

Request

Would you please supply a copy of any Conservation and/or Management Plan prepared in connection with your Council's successful bid in 2008/2009 to the National Lottery 'Parks for People' Fund in respect of Mesnes Park, together with any subsequent amendments or additions thereto, and any similar plans or reports relating to that park prepared after 2009.

Response

[Please see following pages](#)

Mesnes Park, Wigan

Audience Development Plan

Final Report: March 2006

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1 Background to the plan

1.1 The brief and methodology

The Audience Development Plan details priorities for audience development at Mesnes Park up to and following its proposed capital development (see 1.2), with timed and quantified targets for sustainable and realistic growth of user numbers and engagement.

has worked closely with the Steering Group and management team at Mesnes Park during the period from October to December 2005 in compiling the Audience Development Plan.

The overall project has been managed by a Steering Group at Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust as follows:

- - Parks & Countryside Activities Manager
- - Project and Facilities Development Officer
- - Executive Director, Environmental Management and Sustainability
- - Parks Regeneration Manager.

The Audience Development Plan was undertaken in parallel to an Access Plan, also managed by a team at The two teams worked in close communication to ensure that plans were complementary.

The following have been undertaken in preparation of this Audience Development Plan:

- Desk research into organisational plans, policies and research, existing feasibility documents and other relevant local and regional information
- An analysis of the local catchment, population and competition
- Consultation with key stakeholders in Wigan
- A stakeholder workshop to discuss issues, potential and action plans
- Extensive research with users, non users, Friends of Mesnes Park and young people.

1.2 Mesnes Park background and development project overview

1.2.1 Background

Mesnes Park was Wigan's first municipal park, opened on 6 August 1878. It safeguarded open recreational space from development and provided a 'green lung' in an otherwise industrial town. It occupies twelve hectares of former manorial demesnes land known as the 'Mesnes' adjoining the town centre. The design was the result of a competition won by John McClean of Castle Donnington. His layout utilised the sloping site to create terraces surmounted by a pavilion and overlooking a formal garden. An ornamental lake was created from former marl pits and provision was made for recreational areas. Sport and play facilities were added to the Park within the design framework and the garden areas were renowned for their bedding displays and horticultural excellence.

Today the Park occupies the same area and retains the framework and features of the original design. These include the entrance gates and lodge, pavilion, ornamental gardens, walks, lake and rockwork.

1.2.2 Restoration proposals

With local industrial decline, Mesnes Park, in common with many other municipal parks, suffered a period of lack of attention and investment resulting in the loss of features and deterioration of the historic fabric. A concerted effort to address issues and reverse the decline began in 1996 when the Park's national importance was recognised and it was placed on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest. The Friends of Mesnes Park (FOMP) were formed in 1998 and have worked together with Park staff to instigate and undertake urgent work, consult with the public and actively encourage public participation. Noticeable progress has been made since 1999, appreciated and supported by the large number of park users.

The proposed restoration of Mesnes Park is detailed in full in the accompanying Conservation Management Plan. The first phase of the restoration focuses on the heritage and community benefits that would be seen from:

- The restoration of the pavilion, which is used as a café and forms the hub of the Park
- The bandstand, which will be upgraded so it becomes a venue for the proposed diverse performance programme
- Dalton's Steps, which lead visitors to the pavilion and from the top, offers views across the Park and into the town centre
- The lodge which has been unused and boarded up for some time, but development is at feasibility stage, ideally to bring part of the building back into public use.

1.3 Audience development plan overview

The Audience Development Plan will be pivotal to the activity planning, marketing and business planning for the proposed new Park operation. The information gleaned from the analysis will enable informed decisions to be taken, not only about the type and level of provision and activity at the redeveloped site, but also about the ways in which the operation as a whole can involve and attract audiences.

The Audience Development Plan investigated the following key areas affecting future audience development activity at Mesnes Park.

- A review of existing research to assess current audiences and potential audiences to identify:
 - Who are the current users?
 - Who are the potential users?
 - Why is the potential not being met?
 - What action is required to attract potential users and to encourage existing users to visit more often, and for longer?
- Understand current audiences and the barriers (including organisational, physical, sensory, intellectual, social, cultural and financial) that prevent people from accessing the Park (also covered in the Access Plan)
- Present solutions for improving access (also covered in the Access Plan)
- Recommend action plans for each target audience group
- Present priorities and resources needed to put the action plan into practice and to enable effective implementation.

The plan is divided into four distinct sections:

1. Situation analysis
2. Audiences and barriers
3. Analysis and assessment of potential audiences
4. Action plan.

Chapter 2 sets out ABL's analysis of the current operations and audience development in a situational analysis of Mesnes Park.

Chapter 3 analyses current and potential audiences, including the results of recent market research work and also looks at the barriers for use.

Chapter 4 examines the potential for building existing audiences and attracting new audiences, setting targets for measuring impact.

The last chapter sets out a broad action plan for the Park, with details of responsibilities and a broad timescale.

2 Situation analysis

2.1 Introduction

In considering plans for developing audiences for Mesnes Park and improving access to local communities, it is important to commence with a review of current activities, operations and relationships in a situation analysis. Situation analyses are an important part of an organisation's control and monitoring procedures and, in very broad terms, a situation analysis considers the following two questions:

- Where are we now?
- Where do we want to be?

This situation analysis is intended to both review and provide key indicators of factors relating to audience development under present arrangements for Mesnes Park. Issues of audience development need to be reviewed under current operations to inform the development of operations and plans for the new site.

The situation analysis has been informed by the following:

- A desk research exercise into the context and history of the existing resource
- A review of the proposed capital project plans for Mesnes Park
- An assessment of the local catchment area, including Census and deprivation statistics, MOSAIC¹ and TGI² data
- An assessment of the current activity to engage different audience groups and resources
- A review of the policy framework in which the Park is operating, as well as related initiatives locally
- Rationales for audience development
- Consideration of the staff resource.

