement

Stevenage recognises the importance, and benefits, of working closely in partnership with all sectors of the community, including providing opportunities for those who might otherwise feel excluded from community activities.

9.1.7 Marketing

Fairlands Valley Park is well visited by local residents and visitors from further afield. Stevenage Borough Council, working with its partners, recognise the importance of promoting the park, its facilities, and the opportunities that exist for all sectors of the community.

9.2 Finance

The Council ensures that good standards of maintenance and provision can be achieved through adequate revenue funding for day to day activities.

Officers seek capital and/or external funding, for specific improvement projects as the need, and opportunity, arises.

9.3 The Five Year Action Plan

The Action Plan sets out to deliver the Aims and Objectives identified through consultation to date.

Each action is linked to at least one of the following aims:

1. A Welcoming Place
2. Healthy, Safe and Secure
3. Well Maintained and Green
4. Sustainability
5. Conservation and Heritage
6. Community Involvement
7. Marketing
8. Management

KEY

EPDM	Environmental Performance and Development Manager
GSDO	Green Spaces Development Officer
GSPM	Green Spaces Project Manager
ACM	Arboriculture and Conservation Manager
SLL	Stevenage Leisure Ltd
SDS	Stevenage Direct Services (Street Scene)
LS	Leisure Services Team
GSV	Green Space Volunteer
GSLV	Green Space Lead Volunteer
WGCAC	Welwyn Garden City Angling Club
HWE	Highways Engineer

	Objective	Action	Link to GFA Aims	Yr. 1 2018/19	Yr. 2 2019/20	Yr. 3 2020/21	Yr. 4 2021/22	Yr. 5 2022/23	Notes
	Retain Green Flag Award	GSDO	All	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Review the existing suite of parks noticeboards and finger pointers and install or replace with new signs where required	GSDO	1, 7	✓	✓				Review expected to be carried out during 2018/19 as part of the Cooperative Neighbourhood Management (CNM) Programme
	Remove redundant signage	GSDO	1, 7	✓					
	Develop and/ or update park information leaflets	GSDO	1, 7		✓				
	Make new management plan available to all by uploading to Council's webpage	GSDO	1, 7	✓					

	Objective	Action	Link to GFA Aims	Yr. 1 2018/19	Yr. 2 2019/20	Yr. 3 2020/21	Yr. 4 2021/22	Yr. 5 2022/23	Notes
	Undertake consultation with children and teenagers to determine the design of the improvements to the principal play area	GSPM	6	✓					Capital funding agreed and ties in with CNM programme and play review.
	Carryout installation of new play area improvements	GSPM	1, 2, 3, 6, 7	✓					Project predicted to be completed before summer 2018
	Undertake works to renew the trim trail facilities	GSPM GSDO	1, 2, 3, 7	✓					
	Install bike racks in park to encourage visitor cycling	GSDO	1, 2, 4	✓					
	Review number of recorded incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) to determine future action and requirements	GSDO WGCAC SLL	2	✓		✓		✓	
	Carryout publicity of new water rescue cabinets and develop information on how to use them	GSDO	2, 7	✓					Leaflet and poster created and displayed throughout park
	Review water rescue cabinet provision and determine need for additional cabinets	GSDO	2			✓			

	Objective	Action	Link to GFA Aims	Yr. 1 2018/19	Yr. 2 2019/20	Yr. 3 2020/21	Yr. 4 2021/22	Yr. 5 2022/23	Notes
	Carryout promotion of Gordon the Greedy Goose to improve education around feeding the park's waterfowl	GSDO	2, 3, 6	✓	✓				
	Review numbers of Canada geese and the existing control measures	GSDO WGCAC	2, 3, 4	✓		✓		✓	
	Undertake condition survey of all footpaths and access routes to inform future capital funding bid	HWE EPDM	1, 2	✓					
	Carryout condition survey and replace worn footboards on the Millennium (Dutch) bridge	HWE GSDO	1, 2	✓					
	Review the bin provision in the park and deliver programme of replacing all bins to standardised covered bin	GSDO SDS	2, 3	✓	✓				
	Review the silt levels in the balancing pond	GSDO GSPM HWE	3, 4					✓	Silt removal carried out 2017
	Develop proposal for improvements to the Maze	GSDO GSPM EPDM	3			✓			

	Objective	Action	Link to GFA Aims	Yr. 1 2018/19	Yr. 2 2019/20	Yr. 3 2020/21	Yr. 4 2021/22	Yr. 5 2022/23	Notes
	Make funding bids to support the delivery of the maze improvement proposals	GSDO EPDM	3, 6				✓	✓	
	Scheduled general maintenance of trees within the park	ACM	2, 3		✓				
	Review establishment success of coir roll installations around the Main Lake	GSDO	3, 5	✓	✓				
	Seek funding from the Environment Agency to support further improvements to the marginal vegetation on the Main Lake	GSDO	5			✓			
	Investigate opportunity to reinstate the bird feeding stations with a solution to discourage vermin issues.	GSDO	5, 6	✓					
	Map locations of current nest boxes within the park	GSDO GSV	6, 5		✓				
	Liaise with HMWT to identify suitable locations for additional nest boxes and add to mapped data.	GSDO GSV	5, 6		✓	✓			
	Develop way to inform parks visitors of birds sightings in the park	GSDO	5, 6, 7	✓					

	Objective	Action	Link to GFA Aims	Yr. 1 2018/19	Yr. 2 2019/20	Yr. 3 2020/21	Yr. 4 2021/22	Yr. 5 2022/23	Notes
	Consider opportunities for additional interpretation boards/ panels within the park	GSDO	7			✓			
	Review success of Yellow Rattle establishment in meadow grassland	GSDO GSV	6, 5		✓				
	Sow existing grassland meadows with a wildflower meadow mix to improve species diversity	GSDO EPDM GSV	6, 5	✓		✓		✓	
	Develop viable project for the enclosed Environment Lake area	GSDO	1, 2, 3, 5, 6	✓	✓				
	Make funding bids to support delivery of the proposed Environment Lake project	GSDO EPDM	1, 2, 3, 5, 6		✓	✓			
	Develop a management plan for Shackledell grassland and the lakes	GSDO EPDM	5				✓		
	Seek to designate Shackledell as a Local Nature Reserve	GSDO EPDM	5					✓	
	Seek to designate the lake system as a Local Nature Reserve	GSDO EPDM	5					✓	

	Objective	Action	Link to GFA Aims	Yr. 1 2018/19	Yr. 2 2019/20	Yr. 3 2020/21	Yr. 4 2021/22	Yr. 5 2022/23	Notes
	Seek to deliver the actions identified in the BAP (2017-2022)	GSDO GSV GSLV	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Liaise with WGCAC to develop additional angling opportunities	GSDO WGCAC	6		✓				
	Liaise with WGCAC to actively promote angling opportunities	GSDO WGCAC	6, 7	✓		✓			
	Undertake data collection to determine visitor numbers and timings	GSDO GSPM	6, 7, 8	✓		✓		✓	
	Review and update the customer satisfaction survey	GSDO EPDM GSPM	6, 7, 8	✓				✓	
	Carryout promotion of the revised customer satisfaction survey	GSDO EPDM GSPM	6, 7	✓	✓			✓	
	Investigate opportunity to create a dedicated volunteer group or wardens for the park (associated with the GSVs)	GSDO	6			✓			
	Investigate opportunity for electric car charging points (dependant on technology shifts)	GSDO	4				✓		

	Objective	Action	Link to GFA Aims	Yr. 1 2018/19	Yr. 2 2019/20	Yr. 3 2020/21	Yr. 4 2021/22	Yr. 5 2022/23	Notes
	Liaise with SLL and café management to determine potential for recycling facilities improvements	GSDO SLL LS	4		✓				
	50 year anniversary celebration – plan and deliver celebratory event to mark anniversary of official opening of the park	All relevant stakeholders	6, 7				✓	✓	

10.0 Monitoring & Review

For a management plan to be effective it is essential that the document remains current and relevant. To ensure that the management plan for Fairlands Valley Park achieves its objectives, and continues to meet the needs and aspirations of the community the following monitoring mechanisms will be implemented:

10.1 Every Five Years

- The whole management plan will be reviewed and revised
- A condition survey will be undertaken for the tree stock, in order to inform the planned maintenance programme

10.2 Annually

- Seek to retain Green Flag status annually
- Maintain a photographic record
- Maintain a comprehensive record of all works undertaken within the Park, including planting plans and construction details
- Review of the work plan for the previous year to confirm that all actions have been completed, and to make explanatory notes if some actions have not been achieved
- Develop the work plan for the following year
- Review of the five-year work plan, making additions and amendments as appropriate
- Undertake a condition survey of all plant and equipment within the Park
- Undertake Risk Assessments to ensure that the Park remains safe and secure
- Monitor the condition of all permanent planting to inform future management requirements, including replacement where appropriate
- Monitor and record the number, and nature, of formal events taking place within the Park
- Monitor customer satisfaction
- Monitor income and expenditure against annual budgets
- Develop a programme of meetings with community groups

11.0 Appendices

Appendix A	Feedback to Green Flag Judges Comments 2017/18
Appendix B	Policies, Strategies and Acts
Appendix C	Premises Licence
Appendix D	Summary of Maintenance Operations
Appendix E	Risk Management
Appendix F	Customer Satisfaction Survey
Appendix G	Map of Fairlands Valley Park
Appendix H	Promotional Material
Appendix I	Past Improvements in Depth

Appendix A: Green Flag Judges Comments and



Mystery Shopping - Interim Quality Assessment

Answer the questions below providing detailed feedback that will benefit the site.

Name of Site: Fairlands Valley Park

Managing Organisation: Stevenage Borough Council

Date, time and duration of visit: 16th October 2017, 10.45am., 45mins.

Weather conditions: Sunshine and windy.

1. Was the site easy to find e.g. directional signage?

Yes

Comments: Good directional signage.

2. On approaching the site were you encouraged to enter?

Yes

Comments: Very good welcoming signage and the entrances draw the visitor in.

3. Were entrance signs visible announcing the site and did they provide contact details for complaints/praise?

Yes

Comments: Excellent.

4. Were entrances safe and accessible to people of differing abilities?

Yes

Comments:

5. Were entrances and car parks clean, litter free and well maintained?

Yes

Comments:

6. Were signs throughout the site of good quality, well maintained, and displaying up to date and relevant information?

Yes

Comments: Excellent signage throughout.

7. Were paths in good condition, clean, unobstructed and accessible to people of different abilities?

Yes

Comments:

8. Were any staff on site easily identifiable to the public, knowledgeable and approachable?

Yes

Comments: The staff were clearly identifiable, unfortunately they were working on an island and not approachable.

9. Were facilities such as toilets, cafés etc. clean, well maintained and open as advertised?

Yes

Comments:

10. Were buildings, structures and features such as walls fences etc in good condition and free from graffiti?

Yes

Comments:

11. Was all children's play equipment well maintained and clean?

Yes

Comments: The safety surface around the play equipment was in places breaking up with grass growing through.

SBC Response: Repairs to the safety surfacing were carried out during the 2017 autumn/ winter period. A complete overhaul of play area including surfacing expected for 2018.

12. Were benches, bins etc. well located, clean and in good condition?

Yes

Comments:

13. Was safety equipment present, fit for purpose and in good condition (if provided)?

Yes

Comments: Water safety equipment in place.

14. Was lighting, CCTV and other security measures in good condition (where provided and able to be assessed)?

Yes

Comments:

15. Did litter bins appear to be emptied regularly and was the site litter free?

Yes

Comments:

16. Was dog and other animal fouling adequately controlled?

Yes

Comments: No evidence of dog fouling seen.

17. Were horticultural standards being maintained?

Yes

Comments:

18. Did trees appear to be safe and in good condition?

Yes

Comments:

19. Were features requiring or undergoing maintenance made safe with appropriate signage?

N/A

Comments:

20. Did you feel safe during your visit?

Yes

Comments: Large volume of visitors including two school groups.

21. Was the site flying its Green Flag, and was the flag in good condition and recognisable and was a certificate displayed?

Yes

Comments: Fairlands Valley Park is obviously very proud of its Green Flag status.

22. Did you obtain feedback from park users and/or staff?

Yes

Comments: A nursery school helper said they regularly brought their children into the park for open air classes.

23. Would you like to make any additional observations?

Yes

Comments: Fairlands Valley Park is an excellent site that offers a wide range of activities for all visitors and is very worthy of its GF status.

Please rate the site as follows

Green meets all the requirements of the Award

Comments

Appendix B: Policies, Strategies and Acts

Policies and Strategies

- Biodiversity Action Plan
- Corporate Communications Strategy
- Stevenage 2012 Our Town – Our Future, the Stevenage Community Strategy
- Consultation Strategy
- Corporate Performance Plan
- Environmental Enforcement Strategy
- Green Space Strategy 2010 – 2020
- Play Strategy
- Corporate Plan, Sharing the Dividends 2013 – 2018
- Stevenage Cycling Strategy

Acts

- Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act, 2005
- The Equality Act, 2010
- Environmental Protection Act, 1990
- Health & Safety at Work Act, 1974
- Occupiers Liability Act, 1957
- Public Health Acts, 1848 and 1875
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations
- Town and Country Planning Act, 1990
- Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981
- Dogs Act, 1871
- Dangerous Dogs Act, 1991
- Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act, 1996

Appendix C: Premises Licence

Environmental Health and Licensing

Head of Environmental Health and Licensing: Richard Evans



Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage, Herts SG1 1HN. Tel: (01438) 242242 Fax: (01438) 242566 DX 6022, Stevenage 1

Licensing Act 2003

Premises Licence

SBCR0029

Part 1 - Premises Details

POSTAL ADDRESS OF PREMISES, OR IF NONE, ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP REFERENCE OR DESCRIPTION

Fairlands Valley Park & Sailing Centre

Six Hills Way, Stevenage, Hertfordshire, SG2 0BL.

Telephone 01438 353241

WHERE THE LICENCE IS TIME LIMITED THE DATES

Not applicable

LICENSABLE ACTIVITIES AUTHORISED BY THE LICENCE

- a performance of a play
- a performance of live music
- any playing of recorded music
- a performance of dance
- entertainment of a similar description to that falling within a performance of live music, any playing of recorded music or a performance of dance
- entertainment facilities for dancing
- entertainment of a similar description to that falling within entertainment facilities for making music or dancing

THE TIMES THE LICENCE AUTHORISES THE CARRYING OUT OF LICENSABLE ACTIVITIES

Activity (and Area if applicable)	Description	Time From	Time To
A.	Performance of a play (Indoors & Outdoors) Monday - Sunday	9:00am	11:00pm
E.	Performance of live music (Indoors & Outdoors) Monday - Sunday	9:00am	11:00pm
F.	Playing of recorded music (Indoors & Outdoors) Monday - Sunday	9:00am	11:00pm
G.	Performance of dance (Indoors & Outdoors) Monday - Sunday	9:00am	11:00pm
H.	Entertainment of a similar description to that falling within E, F, or G (Outdoors) Monday - Sunday	9:00am	11:00pm
J.	Provision of facilities for dancing (Indoors & Outdoors) Monday - Sunday	9:00am	11:00pm
K.	Provision of facilities for entertainment of a similar description to that falling within I or J (Indoors & Outdoors) Monday - Sunday	9:00am	11:00pm

THE OPENING HOURS OF THE PREMISES

Description	Time From	Time To
Monday - Sunday	Midnight	11:59pm

WHERE THE LICENCE AUTHORISES SUPPLIES OF ALCOHOL WHETHER THESE ARE ON AND / OR OFF SUPPLIES

Licensing Act 2003

Premises Licence

SBCR0029

Part 2

NAME, (REGISTERED) ADDRESS, TELEPHONE NUMBER AND EMAIL (WHERE RELEVANT) OF HOLDER OF PREMISES LICENCE

Stevenage Borough Council

Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage, Hertfordshire, SG1 1HN.
Telephone 01438 242670

REGISTERED NUMBER OF HOLDER, FOR EXAMPLE COMPANY NUMBER, CHARITY NUMBER (WHERE APPLICABLE)

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1 - MANDATORY CONDITIONS

- 1) Only individuals licensed by the Security Industry Authority may be used at the premises to guard against:
- unauthorised access or occupation (e.g. through door supervision), or
 - outbreaks of disorder, or
 - damage

ANNEX 2 - CONDITIONS CONSISTENT WITH THE OPERATING SCHEDULE

Fairlands Valley Park

- 1) A Fire Risk assessment will be carried out and recorded for the grounds of Fairlands Valley Park.
- 2) A Risk Assessment will be carried out prior to each event within the grounds of Fairlands Valley Park to address, in particular, the licensing objectives.
- 3) The Risk Assessment will consider the safety of all staff, members of the public, visitors and persons at specific risk in case of fire or emergency. The findings will determine the Emergency Plan.
- 4) The Event Safety Guide: ISBN 0 7176-2453-6 will be used to assist the risk evaluations including the Emergency Plan, depending on the size and nature of each event. Other guidance documents may be used if agreed with Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service.
- 5) Emergency Vehicle Access and Egress must be maintained for all events, and a Fire Appliance must be capable to get within 50 metres of any temporary structure (on a hard standing capable of taking the weight of a Fire Appliance in all weathers).
- 6) For larger events, a copy of the Risk Assessment and the Emergency Plan will be forwarded, 28 days prior to the event, to:
 - a) Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, Fire Safety Department, for comment, and;
 - b) Station Commander, Stevenage Fire Station, for consultation and station familiarisation.
- 7) The Fire Risk Assessments will be carried out by a competent person.
- 8) The Licence Holder will give written notice to the Licensing Authority, Police, Fire Authority and Environmental Health at least 28 days prior to each event. That notice shall include an Operating Plan that addresses any risks identified, and a copy of the risk assessment for the event.