¹ MOSAIC profile; this classifies households by post code into one of eleven lifestyle groups, which are in turn further divided to give sixty-one sub-groups or types. Mosaic profiling is generated from a number of sources, including the 2001 Census, house price data from the land registry, local levels of council tax and a number of market research surveys (including the Target Group Index, the British Crime Survey, and Experian's own lifestyle questionnaires).

² TGI (Target Group Index) is a global network of single-source market research surveys. The typical TGI survey covers 18 broad product / service areas taking in the full range of consumer products and services and providing data on some 4000 brands in over 500 product fields.

2.2 Mesnes Park: significance and value

Mesnes Park was Wigan's first municipal park, created in 1878 to safeguard open recreation space from development. It is an early example of a reclaimed colliery site, and therefore has a direct link with Wigan's industrial heritage.

The Park is located in the heart of Wigan in a prominent town centre location. It is listed Grade II on the English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens and forms part of the Mesnes Park Conservation Area.

The Park contains seven listed buildings and structures, as follows:

- Entrance lodge (1880)
- The main entrance gateway (1878)
- The Powell Monument to Sir Francis Sharp Powell, a local politician and hero (1910)
- The pavilion (1880)
- Two flights of Dalton's Steps (1878)
- The bandstand (1890).

The Park also has rockwork and a water feature created by James Pulham and Sons, initially uncovered by The Friends of Mesnes Park and gradually cleared over time.

Today the Park occupies the same area and retains the framework and features of the original design which had produced a bold and innovative layout. Changes have resulted in other features such as the fountain, drinking fountain and flower vases being lost, but overall the use of the Park remains consistent with the purpose for which it was designed.

The bandstand forms a significant and early addition to the original design. The recreation areas developed throughout the late 19th and 20th century were envisaged in the original design and are now in need of refurbishment.

The Park as a whole is deemed of high significance³. In terms of heritage merit, the lodge, main entrance gateway, pavilion building, pavilion steps, bandstand, the lake, main axial footpath and circulation route, and rockwork are deemed the most significant features.

³ Conservation Statement, Bertram Hyde November 2005

The Park is significant to the local community and sees high levels of use (see Chapter 3 for further details). The Powell Monument is of particular value for community use, in part due to the tradition in Wigan of rubbing Powell's foot for good luck.

Mesnes Park has local significance partly because it provided opportunities and experiences that were an important part of people's lives. The Friends of Mesnes Park group (see 2.4.3 below) and the work they have carried out to promote the Park has prompted considerable response locally. The exhibition 'Mesnes Park - a People's History', produced in 2000, included reminiscences and photographs of local people. The exhibition attracted great attention and has been photographed and hung as a permanent display in the café pavilion.

In terms of social and cultural significance, the events, sports and play facilities, café and community initiatives are particularly valuable features of Mesnes Park (see below).

2.3 Services and facilities

2.3.1 Opening times

Mesnes Park remains permanently open and is staffed⁴ from Monday to Thursday between 7.30 in the morning and 17.00 at night and from 7.30 to 15.00 on Fridays.

Fredericks, the café, is open at different times according to the time of year. In summer, opening times are 9.30 to 18.30, whereas in winter the café shuts at 16.30.

2.3.2 Services and activities

Mesnes Park has the following permanent public facilities.

Sports and play facilities:

- Children's play areas and playshack (built to RoSPA standards):
 - Under 5's Play Provision
 - 5 – 12's Play Provision
- Basketball pitches
- Extreme sports facility

⁴ It should be noted that there are no staff dedicated solely to Mesnes Park. All staff onsite will be from the Parks Services teams and Grounds Maintenance Services teams, who are responsible for working at all parks within the borough.

- Tennis courts
- Crazy golf
- A bowling green
- An informal recreation area.

Ancillary facilities:

- A café, Fredericks which offers hot and cold meals, drinks and icecream
- Toilets within the café.

Natural heritage facilities:

- A lake, which has recently been improved, further to feedback from users
- The rose garden and formal bedding displays
- A stone 'Play Trail' with a leaflet and plan of the Park, directing trail users to a series of stone gargoyles.

Exhibitions and interpretation:

- The Friends of the Park collected extensive historical information during the production of the exhibition 'Mesnes Park - A People's History'. The Heritage Services team supported the Friends through the project and Wigan History Shop displays the exhibition occasionally. Selected information and memories formed 16 panels which make up the exhibition displayed in the café area, although much information was not used due to the lack of space. An aspiration of the Friends is to publish a Mesnes Park history booklet, containing all the information which was collated.
- The Friends also contributed to Wigan's Parish Map, which was created to celebrate the Millennium and was co-ordinated through the Heritage Services team.
- Mesnes Park is the focus of many articles found in the Heritage Services magazine 'Past Forward'. The Friends of Mesnes Park have used the opportunity to recruit new volunteers through this means and help them to find out information about the Park.

2.3.3 Events

The 'Green Spaces Yours to Enjoy' events programme, organised by rangers, is the way that the Parks Services team encourages the public

to be involved with the Park. Events for families, older people, schools, young people and special interest groups have recently included:

- Natural history walks
- Green spaces conservation volunteer programmes
- Feed the birds and bird feeder making sessions
- Health walks
- Brass band performances
- Pumpkin carving session for families
- Christmas decoration making session
- Arts events.

If an organisation wishes to hold an event in Mesnes Park, an events pack is offered to support groups through the event planning procedure so booking, risk, insurance, and facilities are covered.