ANNEXES continued ...

9) In the event that a Responsible Authority are of the opinion that the operating plan and associated Risk Assessment do not meet the Licensing Objectives of Public Safety and/or Prevention of Public Nuisance, written notice will be given to the Licence Holder by that Responsible Authority prior to the event date stating that the event shall not proceed. Once the Responsible Authority is satisfied that the Licensing Objectives have been met, the notice will be withdrawn.

10) The applicant will have regard to any recommendations or requirements of, in particular the Stevenage Borough Council - Safety Advisory Team and/or Licensing Officer(s), the Police and/or such other Responsible Authorities as make any comments, in relation to any individual licensable event or activity.

11) In addition to the consideration of the Prevention of Crime and Disorder within the Risk Assessment process and subsequent operating plan, adequate ratios of Security Industry Authority licensed staff to numbers of persons attending will be employed and deployed at any licensable event or activity.

12) Police recommendations and current guidance and best practice will be followed in relation to ratios and use of security staff.

13) Conditions of hire for circuses require confirmation that: -

- a) The tent is inspected annually for flame retardence and structural integrity;
- b) The tent will be erected by experienced and trained crew;
- c) Risk Assessments will be provided, which include fire and evacuation procedures, arrangements for emergency lighting in the event of a power failure, stewarding and crowd control arrangements;
- d) Pre performance checks will be conducted to identify and remove hazards that could cause slips, trips and falls.

14) Conditions of hire for other organisations require confirmation that: -

- a) Rides and sideshows receive an annual safety inspection;
- b) Rides and sideshows are erected by experienced and trained crew;
- c) Risk Assessments are provided for all rides and sideshows, which include fire and evacuation procedures, arrangements for emergency lighting in the event of a power failure, stewarding and crowd control arrangements;
- d) Periodic checks conducted to identify and remove hazards that could cause slips, trips and falls.

15) All performances will end at 23.00 hours.

16) If identified through the Risk Assessment process, a noise management plan will be agreed with the Environmental Health Officer.

17) The Risk Assessment process will include arrangements for the location and re-uniting of children with their parent(s) or designated guardian(s), with particular regard to family or other events likely to attract children.

18) All staff employed in the arrangements for locating and re-uniting children will have received and enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check.

The Sailing Centre

1) The maximum permissible number of persons that may be present within the area indicated as used for licensable activities at one time must not exceed 50. The breakdown of this figure is as follows:

Environmental Health and Licensing

Head of Environmental Health and Licensing: Richard Evans



Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage, Herts SG1 1HN. Tel: (01438) 242242 Fax: (01438) 242566 DX 6022, Stevenage 1

Licensing Act 2003

Premises Licence

SBCR0029

ANNEXES continued ...

50 persons allowed in the Classroom

This number has been calculated working from the plans that accompanied the application using the document "Guide to Fire Precautions in Existing Places of Entertainment and Like Premises". The Fire Authority may wish to amend this figure following any future inspections.

2) Where measures necessitate structural alterations to a building, application for approval in accordance with the Building Regulations should be made prior to the commencement of any works.

ANNEX 3 - CONDITIONS ATTACHED AFTER A HEARING BY THE LICENSING AUTHORITY

Not applicable.

ANNEX 4 - PLANS

Two plans attached:

- Fairlands Valley Park & Sailing Centre - Plan A
- Fairlands Valley Sailing Centre - Proposed Alterations Drawing No.: 9903/01

05/04/2006

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Baxter", written over a dotted line.

Principal Licensing Officer

Appendix D: Summary of Maintenance Operations

Grass: General Responsibilities

The contractor shall allow for and provide all plant, labour, materials and equipment necessary to maintain, clean, well-trimmed and evenly cut grass areas throughout and within the terms of the contract.

The main grass cutting season will be between April and November inclusive.

Grass cutting operations will be limited to the hours stated in the Conditions of Contract except central reservations.

All plant and equipment shall be competent to carry out the work. Blades shall be sharp and all parts accurately adjusted to function efficiently.

Immediately prior to grass cutting operations the contractor shall remove any deleterious materials from the grass area about to be cut. Materials include litter, stones, debris, glass, twigs and branches. All arisings shall be removed to the contractors own tip. Any litter shredded by grass cutting operations shall be picked up immediately after cutting. Any larger items that cannot be moved by hand shall be left in situ and the grass cut around as near as possible.

During and immediately after grass cutting operations all associated and adjacent hard surfaces are to be kept free and clear of grass cuttings, mud and other debris resulting from the grass cutting operations. Particular attention should be paid to footpaths and the safety hazards incurred during wet conditions.

Cutting shall be carried out around, between and, where possible, under all obstructions such as trees, lamp columns, benches, signs, fence lines, walls, litter bins, etc. The grass shall be cut at the same time and to the same height as the main cut. Where cutting operations take place against obstacles likely to be damaged, suitable protection and care must be taken. The contractor will make good and / or replace damaged property or materials at their own expense.

All grass edges around shrub beds, rose beds, annual flower beds and channels shall be strimmed on each occasion and at the same time as mowing of adjacent grass area. All arisings shall be removed to the contractors tip.

Grass cutting operations shall be delayed in the immediate area(s) where bulbs and corms have been planted / naturalised to allow them to grow, flower and die back for up to six weeks after flowering. The contractor shall cut these areas as directed by the Supervising Officer. The grass shall be cut to a height of 50mm and the arisings raked off and disposed of at the contractors tip. Immediately following this the grass shall be cut at 30mm. The contractor will bear the cost of the above works and once initial cuts have been completed the area(s) will be maintained to the standards specified.

The contractor shall be responsible for the repair of grass areas or other items damaged as a result of negligent maintenance. Repairs and / or replacements will be at the contractors expense and to be entirely to the satisfaction of the Supervising Officer.

For the purpose of this contract the item 'a cut' or 'cutting' shall consist of as many passes, in as many directions, with the appropriate grass cutting machinery / equipment as is necessary to cut all the grass cleanly and evenly to a standard which is in accordance to the above definition. This definition is particularly important when, during wet conditions, the grass is laid down by the wheels of machinery (or

any other cause) giving an area the appearance of having been cut cleanly but where the grass later springs up. In such instances the area will be deemed not to have been cut properly and the contractor will be obliged, or may be instructed, to revisit the area and take such action as is necessary to provide the required satisfactory standard of finish entirely at his own expense.

Adverse Weather / Ground Conditions – It is the contractors responsibility to ensure that he is using the correct type of machinery operating in the correct mode of action for the prevailing weather / ground conditions in each and every cut throughout the contract period.

Dry Conditions – When the conditions do not allow grass to grow then the grass cuts will be stopped.

Grass: Leisure

- The contractor shall cut the grass fortnightly on 8 occasions per growing season, starting during the third week of March and finishing during the third week of November. The exact timing will be dependent on weather conditions and grass growth rates.
- The contractor shall cut the grass to a uniform height of 25mm using approved unboxed cutting machinery.
- All clippings should be evenly dispersed across the sward immediately after cutting.
- On one occasion per annum, in November / December, all grass abutting paths, hardstand areas and shrub beds shall be edged back. The arisings will removed to the contractors site at the end of each day.
- On 6 occasions leaves will be collected from all grassed areas and removed from site.

Grass: Meadow Cut

- The contractor shall cut the grass on one occasion, in September/October. The exact timing will be dependent on weather conditions and flowering times.
- The contractor shall cut the grass evenly and cleanly to 75mm.
- Within 48 hours of cutting the contractor will rake up all cuttings from the whole area and remove from site.

Shrub Bed: General Responsibilities

The contractor shall allow for, and provide, all plant, labour, materials and equipment necessary to maintain healthy and clean shrubs and shrub beds.

At every maintenance visit the first operation will be to remove all litter, debris, vegetative rubbish (such as leaves and twigs) and other deleterious matter from the bed. All arisings to be removed to contractors tip by the end of each working day. Any large deposits of garden rubbish, rubble, flytipped rubbish, etc must be reported to the Supervising Officer who may authorise their removal with a variation order at schedule of rates.

The contractor shall be responsible for the replacement and reinstatement of shrubs and shrub beds, damaged as a result of negligent maintenance, at their own expense.

All arisings from pruning and shrub bed maintenance shall be removed to the contractors tip by the end of each working day, and at no time should any arisings cause obstruction to footways, cycle routes or highways.

The site / plot, including the surrounding areas such as paths and grass paths, to be left clean and tidy on completion of each maintenance visit.

Shrub Bed: Non Prestigious

Summer / Winter Prune: all shrubs shall be pruned to achieve the following:

- Removal of all dead, diseased and damaged material
- Removal of any material obstructing vehicle, cycle and pedestrian sight lines
- Removal of any material encroaching and / or obstructing roads, paths, cycle routes, walkways, other hard surfaces and grass areas
- Removal of any material encroaching and / or obstructing light to windows, doors, vents, metre housings, gates and street furniture

Weed control shall be undertaken immediately after the summer and winter pruning operations. Shrub beds will be kept clear of weed growth through the use of contact herbicides.

Hedges: General Maintenance

Hedge cutting is to be undertaken to maintain the hedge at constant dimensions, unless otherwise directed, and will be carried out in such a manner to promote healthy growth, well-furnished from ground level to its full height. The top should be level, following the ground contours and the contractors attention is drawn to Figure 11 "Hedge Cutting" showing preferred shape profiles and cutting sequences.

When carrying out hedge cutting works the contractor shall time the operations so as to cause as little disturbance to pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

Respect for wildlife, particularly birds nesting, will be expected. Where birds are nesting the contractor will ensure maximum care not to disturb the nest of birds, even if it means leaving, in part or whole, the cutting of a particular hedge until the nest has become unoccupied.

Should there be a wasp's nest within the hedge the Supervising Officer shall be informed immediately and the nest removed by the contractor through liaison with Environmental Health.

At every maintenance visit the first operation will be to remove all litter debris and any other deleterious material from within the hedge and hedge base. All arisings to be removed to contractors tip.

The contractor shall be responsible for the replacement and reinstatement of any hedge, damaged as a result of negligent maintenance, at their own expense.

The site / plot, including the surrounding area such as paths and grass areas, are to be left clean and tidy on completion of each maintenance visit.

Where a hedge borders a private property the contractor shall only be responsible for cutting the Councils side, top and ends of the hedge, including the hedge base.

Hedge Maintenance

Hedges to be maintained on two occasions each year, once in the period June – August, and again between November – March.

All weed and grass growth along base of hedge is to be cut to a height of 25mm. All weeds and grass growing on / in the hedge is to be removed. All arisings to be removed to contractors own tip.

All hedges shall be cut back to previous year's growth along top, ends and sides to retain a good shape. At no time should the bottom of the hedge be narrower than the top.

All hedges shall be pruned to achieve the following:

- Removal of dead, diseased and damaged material
- Removal of any material obstructing vehicle, cycle or pedestrian sight lines
- Removal of any material encroaching upon and / or obstructing roads, paths, cycle routes, walkways, other hard surfaces and grass areas.
- Remove any material encroaching upon and / or obstructing light to windows, doors, vents, metre housings, gates and street furniture. All arisings to be removed to contractors tip.
- The hedge, hedge base and surrounding area are to be left clean and tidy.

Play Areas

The contractor shall allow for, and provide, all plant, labour, equipment and materials to inspect and maintain the play grounds and equipment in a clean and tidy condition throughout the period and within the terms of the contract.

Weekly Inspection Report and Repair: to be carried out by a competent person with recognised engineering experience and knowledge of the current British Standard 1176 and 1177 recommendations and play equipment design and performance.

At weekly intervals the contractor shall carry out a full inspection of all equipment within the play area.

The contractor shall inspect the play area, and carry out any necessary remedial action on the following items, in accordance with the British Standards, once a week:

- Clean all graffiti from all surfaces within the play area using approved cleansing materials
- Maintain notices in good condition
- Ensure fencing and gates are secure
- Maintain seating and bins in good repair
- Report any health or safety hazards adjacent to play areas to the Supervising Officer
- Ensure fittings or fixings are in position and secure
- Check for any protrusions or sharp edges
- Ensure that all moving parts are working freely and quietly, in accordance with design
- Check that the paintwork, or other finishes are in good condition
- Check that all safety measures are in good repair
- Check all surfaces for damage or wear
- Check for any damaged woodwork

Twice a week:

- Ensure play area is clean and tidy, free from water and all arisings shall be cleared from site to the contractors tip
- Empty litter bins and remove arisings to contractors tip
- Ensure safety surfaces are free from glass, stones, animal fouling and any other debris. All arisings to be cleared from site.

The contractor shall specifically check against a detailed list – see specification.

At regular weekly intervals, immediately following checks, the contractor shall sweep the whole of the surface of the play area, and remove all arisings to the contractors tip.

The contractor shall be required to carry out minor repairs. Should an item of play equipment, etc be found, on inspection by the contractor, to have suffered vandalism or incurred a fault thus rendering the item unsafe or likely to fail, it shall be immediately repaired by the contractor. If repairs cannot be made immediately because the required parts are not readily available, or the damage / fault is of a major nature, the contractor shall immediately carry out such necessary measures to totally prevent the item from further use of any access, until repairs can be made. All acts of vandalism affecting equipment, and any major faults discovered by the contractor, shall be immediately notified to the Supervising Officer.

The contractor shall be required to keep a permanent stock of regularly occurring replacement parts to enable them to carry out immediate repairs. The contractor shall keep adequate records of maintenance and repairs for inspection by, and submission to, the Supervising Officer.

The contractor shall provide weekly inspection sheets, and record the results of each inspection on each play area.

Lubrication: on 16 occasions through the year the contractor shall lubricate all bearing surfaces, bushes, rollers, and thrust surfaces. The contractor must allow, in their prices, for disassembly of any components, housings or casings to enable complete lubrication.

Rub Down and Paint / Treat Playground Equipment: painting of playground equipment will be carried out as required. All work shall only be undertaken in favourable conditions. No painting shall take place, under any circumstances, during school holidays, bank holidays or weekends, and all items shall be marked with 'wet paint' signs for a suitable period when the contractor is not on site. See specification for full details.

Herbicide Treatment: on three occasions during the year (February/April, June/July and September/October) the contractor shall apply an approved herbicide to a 150mm strip either side of the fences and to all hard surfaces and safer surfacing.

Litter

A Cleansing Operative is on site every day of the week. They undertake emptying of litter bins, sweeping of glass/debris from hard surfaces, and litter picking within the whole park. At least every three months, or as required, the operative will also remove litter and debris from the water courses.

Building Maintenance

SLL staff undertake daily cleaning and general maintenance of the toilets / showers / changing rooms / classroom within the Sailing Centre and Aqua Park. Costello's Café staff undertake daily cleaning of the toilets / seating area / kitchens within the café and serving area of the Aqua Park.

The Councils Property Services section carries out:

- Compliance related inspections to all buildings – water hygiene, fire / smoke alarms, etc.
- Maintenance of the boiler and heating systems to achieve maximum efficiency
- Maintain double glazing to Sailing Centre and Café
- Maintain insulation to plumbing pipe work
- Maintain motion detector lighting to Sailing Centre
- Maintain ventilation system to Sailing Centre and Café.

Reactionary Works

Graffiti

The Graffiti Team arrange for the removal of the graffiti in a timescale determined by the content:

- Offensive within 1 working day, i.e. graffiti which is racist or offensive in some other way
- Inoffensive within 2 working days

Pest Control

Pest control is carried out as required, and usually requires removal of affected material – chemical control may be used in very exceptional circumstances.

Accident Reporting

All reports of accidents occurring within the Fairlands Valley Park will be investigated within two working days. Appropriate remedial works will be carried out accordingly.

Complaints and Reports of Problems

Play Area: Any report received of broken glass, damaged equipment will be inspected and rectified within 24 working hours.

Landscape: the teams will revisit within five working days.

General: any report will be inspected in a timescale determined by the nature of the report:

H&S related within 24 working hours

Non-urgent within five working days

N.B. The Council has dedicated teams able to respond to a variety of environmental issues. For example:

- Street Smart is a response team who will deal with issues such as broken glass in play areas, fallen trees, etc
- Glass patrols on quad bikes who carry out routine clearance of glass from cycle tracks, but will also respond to reports of glass on footpaths and in open spaces
- Mobile patrols, on quad bikes, who are able to respond to reports of dog fouling on footpaths, cycle tracks and in open spaces.
- Environmental Enforcement Officers respond to reports of fly tipping, drugs paraphernalia, etc. Officers are also able to issue fixed penalty notices to dog owners who fail to clear up after their dog.