2.3.4 Community projects

Encouraging use of facilities by Wigan's diverse communities is a key theme for the Trust and the Festivals Team have worked in partnership with the Parks Team and other agencies to organise the WOW (Wigan One World) Festival. The pinnacle of the festival for the last two years has been a large event in Mesnes Park.

This has been the opportunity for local community groups from around the Borough to express their culture through dance, music and food.

Partnership working with Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust's Heritage Services section has also led to Mesnes Park hosting the annual Holocaust Ceremony.

2.3.5 Educational activities

The Park is used formally and informally as an educational resource.

Apart from particular links established with one school that lacks grounds for external activities, several schools use the Park without making direct contact with the ranger service. Primary classes have undertaken bulb planting, scouts manoeuvred the stone trail and brownie packs participated in Christmas workshops.

Children attending workshops at the Drumcroon Arts Centre sometimes use the Park as a visual resource and for lunch breaks.

However, Parks Community Officers acknowledge that there is much more scope for informal cross-curricular education and potential to develop more active and regular links with schools locally.

2.3.6 Joined Up Mesnes Park (JUMP) initiative

The JUMP (Joined Up Mesnes Park) project hopes to tackle the issue of youth nuisance and anti social behaviour in and around the vicinity of the Park. It takes a multi-agency approach and already has the support of the key agencies:

- The police
- The Community Protection Team – Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) unit
- The Parks Services team
- Positive Futures - an organisation which offers a range of services to young people in Wigan and includes the Connexions Service, Adult Information Advice and Guidance Services, the Youth Service, the Education Welfare Service and the Child Support Team
- The Friends of Mesnes Park.

The aims of the project are:

- To provide a safe environment within Mesnes Park
- To promote the safe use of the Park for all the community
- To engage with young people and offer a programme of diversionary activities
- To reduce the opportunity for anti social behaviour
- To improve the facilities for young people
- To develop a sense of ownership of the Park within the younger generation
- To reduce the perceptions that the Park is a 'no-go' area.

It is intended to do this by creating lit routes through the Park, installing monitored CCTV at strategic points in the Park and challenging unlawful behaviour using dedicated staff.

Alongside these developments, JUMP sets out to improve facilities for young people by developing a number of areas within the Park for them to meet, providing a co-ordinated programme of activities and developing youth mediation accommodation at the playshack. This will draw young people away from the more vulnerable buildings in the Park. It is hoped that a rapport will develop between youth workers, Police Community Support Officers (CSOs), Rangers and young people.

Funding is currently being sourced to implement a pilot JUMP programme, initially for a three year period.

2.4 **Management of the operation**

2.4.1 Governance

Since April 2003, all Wigan Borough's leisure and cultural services have been delivered by Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust, on behalf of Wigan Council.

Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust is a non-profit distributing organisation, which reinvests its surplus to improve services. The Trust is a registered charity that brings some financial advantages, and is maintained by external funding and income generation, including an annual grant from Wigan Council.

Their board of Trustees have the responsibility for ensuring the Trust is managed appropriately and all buildings and facilities are being leased from the Council.

Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust's Environmental Management and Sustainability team are overseeing the overall restoration of Mesnes Park.

2.4.2 Staffing

Management and community links

The Park is currently managed by Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust's, Environmental Management and Sustainability section. The Parks Services team is responsible for the management whilst the Grounds Maintenance Services teams are responsible for the maintenance of soft landscapes.

The Executive Management Team has undergone some recent changes. In January 2004 Stuart Murray was appointed as Executive Manager for Environmental & Sustainability and commenced on a reorganisation of the current structure. The new structure will recover the lost flexibility encountered through Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT), reaffirm ownership within the one service and remove the barriers of 'Client' & 'Contractor', facilitate community engagement through Townships and focus resources via a Parks strategy to effectively deliver a programme of strategic improvements.

Historically the Parks Manager (acting) had overall responsibility for Mesnes Park along with the other parks and green spaces within the Borough. A team of two Parks and Open Spaces Officers, 4 Parks Community Liaison Officers, and 10 rangers supported the Manager.

The new structure⁵ has a focus on regeneration and activities and rationalises the functions carried out by the top tier structure of the Environmental Management and Sustainability Section. A set of core sites will be derived from the Parks strategy and will focus resources to a smaller amount of sites. The non-core sites will transfer under the

⁵ For a diagrammatic representation of the new structure see Appendix 1

control of the Green Spaces Manager and remove duplication of staff time on sites.

The Parks Regeneration Manager is responsible for the development of a Parks Strategy, the development of parks related improvement schemes, grant applications and project delivery.

The Parks & Countryside Activities Manager is responsible for the presentation of the core sites, the ranger service and all issues relating to events and activities. The structure of Community Liaison Officers and ranger staff currently remains the same as the historical structure chart as work is undertaken to assess the best use of resource to meet the demands of the new senior role.

Officers are based in the Parks and Cemeteries offices approximately a quarter of a mile from Mesnes Park, enabling good daily communication and interaction between staff. The rangers based in Mesnes Park provide ranger services for the west of the Borough.

The Park & Countryside Activities Manager manages the capital and revenue budgets and is responsible for delivering the service plan.

Parks Community Liaison Officers are responsible for day to day contact with user groups, community groups, panels and committees, coordinate the events programme and organise many of the events in liaison with others. As the project has developed, the role of the Community Liaison Officers has grown in Mesnes Park, developing and maintaining links with the local community. In particular they liaise with the Friends group and attend their meetings and are members of Township Community Safety Group where they have regular contact with the police and youth services. Their relationship with other park staff, concessionaires and users is good and they are aware of issues and accessible and responsive to concerns of members of the public.