Fairlands Valley Park – Table of Maintenance Frequencies

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
Grass:													
Mowing	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1					8
Litter Picking	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1					8
Edge Back								1					1
Leaf Collection								2	2	2			6
Grass: Meadow													
Mowing							1						1
Collection							1						1
Shrub Beds: Non- Prestigious													
Summer Prune			1										1
Winter Prune									1				1
Weed Control				1						1			2
Litter Pick			1							1			2
Hedges													
Prune			1					1					2
Litter Pick			1					1					2
Manual Weed			1					1					2
Chemical Weed Control			1								1		2
Play Area													
Inspection	5	5	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	5	4	4	52
Lubricate	1	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	16
Litter Pick	10	10	8	8	10	8	8	8	8	10	8	8	104
Sweep Surfaces	10	10	8	8	10	8	8	8	8	10	8	8	104
Apply Herbicides			1								1		2
General Cleansing													
Check / Empty Dog Bins	30	31	30	31	31	30	31	30	28	30	29	31	362
Check / Empty Litter Bins	30	31	30	31	31	30	31	30	28	30	29	31	362
Litter Pick	30	31	30	31	31	30	31	30	28	30	29	31	362
Litter Pick of Water Courses	1			1			1			1			4

Appendix E: Health & Safety and Risk Management

Stevenage Borough Council Health and Safety Policy

Part 1 General Statement of Safety Policy

- 1.1 Stevenage Borough Council recognises and accepts its responsibility as an employer for providing a safe and healthy work place and working environment for all its employees.
- 1.2 The Council will take all reasonably practicable steps within its power to meet this responsibility paying, particular attention to the provision and maintenance of:
- i) plant, equipment and systems of work that are safe;
 - ii) safe arrangements for use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances;
 - iii) sufficient information, instructions, training and supervision to enable all employees to avoid hazards and contribute positively to their own safety and health at work;
 - iv) a safe place of work and safe access to it and safe egress from it;
 - v) a healthy working environment;
 - vi) adequate welfare facilities.
- 1.3 The Council will also ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that its work activities do not endanger the health and safety of the general public.
- 1.4 Without detracting from the primary responsibility of managers and supervisors for ensuring so far as is reasonably practicable safe conditions of work, the Council will provide competent technical advice on safety and health matters where this is necessary to assist line management in its task.
- 1.5 The Council will provide and maintain arrangements for joint consultation on health and safety matters and will co-operate with safety representatives appointed by recognised trade unions.

In addition the Council will hold regular meetings of the Health and Safety Corporate Working Group and associated Cavendish Road sub-group to facilitate co-operation between all employees in effectively promoting and developing measures to ensure health and safety at work of the employees.

- 1.6 Detailed information on the organisation and arrangements made for implementing this General Statement are included as part of this policy, following consultation with employees.
- 1.7 A copy of this policy will be given to all employees together with specific policies and procedures relevant to their workplace.
- 1.8 The policy will be reviewed, added to and modified as appropriate to sustain its effectiveness and such changes will be brought to the notice of employees

Risk Assessments Relevant to Fairlands Valley Park

	Description	Owner
1	Open Water	SBC
2	Volunteers: Meadow improvement works	SBC
3	Volunteers: Working in the cascades, in and around water	SBC
4	Volunteers: Lead volunteers	SBC
5	Volunteers: Community litter picking	SBC
6	Volunteers: Scrub and vegetation management	SBC
7	Volunteers: Butterfly surveying	SBC
8	Lone Working	SBC
9	Environmental Cleansing	SBC
10	Skip Delivery & Collection	SBC
11	Play Equipment	SBC
12	Woodland Tree Inspection	SBC
13	Rotary Mowers	SBC
14	Cylinder Mowers	SBC
15	Tractor Mounted Rotary and Flail Mowers	SBC
16	Tractor Mounted Cylinder Mowers	SBC
17	Ride on Grass Cutting Machines	SBC
18	Hedge Cutting	SBC
19	Application of Pesticides	SBC
20	Mechanical Woodchipping	SBC
21	Mechanical Tree Stump Removal	SBC
22	Use of Chainsaws	SBC
23	Strimming Grass Areas	SBC
24	Arboricultural Works	SBC
25	Blowing Grass Debris	SBC
26	Aerial Tree Work	SBC
27	Use of Pole Saw	SBC
28	Mobile Elevated Work Platform	SBC
29	Amazone Flail Mower	SBC
30	Manual Handling	SBC
31	Metallic Welding	SBC
32	Workshop Equipment & Activities	SLL
33	Blue Green Algae	SLL
34	Leptospirosis (Weils Disease)	SLL
35	Fire Evacuation (General)	SLL
36	Fire Evacuation (Millennium)	SLL
37	Conducting Weekly Health & Safety Checks	SLL
38	Missing Persons	SLL
39	Removing Persons/Animals from Ice	SLL
40	Work Related Driving (Landrover)	SLL
41	Working Outdoors	SLL
42	Work Experience	SLL
43	Young Instructors	SLL
44	Manual Handling	SLL
45	Legionella	SLL
46	First Aid	SLL
47	Portable appliance Testing Procedure	SLL
48	Using Portable appliances	SLL
49	Pressure Washer	SLL

50	Dealing with Sharps	SLL
51	Vibrations at work	SLL
52	Asbestos	SLL
53	New and expectant Mothers	SLL
54	Noise	SLL
55	Hypo gel	SLL
56	photography	SLL
57	Use of lawnmowers	SLL
58	Boat maintenance	SLL
59	Decorating	SLL
60	Fire safety	SLL
61	Sailing & Windsurfing	SLL
62	Adult Sail, Windsurf & Powerboat Courses	SLL
63	Junior / Youth Courses	SLL
64	Raft Building (Main Lake)	SLL
65	Raft Building (Millennium Lake)	SLL
66	Paddle Sport (Main Lake)	SLL
67	Paddle Sport (Millennium Lake)	SLL
68	Rowing Boats	SLL
69	Pulling Boat (ASC)	SLL
70	Operating the Safety Boat	SLL
71	Launch & Recovery of Dinghies	SLL
72	Hire of Craft	SLL
73	Bell boating & Dragon boating	SLL
74	School & Group Bookings	SLL
75	Boat Storage & Removal & Disposal	SLL
76	Maintenance of Boats	SLL
77	Climbing Wall	SLL
78	Towing the Climbing Wall	SLL
79	Power kiting	SLL
80	Mountain Boards & Buggies	SLL
81	Orienteering	SLL
82	X Country	SLL
83	RYA Shore based courses	SLL
84	Mountain Biking	SLL
85	Teambuilding & Problem Solving Activities	SLL
86	Nordic Walking	SLL
87	Fireworks	SLL
88	Vehicle movements	SLL
89	Traders	SLL
90	Unauthorized vehicle	SLL
91	Tasks and drills	SLL
92	Stewarding and communications	SLL
93	Public address electrical failure	SLL
94	Lighting towers	SLL
95	First aid provision	SLL
96	Fireworks in crowd	SLL
97	Fire fighting	SLL
98	Drowning	SLL
99	Deliver and storage of fireworks	SLL
100	Crowd control	SLL

Fairlands Valley Park Customer Satisfaction Survey

We would like to know about your experience of visiting the Park.

Please take a few minutes to let us know what you thought of your visit today. Your answers are confidential, but will help us to identify where we need to improve our service. Thank you.

Date: Your Postcode:

Part A: About Your Visit

1a How often do you visit Fairlands Valley Park?

- First visit
- Once a month
- Once every two weeks
- Every week
- Most days
- Every day

1b How often to you visit during...

Winter
(including late autumn
and early spring)

Summer
(including late spring
and early autumn)

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Seldom or never during this season | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Once a month | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Once every two weeks | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Every week | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Most days | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Every day | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

2. When you visit the Park, where do you normally travel from? (please tick only one)

Home Work School Shops College Other

3. How would you normally travel to the park?

On foot Bicycle Motorbike Car Bus Taxi Minibus



4. Why do you normally visit Fairlands Valley Park?
(please tick up to 5 main reasons)

- | | | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| To relax | <input type="checkbox"/> | For the wildlife | <input type="checkbox"/> | Enjoy the green space | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Get some fresh air | <input type="checkbox"/> | For a walk | <input type="checkbox"/> | Take a shortcut | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| To walk the dog | <input type="checkbox"/> | Family outing | <input type="checkbox"/> | Picnic | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| To meet friends | <input type="checkbox"/> | Visit the play area | <input type="checkbox"/> | Visit the aqua park | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Attend events | <input type="checkbox"/> | Watersports | <input type="checkbox"/> | To improve my health | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Play sports or games | <input type="checkbox"/> | Watch sport or games | <input type="checkbox"/> | Guided walk / talk | <input type="checkbox"/> |

5. What features and facilities are important in any green space, and how would you rate this site?

	Level of Importance			Performance in this green space				
	Very	Quite	Not	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	n/a
Cleanliness								
Ease of getting around								
Grass / shrubs								
Trees								
Wildlife								
Seats/bins/signs								
Toilets								
Car parking								
Bicycle parking								
Play area								
Aqua park								
Café Facilities								
Sailing Centre Facilities								
Water sports								
Extreme sports / Ropes								
Fishing								
Events / activities								
Information about park								

6. What is your overall impression of the Fairlands Valley Park today? (please tick only one box)

- Excellent Good Average Poor Very Poor

7. What might encourage you to use the park more often, or to stay for longer?

.....

.....

.....

.....

Part B: About You

The Council is committed to ensuring that all of its services are delivered fairly. We would be grateful if you could answer the following questions about yourself so that we can make sure that services are delivered fairly to everyone and that all sections of the community are equally satisfied with our service. The questions in this section are voluntary but the more information you provide then the more we can learn about customers' views on our services.