The role of one of the Parks Community Liaison Officer had been temporarily refocused to a Mesnes Park Development Officer, to facilitate the development of a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund. This has now been superseded with the appointment of the Parks Regeneration Manager.

The Parks and Open Spaces Officer is responsible for service procurement and managing the maintenance contract. Their work includes monitoring, organising the purchase and installation of new park furniture, initiating and supervising minor works and managing day to day maintenance issues in addition to liaison with contractors on site.

Currently the rangers patrol the park as part of a broader role that covers approximately 60 other sites. Their hours are seasonally adjusted and are managed on a 4-day shift system. There is ranger cover from 08:20 throughout the year with finishing times seasonally adjusted from 16:30 in winter to 22:00 in summer.

Rangers carry out a building check on a daily basis and respond to any defects and minor repairs that are required in the park, as specified by The Parks Community Liaison Officer. Any issues that arise from the building check are processed through the Maintenance & Repair system. The playground maintenance team is managed under the remit of the Policy & Regeneration Executive Director. The team is responsible for inspecting the play equipment once a week and follow their inspection procedure. An independent inspection is carried out twice per year.

Future Management

It is proposed that a Senior Ranger dedicated to Mesnes Park will be appointed to take responsibility for the overall management and maintenance of Mesnes Park. They will be responsible to the Parks & Countryside Activities Manager and take responsibility for the overall management and maintenance. Their responsibilities would include:

- Co-ordination of the work of staff in Mesnes Park
- Co-ordinate the restoration of Mesnes Park
- Planning of maintenance under the overall guidance and in accordance with the management and maintenance plan
- Management of tenants and concessions, including the café and sport facilities
- Communication with user groups such as the bowlers, Friends groups and Parks Forum
- Supporting sub groups of the Friends that deal with specific issues e.g. events, Lake Management group, etc.
- Assist Friends with funding opportunity initiatives inclusive of support training
- Co-ordination of volunteer activities
- Working with the Parks Community Liaison officers to co ordinate events and to encourage use of the park by existing and new sectors of the community, as determined by the Audience Development Plan
- Management of Mesnes Park revenue budget
- Responsibility for standards of care and the maintenance and improvement in quality; cleansing, routine maintenance of park fabric, cleaning of toilets
- Responsibility for health and safety including vehicle movement
- Responsibility for overall security

- Ensuring the implementation of the interpretation strategy
- Ensuring the implementation of the Access Plan
- Representation on the Township Community Safety Group
- Developing any funding/marketing opportunities for Mesnes Park to maximise income
- Liaison with Council Departments, other sections within Leisure & Culture Trust, strategic partners, e.g. Wigan and Leigh College, Drumcroon Arts Centre and the Town Centre Manager to coordinate activities.

Training and Continuing Professional Development

The Trust is committed to its Investors in People status and recognises that it is only through a competent and motivated work force that it can meet its strategic objective of delivering quality services to its customers and clients. The policy of the Trust is, therefore, to provide planned training and development opportunities for its employees in order to enable them to realise their own potential and so make the best possible contribution towards meeting the Trust's service objectives.

The Trust regards training and development as an investment in its work force, which will ensure that their performance is maximised through the development of appropriate knowledge, skills and attitude. For this reason, the Trust undertakes Employee Development Needs Assessments with its employees on a regular basis. The Trust will strive to provide the training and development opportunities to enable those needs to be met.

2.4.3 Friends of Mesnes Park

The Friends of Mesnes Park were formed in 1998 and are made up of representatives from stakeholders, local councillors, police and residents of the Borough. The group have been involved with the Park at all levels.

Their involvement includes:

- Day to day operational involvement
- Raising the profile of the Park within the community
- Research and interviews to enable them to produce their exhibition 'Mesnes Park – a People's History'
- Involvement in leading significant improvement projects
- The Friends have also been involved in the development of the restoration project from the beginning.

Membership of the Friends is open to users of the Park and residents of the Borough. Friends meetings are held every two months and attended by Parks Services Officers to provide a forum for continuous consultation on progress, ideas and action. Smaller sub committees meet more regularly and expand ideas and develop projects, such as the Lake Management group.

The Parks Team consider the relationship with the group as an important avenue of communication with the local community and value and act upon the feedback of the representatives.

2.4.4 Marketing and communications

The events programme is marketed by way of a quarterly leaflet which is distributed to a mailing list, schools, libraries, sports centres and public outlets.

The Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust web page also lists the events.

2.5 Access

An Access Audit has been carried out in the Park which identifies barriers which the Park presents to its current users and hinders the development of new audiences. This is explored further in the accompanying Mesnes Park Access Plan.

Key issues of physical access relate to the approach to the Park (lack of accessible parking bays and poor access from the town centre with a dual carriageway as a significant barrier). Throughout the Park, the footpath surfaces are in poor condition and the layout of the Park raises issues for those with physical impairments. Steps throughout are potential hazards.

Buildings and structures were designed many years ago and are not friendly to those with physical impairments. The pavilion which is used as a café, the hub of the Park, is accessed by two flights of steps, which presents problems for people with mobility impairments. Alternative routes are steep and increase the walk to the building. It was recognised that within the Park as a whole, there was a lack of disabled WC accommodation so they were recently upgraded. This was completed in March 2006. Toilets are only available when the café is open.

People with sensory impairments might be excluded from gaining the most out of the current experience of visiting the Park, because there are few ways for visitors to experience a visit, or events, through different senses, be it aural, visual or tactile. In addition, there is a lack of clear navigational support for people with visual or learning difficulties.

Hands-on⁶ opportunities are included in several of the spaces on the Park site and there was a sensory garden but this no longer exists.

⁶ Involving active participation

Plans to improve access and overcome these barriers are detailed in the Access Plan.