The information you provide will be kept confidential and will be used for no other purpose other than checking on the fairness of the council services we provide.

1. Are you female or male? (please tick only one box)

Female Male

2. Which of the following best describes your age? (please tick only one box)

Under 10 10-16 17-19 20-29 30-39
40-49 50-59 60-74 75+

3. Do you consider yourself to have a disability that affects your use of green spaces? (please tick only one box)

Yes No Rather Not Answer

If yes, which of the following best describes your disability?

Hearing impaired / deaf Mental health Visually impaired / blind
Physically impaired Prefer not to say Other

4. Which of the following best describes your ethnic group? (please tick only one box)

White

British
Irish
Polish
Other white background

Mixed

White and Black Caribbean
White and Black African
White and Asian
Other mixed background

Black or Black British

Caribbean
African
Other Black background

Asian or Asian British

Indian
Pakistani
Bangladeshi
Other Asian background

Other

Other ethnic group
Prefer not to say



Appendix G: Map of Fairlands Valley Park

Map of Fairlands Valley Park



Appendix H: Promotional Material

The Comet

More than 100 dogs take on Stevenage Heli Hounds walk for Essex and Herts Air Ambulance

PUBLISHED: 12:05 18 October 2017 | **UPDATED:** 12:05 18 October 2017 [Louise McEvoy](#)



More than 100 dogs took part in the HeliHounds event in Stevenage on Sunday. Picture: EHAAT.

More than 100 dogs and their owners took a stroll through Stevenage’s Fairlands Valley Park on Sunday to raise money for the Essex and Herts Air Ambulance.

The third annual Heli Hounds 5km walk was led by the finalists of a competition to determine who would be crowned the charity’s 2018 poster dog.

The overall winner, who took the title Heli Hound Hero, was husky Tikaani, who celebrated his birthday on Sunday and who has attended four Heli Hounds walks over the past few years.

Jen Wall, volunteer and events manager, said: “It was a lovely day for an autumn dog walk. Seeing so many dogs in one place and walking for the charity was a wonderful experience. A lot of dog owners were making friends and everyone was in high spirits, despite the lack of sunshine. Thank you to everyone who attended.”

Money raised from the event is still being counted and will go towards keeping the charity operational.

Bonfire Night: Where you can watch the fireworks in Stevenage, Hitchin and Letchworth on Sunday

PUBLISHED: 19:31 03 November 2017 [Nick Gill](#)



Fireworks at the end of The Great British Prom 2017 at Knebworth

Fireworks will light up the sky above Stevenage, Hitchin and Letchworth this Sunday, November 5.

Bonfire Night is expected to go off with a bang, and here we shed light on three major displays for the area which all take place on the same evening.

Stevenage's annual effort will once again take place at Fairlands Valley Park.

For residents of the town, the display in the park off Six Hills Way and Fairlands Way starts at 7.30pm and is free to attend.

Stevenage Borough Council's website states: "You will be able to see the display from all parts of Fairlands Valley Park, so you can come into the park from any entrance."

There is free parking available in Fairlands Valley Showground, opposite Stevenage FC's stadium in Broadhall Way.

...

Clowns lead the crowd to laughs in a Circus Wonderland

Clowns, jugglers and acrobats will abound at Circus Wonderland in Stevenage this week.

The show is at Fairlands Valley Showground – just one stop on its 37-week tour of the UK – until Sunday.

This is Circus Wonderland's sixth year on tour, having been launched in 2012 by performer Kriss Freear, Paul Carpenter and Grace Arnett.

As well as running the show, all three directors also appear in the ring – Kriss and Paul as clowns Kakehole and Popol, and Grace with her fabulous foot juggling fiesta.

This will be the third consecutive year that the trio

have brought their circus to Stevenage – taking over the showground car park opposite Stevenage FC's stadium in Broadhall Way.

The performance is hosted by 'whiteface' clown Mr Popol. The authority figure of the whiteface clown in his glittering costumes and white heeled shoes was once a familiar figure at every major circus, but Mr Popol is the only remaining British whiteface clown.

His sparkling coat contains 180,000 sequins that were individually hand stitched over a period of 18 months.

Chaos ensues with the arrival of 'auguste' clown Kakehole with his more familiar attire of red nose, baggy trousers and



■ Clowns are in on the act when Circus Wonderland comes to Stevenage next weekend.

Picture: CIRCUS WONDERLAND.

oversized boots. He continually upstages Mr Popol as he tries to keep the show running smoothly.

Miss Grace Olivia will dazzle the audiences with her foot juggling or 'antipodist' skills, in which she lies back and manipulates seemingly impossible objects with her feet.

The stars of the Casablanca troupe of Moroccan acrobats are appearing in the UK for the very first time. Their incredible

tumbling and pyramid building acrobats have traditional talents that have become a world-renowned Moroccan circus speciality.

From Moldova, Ruslan Arianov presents an unusual act, stylishly spinning around the circus ring in his revolving Cyr Wheel which takes its name from its inventor Daniel Cyr, who created the large aluminium ring and perfected its use as a circus art

just 20 years ago.

There is one show at 7pm today, two shows tomorrow at 4.30pm and 7.30pm, on Saturday at 2pm and 5pm and on Sunday at 12 noon and 3pm.

Prices are split into different bands, dependant on where you would like to sit. There are discount vouchers and special offer family tickets available from the www.circuswonderland.com.



HERTS ORCHARD PROJECT

Volunteers are wanted for a major project researching Hertfordshire's orchards. The Landscape Group, a collective of academics and postgraduate students at the University of East Anglia, has been awarded £477,700 by the Heritage Lottery Fund for the three-year study, entitled Orchard's East.

Tom Williamson, professor of history at the UEA, said, 'We'll examine traditional orchards' environmental and cultural impact by identifying surviving sites, researching the history of fruit growing, surveying wildlife in orchards, as well as restoring important old orchards and creating new community ones.'

'We're hoping that people will volunteer to work with us on the project to help us discover more about Hertfordshire's rich history of fruit cultivation.'

Volunteers can undertake map surveys and online and record office research into orchards as well as helping to capture oral histories. Opportunities to help create new orchards are also on offer. To get involved, email g.broad@uea.ac.uk

DON'T OVERFEED GORDON

A booklet warning people about the dangers of feeding wildfowl has been launched by Stevenage Borough Council.

Gordon the Goose follows the adventures of a bird being overfed on bread – junk food to birds – until he can no longer fly. Overfeeding can cause angel wing, a disease that can prevent birds flying, can make geese more aggressive and increases bird droppings.

'Our geese don't go hungry and while it's fun to feed them people shouldn't go overboard,' said John Gardner, the council's executive member for environment.

The book was written by the authority's green spaces development officer, Joel Gainsford and illustrated by Katie Duffett. Copies are available at the café in Fairlands Valley Park or online at stevenage.gov.uk/parks-and-open-spaces

ED HUTCHINGS' BIRD OF THE MONTH

Jack of all trades

THE thieving habits of the jackdaw were celebrated by the early 19th century humorous poet Richard Harris Barham in *The Jackdaw of Rheims*. In the poem, the bird – the most notorious robber in the crow family – steals the ring of the Cardinal Lord Archbishop of Rheims. 'The Devil', wrote Barham, 'must be in that little Jackdaw.' Apart from snatching and hiding such inedible objects, the bird occasionally steals young birds and eggs which it adds to its diet of carrion, fruit, insects and seeds.

As well as nesting in holes and chimneys,

jackdaw sometimes take over the old nests of other birds and occasionally even makes its nest in a rabbit burrow. The amount



of nest material used depends very much on the site. A large, exposed nest is usually lined with fur, grass, hair and wool – which the jackdaw sometimes plucks from the backs of sheep.

Late April sees the start of the breeding season when three to seven eggs with black and grey speckles are laid. Incubation is by the female who is fed on the nest by the male. The young hatch in 17–18 days and are ready to fledge when about a month old.

Usually, the jackdaw's call is a loud, explosive 'tchack', occasionally this is expanded into a 'tchackertchack'.



Stevenage parks among Britain's best

Three of Stevenage's glorious green spaces have this year won Green Flag Awards, the national standard for quality parks.

The Green Flag Awards, which give national recognition for public and community parks, have gone to Fairlands Valley Park for the ninth consecutive year, the Town Centre Gardens for the sixth year, and Hampson Park for a second year.

Hampson Park is 24 acres of attractive parkland accommodating sports pitches and play areas as well as the skatepark that opened last year. Over the past few years it has hosted a range of successful community events, which have included a nature event and a Teddy Bears Picnic.

Originally developed in the 1960s, the Town Centre Gardens are the primary formal and ornamental public gardens in Stevenage. They were restored in 2011 and are now a busy central green space for residents and visitors as well as a popular venue for events and activities.

Fairlands Valley Park has long been one of Stevenage's most visited attractions. Covering more than 120 acres, it includes four lakes, two children's play areas, a sailing centre and many areas of grassland and woodland.

Green Flag Awards are the national standard for parks and green spaces in England and Wales. Flags are awarded annually to a variety of green spaces that are welcoming, healthy, safe and secure, clean and well maintained, and sustainable, among other criteria.

Much of the success of our green spaces is down to the hard work of council staff, our partners and volunteer groups.

Thank you and well done to everyone concerned.



Meet our Mayor

The Mayor of Stevenage for 2016/17 is Cllr John Lloyd and his wife, Cllr Joan Lloyd, is Mayoress.

John is a familiar face in the Roebuck area of the town, where he has been a councillor since 2004. He is also a County Councillor representing Shephall.

The Mayor will be supporting two charities for 2016/2017. They are The Phoenix Group for Deaf Children and The Garden House Hospice.

John, who also served as Mayor of Stevenage in 2012/13, told Chronicle, "It's a great honour to be Mayor of Stevenage in this 70th anniversary year. Having undertaken this role once before I am looking forward to getting out and about again and meeting lots of residents as well as taking part in a diverse range of activities in Stevenage. I also hope to save some energy for supporting my Mayor's charities as they are very important to me."

If you would like to invite the Mayor to your event, email the Mayor's Secretary tracey.frost@stevenage.gov.uk



Stevenage Borough Council

@stevenageboroughcouncil

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Stevenage Borough Council

January 19, 2016 · London ·

During these very cold mornings and evenings, the lakes at Fairlands and in the Town Centre Gardens can freeze over. While it may be tempting to walk or play on the frozen water, it is highly risky because the ice can easily break. Please take care and stay safe.

- Do not be tempted to go on to the ice no matter how thick it looks
- Keep dogs on a lead when near frozen water
- Do not throw sticks, balls or any other items onto the ice – they may become an attraction for dogs or children
- If you do see a person or animal in trouble in icy water, stay on the bank and phone 999.



Like Comment Share

15

Top Comments

Make some music



at



Fairlands Valley Park

Wednesday 13 August

11am – 3pm

Come and make your own musical instrument and join in our World Percussion music workshop, try different instruments from around the world



Love Green Stevenage

Bring a picnic and come for the day. Listen to the Franklin Street New Orleans Jazz Band and have a go at the music quizzes and games



Stevenage
BOROUGH COUNCIL



Give Nature a Home



Fairlands Valley Park – Boat House

Wednesday 28 May 11am to 3pm



What can you do for nature this spring?

Come and make a butterfly feeder,

Grow flowers for bees and butterflies



**LOVE
FOOD**
hate waste
ROADSHOW



CHILDREN'S COOKERY & FOOD LAB

Fairlands Valley Park

Wednesday 5 August 2015, 11am to 3pm

Make Rainbow & Jammy Biscuits

**Experiment with exploding jelly,
edible slime & bicarb rockets**



For more information please contact
Jerry Hunter on 01438 242989
email: parksandamenities@stivenage.gov.uk

Stivenage
BOROUGH COUNCIL



Fairlands Valley Park

74 Miles away All year round

48 hectares of beautiful parkland situated in the heart of Stevenage with 29 points of interest



Abbots Grove Wood Adventure trail play area Aqua Playground Balancing Pond Bandstand

Park Information

Share Print

On Site Facilities

Situated within the heart of Stevenage and covering 120 acres of beautiful parkland, Fairlands Valley Park provides extensive leisure facilities for all. The Park is renowned for its wide range of water sports facilities, with sailing, windsurfing, angling, kayaking and dragon boating taking place on the 11 acre Main Lake.

There is an excellent play area catering for children, toddlers right through to teenagers, located alongside an exciting water play facility.

The Park provides a variety of habitats which support a range of wildlife. In addition to the traditional short grass swards, Fairlands Valley Park also benefits from woodland, a network of lakes, long grass swards and grassland which provides a home to the Great Green Bush Cricket – the only colony in Hertfordshire.

[Click here](#) for more information about Fairlands Valley Park

The water sports activities and the high ropes course is run by Stevenge Leisure Ltd (SLL). For more information, [click here](#)..

Fishing is available on the Main Lake and is run by [Welwyn Garden City Angling Club](#) - day tickets can be purchased from the bayliff on duty.

[Read less](#)

[Visit the website >](#)

Car Park (Free)	P
Disabled Access	♿
Disabled Toilets	♿
Dogs Welcome	🐕
Food & Drink	🍽️
Pushchair Friendly Paths	🚼
Toilets	🚻

How to get here

Parking:

There are 4 free car parks accessed from:

- Broadhall Way (opposite football ground) - For directions click [here](#)..
- Shephall View - For directions click [here](#)..
- Fairlands Way - For directions click [here](#)..
- Six Hills Way - For directions click [here](#)..

Public Transport Information:

Regular buses serve the park from the town centre. For more information use Intalink website www.intalink.org.uk/timetables or

Appendix I: Past Improvement Projects in Depth

Fairlands Valley Park

20th Century – The Formation of Fairlands Valley Park Continued...

The park is sited in a dry valley, and so it was necessary to rely entirely upon the surface water, which drained into the valley from Pin Green, to create the lakes.

Two large storm drains were built to channel the water from Chells Way into a 'lagoon'. This was formed in the valley to retain the storm water before passing it into a specially designed tank, which separated the traces of oil, petrol and grit. The separator tanks do not purify the water.

A large dam was created, just north of Six Hills Way, to retain the designed level of water. The dam was constructed from compacted clay and is about 7.5m high, 30.5m thick and 120m long.

The Main Lake was formed by excavating the valley bottom to a new profile. The underlying stratum is weathered chalk containing stone flints, and layers of flint and gravel. As chalk is porous the lakes had to be lined with reinforced plastic sheeting. Any leaks from the bottom of the lakes could have been very serious as the dam could be undermined if water seeped downhill. The flints also created difficulties during construction of the lakes as the plastic sheeting had to be protected – the bottom of the main lake was covered with sand, with another layer spread on top of the sheeting. The main lake was 4.9m at its deepest, rising to a minimum depth of 1.5m. At its normal level this lake contained 114 million litres of water.

A specially designed concrete siphon was built into the dam face of the main lake, in order to protect the lake from overflowing as a result of heavy storms and/or high winds. The siphon was designed to draw water away quickly in storm conditions. Normally the water will just trickle down, but as the volume increases it is sucked down. From the siphon the water flows under Six Hills Way in a concrete culvert, and south through the valley, in a pipe, to join the main drainage system of the town, Stevenage Brook.

Gale force winds can cause large waves, and the force of the disturbed water can then exert a considerable scouring action on the sides of the lake. The face of the dam was therefore reinforced with thick slabs of Forest of Dean rock laid on quilted nylon covers filled with concrete.

At the time of constructing the Main Lake two smaller lakes were also created. One was designed for pleasure boating and was restricted in depth to 75cm, for safety reasons. A small island was retained in the middle as a feature, and also to protect two of the town's main foul sewers which passed underground at this point at the time. The sides of this lake were protected from erosion by installing wire cages filled with gravel.



Further north, the natural valley bottom was widened out to form an area of water with small islands left to provide a protected area for wildfowl.

The Environment Lake, 1972

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Between each of these lakes, cascades were constructed to take up the difference in level between each lake.

The cascades were designed with weirs to enable them to cope with sudden storms, and they were shaped with Westmorland stone to form waterfalls.

A recirculating system was constructed to pump water from each lower level to the higher lake. This system has the benefit of re-oxygenating the water and keeping the waterfalls working during dry weather.

In addition to the construction of the lakes, it was also necessary to re-mould the existing valley contours to create new slopes that would blend with the water features in such a way as to provide an attractive landscape for the whole park. At the time of landscaping thousands of trees were planted within the northern section of the Park. However, minimal shrub planting was undertaken and was limited to three beds around the Main Lake.



Shackledell is an area of grassland, enclosed by naturalised trees and scrub, within southern section of the Park. Shackledell was once an allotment and over the years plot holders on the site dwindled and the site was left to nature. Grass species soon colonised the area, but the site was left untouched and unmanaged for over 20 years.

During the late 1980's the Council decided to treat the area as scrubland and started to carry out rudimentary maintenance to the area.

By 1998 the grassland was under control and started to receive a regular maintenance program to encourage native grass species.

During 1996 landscape architects drew up proposals for a planted maze to enhance the entrance to Fairlands Valley Park from Fairlands Way. The maze was constructed the following year, in 1997.

The design allowed for low growing planting to create a maze in which children could play safely.

Local school children helped design the totem poles that were then created by a local chainsaw artist.

21st Century

During the late 1990's the Council committed to a substantial capital programme of investment in Fairlands Valley Park to ensure that it continued to be the premier open space for Stevenage in the 21st century.