2.6 The local environment

2.6.1 A brief history of Wigan

The Borough of Wigan is the largest in Greater Manchester comprising rural and industrial communities and two major centres, Wigan and Leigh. Wigan was originally a Roman settlement. It became a Lancashire Borough in 1246 and grew as a market town with trade in local produce and textiles. By the seventeenth century Wigan was noted for its fine Cannel coal and ironworks. Industry was stimulated in the eighteenth century by improvements in water transport with the opening of the Leeds-Liverpool canal and in 1831 by the arrival of the railway.

Rapid expansion of the town in the early nineteenth century resulted in it becoming one of the unhealthiest in the country with abnormally high death rates. The second half of the century was characterized by municipal enterprise with the development of new streets and housing areas and the opening of a boarding school, infirmary, library, swimming baths and technical college, as well as Mesnes Park.

In first half of the twentieth century, Wigan was a thriving industrial town, but the decline of the coalfield areas caused industrial blight and high unemployment. Since the 1980s there has been substantial new investment. The town centre is classed as a major regional centre with its daily market, new shopping areas interwoven with Victorian arcades and surviving medieval street pattern and civic buildings. The Council has developed strategies for improvement, implementation and evaluation in all areas of its governance that endorse and deliver the policies of national government.

2.6.2 Mesnes Park location

Mesnes Park lies immediately north of Wigan town centre separated from the market and central commercial area by New Market Street and Mesnes Field. The Park forms an important area of green space in the heart of Wigan, creating a wedge linking the commercial centre with surrounding housing.

Mesnes Park is located adjacent to the new National Health Trust Outpatients Department, faculties of Wigan and Leigh College and Drumcroon Arts Centre. Many properties on Bridgeman Terrace to the east are now occupied by businesses but housing areas extend north, west and east of the Park. The Park is readily accessible by public and private transport by way of the town centre. Wigan is around 10 miles from Bolton and 14 miles from Bury and 20 miles from Manchester to the East and 10 miles from St Helen's to the South West.

To the West of Wigan is the M6 connecting to Carlisle in the North and Birmingham to the South. To the East of Wigan is the M61, with connections into Greater Manchester and Eastbound into Yorkshire.

Rail links connect Wigan to Bolton, Warrington, St Helens and Preston in under 20 minutes and Manchester in 40 minutes. Direct services are also available to Liverpool (50 minutes), Birmingham (90 minutes), Carlisle (90 minutes) and London (2 hours 30 minutes).

The railway station is a fifteen minute walk from Mesnes Park, and the bus station is approximately five minutes' walk away. Mesnes Park also serves as a pedestrian through route to and from the commercial centre.

Its location and relationship to the town centre means that it is accessible to both the local community and to a wider range of visitors who come to the town as a regional centre for shopping, work or study. Its central location means that many Council policies impact on the Park, which puts it well placed to be a vehicle to realise local aspirations.

2.6.3 Local population analysis

Local profile

According to the mid-2003 population estimates there were 303,900 people residing in Wigan, of whom 49.2% were male and 50.8% were female. Children under five accounted for approximately 6% of the resident population of Wigan; this compares with almost 6% for England and Wales overall. In mid-2003, 17.4% of the resident population in Wigan were of retirement age (65 and over for males or 60 and over for females) compared with 18.5% in England and Wales.

In the twenty years between 1982 and 2002 the population of Wigan declined by 1.2%, compared with a decrease of 2% for the North West region as a whole. Population density of Wigan averaged 1,603 people per square kilometre, compared with an average of 480 for the region and 380 people per square kilometre for England overall.

Table 1: Age Profile

| | Wigan % | North West % | England & Wales % |
|-------------|----------------|---------------------|------------------------------|
| Under 16 | 20.51 | 20.69 | 20.16 |
| 16 to 19 | 4.89 | 5.12 | 4.91 |
| 20 to 44 | 34.78 | 34.05 | 35.15 |
| 45-64 | 25.42 | 24.15 | 23.82 |
| 65 and over | 14.41 | 15.99 | 15.97 |

Base: all people

Source: 2001 Census, ONS

The population of Wigan is reasonably consistent with the UK average for those under 44, but has a higher proportion of those aged 45-64 and a

much lower proportion of over 65s than the region or the country average. The average age of the population in Wigan was 38.3 years. This compared with an average age for England and Wales of 38.6 years.

As shown in Table 2, people from ethnic minorities consist of less than 1% of the population of Wigan. This is considerably lower than the proportion in the North West region as a whole, or the country average.

Table 2: Ethnic Origin

| | Wigan % | North West % | England & Wales % |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|---------------------|------------------------------|
| White | 98.70 | 94.44 | 91.31 |
| Of which White Irish | 0.58 | 1.15 | 1.23 |
| Mixed | 0.43 | 0.93 | 1.27 |
| Asian or Asian British | 0.44 | 3.42 | 4.37 |
| Indian | 0.23 | 1.07 | 1.99 |
| Pakistani | 0.13 | 1.74 | 1.37 |
| Bangladeshi | 0.02 | 0.39 | 0.54 |
| Other Asian | 0.06 | 0.22 | 0.46 |
| Black or Black British | 0.18 | 0.62 | 2.19 |
| Caribbean | 0.06 | 0.30 | 1.08 |
| African | 0.10 | 0.24 | 0.92 |
| Other Black | 0.01 | 0.08 | 0.18 |
| Chinese or Other Ethnic Group | 0.25 | 0.60 | 0.86 |

Base: all people

Source: 2001 Census, ONS

The 2001 census suggests that Wigan has average levels of affluence; unemployment is slightly lower than the national average. Table 3 below shows the economic activity of those aged 16-74.