In 2000 Fairlands Valley Park benefitted from three exciting projects:

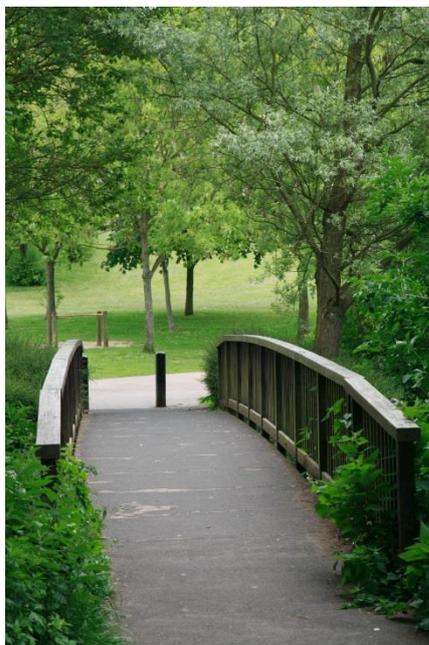
- The Millennium Wood was originally planted in November 1999 by school children from across Stevenage. On this day 2,000 Stevenage school children helped to plant 2,000 native trees to commemorate the new millennium.

During April 2005 the Millennium Wood was given a boost when the Mayor for

Stevenage, Cllr David Royal, and local MP Barbara Follett joined pupils from the Valley School, to plant 26 Oak trees, which were donated by Three Valleys Water.

- The Millennium Avenue was also planted in November 1999. 100 English Oaks, *Quercus robur*, were planted along the footpath leading from the South Field car park up towards the Millennium Wood.
- The Millennium Lake: completed in 1971, the Boating Lake was originally lined with a thick polythene liner. By 2000 the liner had deteriorated beyond economical repair resulting in the banks of the lake becoming severely eroded and water being lost to the chalk bed below.

In 2000 work began to drain and reline the lake. This work was complemented by new landscaping, to stabilise the water's edge, new viewing platforms and wildfowl ramps. In November 2001, the lake was officially opened and renamed the Millennium Lake.



The original bridge, between the Environment Lake and Boating Lake, had steep ramps and caused access difficulties for many of the park users. Visitors with push chairs, wheel chairs or other mobility difficulties found the bridge too problematic.

In 2001 the Council replaced the bridge with a Scandinavian hardwood bridge. The new bridge was designed with gentle ramped approaches making it much easier for all visitors to use.

Play Areas

There are two play areas within the park. The main play area, adjacent to the paddling pools, made some provision for toddlers and juniors. However, in line with the general status of the Park the Council wanted to create an exciting play facility, offering excellent play opportunities for all ages from toddlers to teenagers.

During 2004 works were undertaken to extend the boundary of the play area, making provision for additional fixed play equipment, open space for informal play and picnic tables.

Terrace Gardens

The open space between the café and main lake provided limited opportunity for visitors to sit and enjoy the facilities in comfort. It was a small, uninteresting space with great potential for development.

During 2004, a scheme was designed which sought to provide a larger, more attractive space for café users to enjoy.

The design also provided improved access to the water's edge for those with mobility problems, and delivered an enclosed grassed area ideal for formal or informal activity.

The new terrace gardens were created during 2005; now provide excellent views across the main lake.

Environment Lake

Built during the 1970's the polythene liner that retained the water throughout the lake system had become exposed and badly worn allowing water to leak through to the underlying chalk bed.

Upstream from the Millennium Lake, the Environment Lake suffered the same liner problems and, with some parts of the lake clogged with silt, there was a significantly reduced natural flow of water.

In 2006 the Council appointed consultants to undertake a comprehensive ecology survey of the lake and islands.

In Spring 2007 clearance of scrub and vegetation, from the islands, was carried out in accordance with the ecology survey, and with guidance from the consultants.

Work began, in Summer 2007, to drain the lake and remove the silt. Reshaping of the islands was undertaken and relining of the lake followed. All of the silt originally removed, was reused within the Lake to create a habitat immediately suitable for vital micro-organisms, and to assist with the establishment of marginals. A boardwalk and viewing platform provided visitors with a safe way to get close to nature.

Planting, to stabilise the banks and provide new wildlife habitats, was completed during Spring 2008.

This project delivered on three key agendas – enhancement of Stevenage's premier park, development of educational opportunities, and the improvement of wildlife habitats for the future.

The Main Lake

During an inspection of the Main Lake, in 2005, it was identified that a range of works were needed to be carried out to safeguard the future of the lake.

The project was programmed to take advantage of cold water temperatures during early Spring 2008 to ensure the minimal amount of stress to fish during their removal. The construction phase of the works was carried out during the Summer and was scheduled to be completed by the autumn, thereby enabling the lake to refill during the wet Autumn / Winter period.

The Council worked closely with the Environment Agency and fisheries consultants to ensure the fish in the lake were removed in an appropriate manner and subsequently cared for. An estimated 37,000 fish were removed from the Lake in Spring 2008 – including carp, bream, roach, perch. A majority of the fish were retained, and temporarily held in the Millennium Lake for future restocking. The remainder of the fish stock was sold to other local fisheries.

Works to drain the lake and carry out the necessary repairs started in June. Specialist contractors undertook the replacement of the wave deflector beams, and rejoining of the concrete surround.

The draining of the lake also created an opportunity for the removal of detritus from the bottom of the lake. Amongst the items found were fishing tackle, knives and a shotgun.

Winter 2009 was one of the driest winters on record and the lake struggled to refill as originally planned. This was exacerbated when it was discovered that a previous patch to the original lining had sprung a leak. So despite works being completed within the original timescale, it took a further 12 months for the lake to recover its minimum operational levels.

Sailing Centre

During 2008 the Sailing Centre and Café received a full refurbishment of the toilets, changing facilities, showers and class room. The reception area for the Sailing Centre was also relocated and refurbished.

Paddling Pools

The paddling pools were opened in 1972 and were traditionally available for free public use every year during the school summer holidays. The pools were annually visited by an average of 11,000 people during the 6 week period of opening.

36 years on the pools had come to the end of their economic working lives, and were proving expensive to operate in accordance with the current statutory guidance: paddling pools are subject to the same Health & Safety Executive guidance as swimming pools.

Following a feasibility study, the Council determined to replace the traditional paddling pool facility with an exciting new aquatic playground. From Summer 2009 visitors were able to enjoy safe, interactive water play at Fairlands Valley Park. The area now contains equipment which sprays, squirts, mists or sheets water, giving a fun play for youngsters in a safe and interactive environment.

The new scheme also included improved facilities for children and families using this area of the Park, including a refreshment kiosk and public toilets.

2010

Prior to 2010 the fishing activity was managed by SLL. However, there was increasing levels of complaints and negative feedback from anglers, local residents and parks visitors about the management. In response to this feedback, in 2010 the Council sought to improve the management of fishing activity to the Main Lake by contracting the works to a third, and specialist, party. Following a tendering process, Welwyn Garden City Angling Club (WGCAC) was appointed to work in partnership with the Council.

This has helped to improve the fishing experience for people wanting to fish at Fairlands Valley Park, and to significantly reduce the number of complaints relating to fishing. The club are proactive, and are proving a valuable partner in the park.

A number of floating vegetation islands were installed to the Main Lake, in liaison with WGCAC. These islands provide good habitat for fish and invertebrates below the water level, and are popular nesting sites for coots and moorhens above water.

2011

Signage

During 2011 a rolling programme to replace and improve signage within the park commenced. Damaged notice boards began to be replaced with new ones which provided more opportunity to post information notices and/or event posters. Finger signs were also introduced to key locations to help visitors find their way around the park.

Wild Stevenage

2011 also saw Wild Stevenage – a two year project delivered in partnership between the council and Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust, and funded by SoStevenage and Heritage Lottery Fund. The project sought to increase awareness of wildlife in Stevenage, by involving local people in habitat improvements within the town.

A key element of the project was the protection of Shackledell Grassland. At just 1.43ha the site was small, and subsequently the habitat was very vulnerable to damage through camp fires and gatherings of young people. Through the Wild Stevenage project the partners, and volunteers, helped to plant a new hedge to form a boundary to an extended area of grassland, forming an extension to Shackledell.

2012

Shackledell Grassland

The new grassland, created through Wild Stevenage, developed quickly and in 2012 a section of the original vegetation boundary to the site was removed to enable better access, for humans and wildlife, between the two areas.

A site survey, later in the year, found that most of the cricket and grasshopper species previously found in Shackledell had migrated into the new grassland area.

High Ropes

Funding from the Local Area Agreement Performance Reward Grant was used, in 2012, to create a high ropes facility at Fairlands Valley Park.



The facility was constructed within the sailing compound in order to ensure that users were supervised at all times, and that it would not be subject to vandalism.

Play Areas

During 2012 capital improvements to the play areas was completed. Additional play equipment was installed to the main play area, while the smaller play area, adjacent to the café car park, was completely replaced.