Table 3: Economic Activity

| | Wigan % | North West % | England & Wales % |
|--|----------------|---------------------|------------------------------|
| Full time employees | 41.71 | 38.77 | 40.55 |
| Part time employees | 23.75 | 23.39 | 23.30 |
| Self employed | 6.23 | 7.10 | 8.28 |
| Unemployed | 3.22 | 3.63 | 3.35 |
| Economically active full time students | 1.96 | 2.54 | 2.57 |
| Economically inactive full time students | 2.99 | 4.62 | 4.70 |
| Retired | 13.74 | 14.28 | 13.61 |
| Looking after home / family | 5.71 | 6.12 | 6.51 |

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|------|------|------|
| Permanently sick or disabled | 9.54 | 7.75 | 5.52 |
| Economically inactive - other | 2.97 | 3.32 | 3.12 |

Base: all people aged 16-74
Source: 2001 Census, ONS

Of the people in Wigan who were of working age (i.e. those aged 16 to 64 for men or 16 to 59 for women) the employment rate was 76% during the Summer of 2004 (June to August), compared with an average for Great Britain of 75%. Over the same three months in 1999, the number of people in employment in Wigan as a proportion of those of working age was 70% and the rate for Great Britain was 75%.

According to the 2001 Census, of the people in Wigan who were unemployed, 16.84% were aged 50 and over, 8.2% had never worked and 27.96% were long-term unemployed.

Wigan has a much lower proportion of full time students (4.95%) than the North West (7.16%) or the England and Wales (7.27%) average. Additionally, there is a significantly higher proportion of people who are permanently sick or disabled in Wigan, nearing twice the country average at 9.54%.

There are a number of other factors that provide a picture of the standard of living in Wigan:

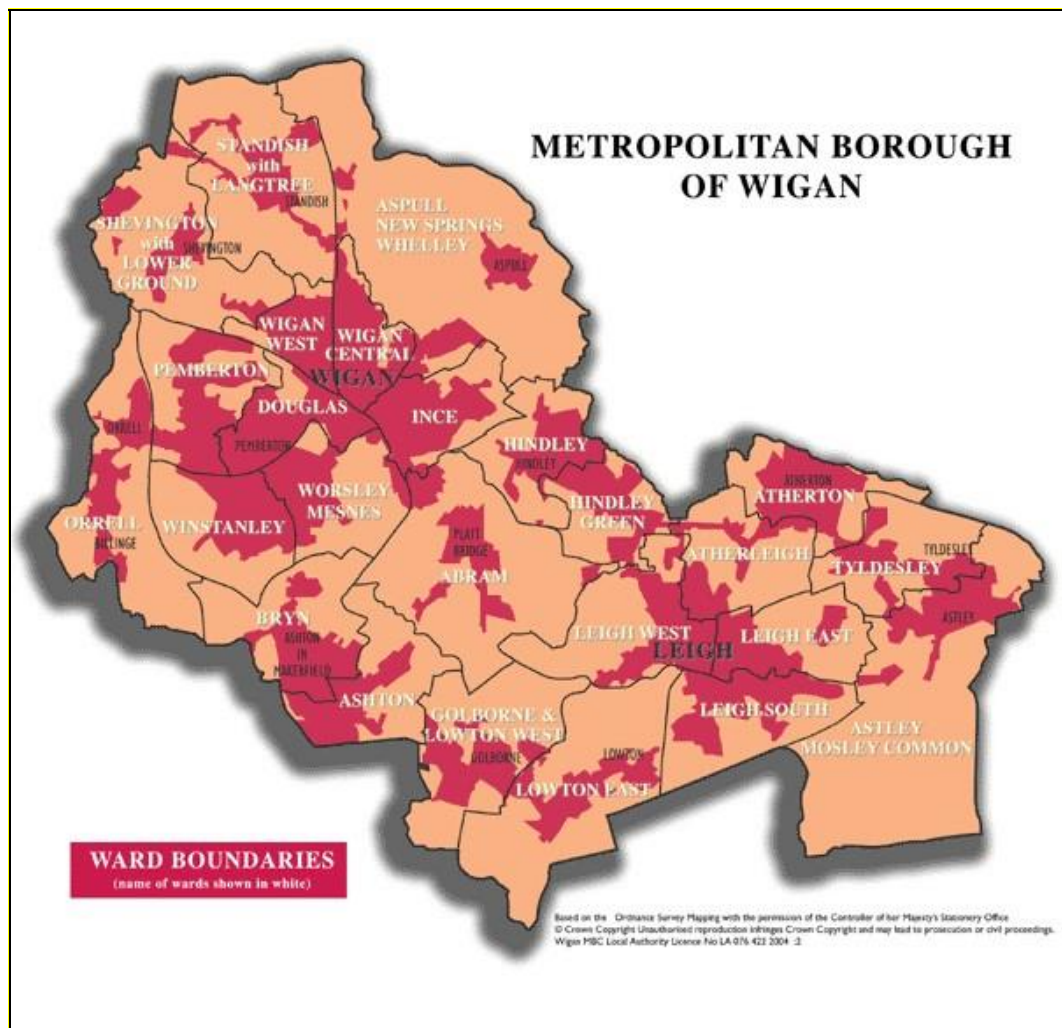
- Attainment of qualifications in Wigan is lower than the national average. 12.92% of people are qualified to degree level or higher, compared to 19.76% in England and Wales and 17.17% for the North West region. This reflects, in part, the lower proportion of students in the area. The proportion of the local population who have no qualifications (35.34%) is higher than the national average (29.08%).
- In September 2004, 12.8% of people claiming work-related benefits in Wigan had been doing so for more than 12 months; this compared with 16% in September 1999. Between September 1999 and September 2004 the number of young people aged 18 to 24 years who were claiming work related benefits reduced by 37.5% in Wigan, compared to a reduction of 30.7% in Great Britain overall.
- The proportion of people that rent from the Council is higher than the average for England and Wales as a whole (17.67%, compared with 13.24%).
- The proportion of people whose general health is described as 'not good' is higher than the region or country average: 11.96%, compared with 10.95% for the North West and 9.22% for England and Wales as a whole. 23% have a limiting long term illness in Wigan.

- The 2004 Indices of Deprivation gives Wigan an overall rank of 53 out of 354 local authority areas⁷. The area ranks at 40 on the Rank of Income scale and 9 on the Rank of Employment scale. Individual ward profiles are detailed below.

Ward profile

Mesnes Park lies within the Wigan Central ward but is in close proximity to the Wigan West Ward, as shown in diagram 1 below.

Diagram 1: Map of Wigan Wards



Due to its town centre location, the park is accessible by Aspull, New Springs, Whelley, Wigan West, Douglas, Ince, Pemberton and Worsley Mesnes. Densely populated areas lie within one mile of the Park.

⁷ The Indices of Multiple Deprivation are calculated by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. They combine information relating to income, employment, education, health, skills and training, barriers to housing and services and crime into an overall measure of deprivation.

Wards have been ranked⁸ according to key statistics, which allows for comparison between wards. Data shows the following key differences, of relevance to Mesnes Park:

- Wigan Central ward has the highest number of people over the age of 65 in the Borough (22% as opposed to a Borough average of 14.4%). The ward has the lowest number of children aged under 4 (4.2% as opposed to 5.8% for Wigan Borough).
- The Borough ward with the highest number of single parent households is Pemberton (14.1% compared with 10.4% for the Borough).
- Pemberton also has the highest proportion of residents with limiting long term illness (26.3%).
- Ince has the lowest proportion of residents aged 16-74 not in employment (5.1% unemployed).
- Six clusters of deprivation among the highest 10% in the country exist within the above wards. All of these clusters lie within one mile of Mesnes Park.

2.6.4 Catchment area analysis

A different picture of the population and its propensity to attend cultural events emerges through catchment analysis data from Experian Ltd, a leading credit reference agency and data supplier. The primary catchments for Mesnes Park have been taken as the 30-minute drive times from the site.

Depending on the nature of the experience at Mesnes Park, occasional events may draw on the larger 60 minute catchment area, for example Bury or Blackburn which fall just outside the 30 minute catchment. Further consideration of the day visitor market is considered under 2.6.6 below. It is of note that these conurbations have access to a range of provision and are unlikely to travel to Wigan for activities they can access closer to home.

Catchment area analysis

Catchment analysis data from Experian Ltd provides an analysis of the key catchments area of all those living within a 30-minute drive time of Wigan⁹.

⁸ Wigan Council estimates based on best fit of 2001 Census Output Areas to new ward boundaries in 2004.

⁹ This information was profiled using MOSAIC an industry standard database that analyses the population's socio-economic and socio-cultural behaviour.

30-minute catchment

The 30-minute catchment takes in an area just stretching to Preston in the North, to the western fringes of Manchester, including Bolton and Salford in the East, to Warrington and Knutsford in the South and to north Merseyside (including St Helen's and the coast) to the South West and West.

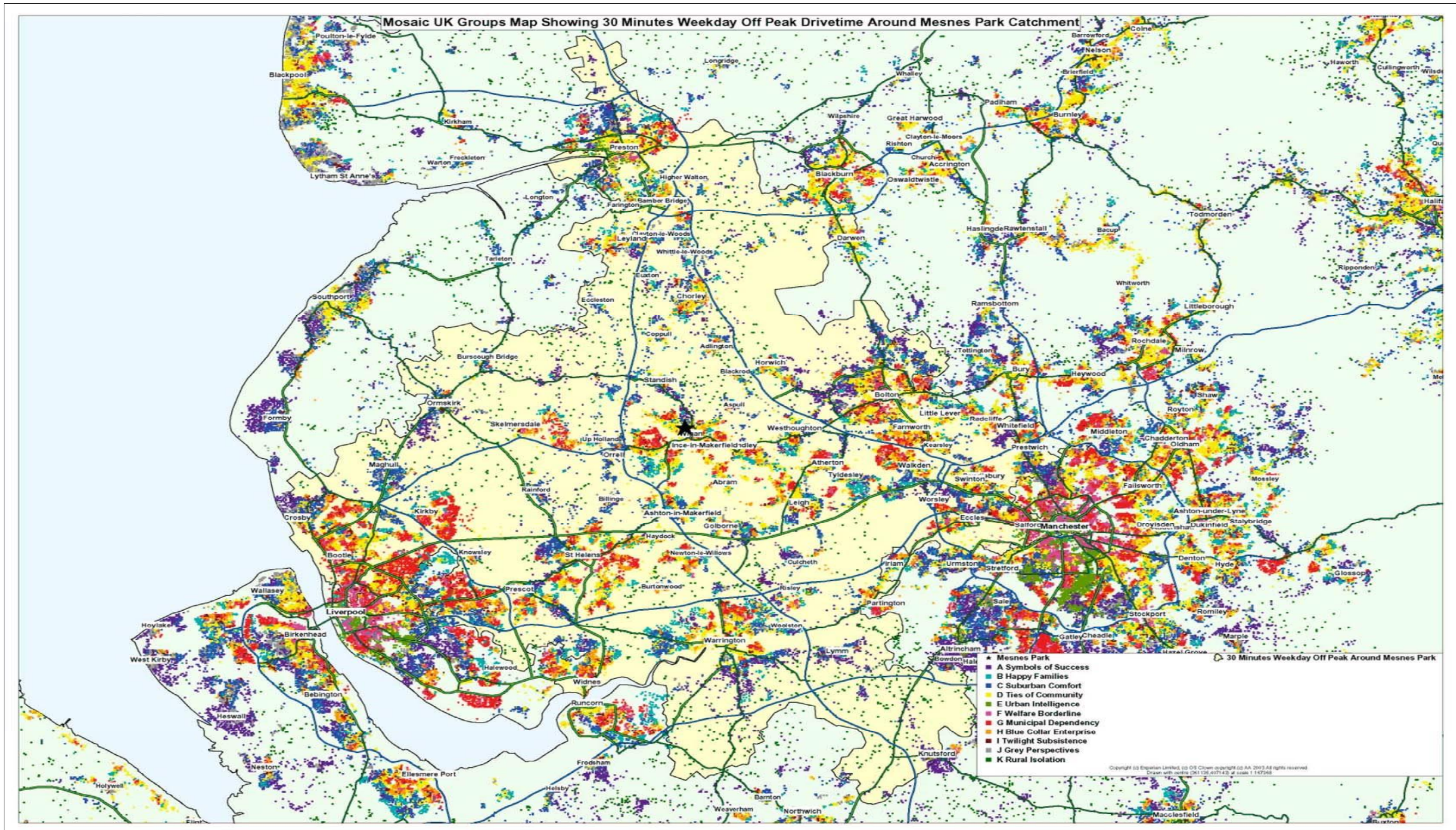
The catchment has a total population of 2,064,088 (age 15+ population of 1,671,220)¹⁰.

The catchment area is detailed on the map overleaf.

¹⁰ 2003 Population Estimate, Experian Ltd

ABL Cultural Consulting

Diagram 2: Catchment analysis: 30 minute drivetime of Mesnes Park



The age profile of the catchment population is broadly similar in terms of age profile to that of Great Britain. Reflecting the trend in the Borough above, the 45-54 and 55-64 age bands in the 30-minute drivetime are greater than the GB average, having an index of 101/103 against a national index of 100. Conversely, the proportion of adults aged 20-24 is lower than the country average with an index of 94 against the GB index of 100.

Profile of the population

The most commonly found MOSAIC household types within the 30minute catchment are:

- “Municipal Dependency”
Index of 251 compared to a GB index of 100

Municipal Dependency mostly contains families on lower incomes who live on large municipal council estates where few of the tenants have exercised their right to buy. Often isolated in the outer suburbs of large provincial cities, *Municipal Dependency* is characterised as much by low aspirations as by low incomes. Here people watch a lot of television and buy trusted mainstream brands from shops that focus on price rather than range or service¹⁰.

- “Ties of Community”
Index of 147 compared to a GB index of 100

Ties of Community is comprised of people whose lives are mostly played out within the confines of close knit communities. Living mostly in older houses in inner city neighbourhoods or in small industrial towns, most of these people own their homes, drive their own cars and hold down responsible jobs. Community norms rather than individual material ambitions shape the pattern of most residents’ consumption.

- “Twilight Subsistence”
Index of 118 compared to a GB index of 100

Twilight Subsistence consists of elderly people who are mostly reliant on state benefits, and live in housing designed by local authorities and housing associations. Some live in old people’s homes or sheltered accommodation, while others live in small bungalows, set in small enclaves within larger council estates. Most of these people spend money only on the basic necessities of life.

- “Happy Families”
Index of 113 compared to a GB index of 100

Happy Families contains people whose focus is on career, home and family. These are mostly younger age groups who are married, or at least in a permanent relationship, and are now raising children in post

¹⁰ MOSAIC descriptions, Experian Ltd

war family houses, often in areas of the country with rapidly growing populations. The focus of expenditure is on equipment for the home and garden, and the immediate family unit is the principal focus of leisure activities.

- “Suburban Comfort”
Index of 106 compared to a GB index of 100

Suburban Comfort comprises people who have successfully established themselves and their families in comfortable homes in mature suburbs. Children are becoming more independent, work is becoming less of a challenge and interest payments on homes and other loans are becoming less burdensome. With more time and money on their hands, people can relax and focus on activities that they find intrinsically rewarding.

Municipal Dependency is significantly over-represented in the immediate 30-minute drivetime, whilst *Ties of Community* is also very high. Both are characterised by high shared community values and there is the potential to capitalise upon this through encouraging continued use of Mesnes Park as a community space. *Happy Families* also represent a key group for Mesnes Park and it will be important to ensure that a wide range of provision exists for all types of family units.

Those that are interested in engaging with specific interest-based activities are most likely to be those who fall into the *Suburban Comfort* MOSAIC group, with a high proportion of older couples whose children have left home, leaving them with a greater level of time and income.

2.6.5 Population and social trends and projections

Future population trends and social trends are important to consider for the development at Mesnes Park. The United Kingdom population is steadily increasing with the Office of National Statistics projecting that it will increase from 58.8 million in 2001 to 63.2 million by 2026¹¹. This is equivalent to a 0.28% average annual growth rate. Almost 60% of this projected 4.3 million increase is attributable to an assumed level of inward migration.

National Population Projections (2003 based) for Wigan estimate a population of 319,100 by 2021 rising to 322,200 in 2028. At 2021 all age groups are higher than in the former projections except for the 5059 age group which shows a small decline in numbers.

Examination of population trends and projections indicates there will be not only a growing total market over the long term, but that there will

¹¹ Population projection information is sourced from ‘Interim 2001-based national population projections for the United Kingdom and constituent countries’ in ‘Population Trends’ No. 111, Office of National Statistics, Spring 2003 and ‘United Kingdom Population Trends in the 21st century’ in ‘Population Trends’ No. 103, Office of National Statistics, Spring 2001.

be substantial numbers of active, retired older people in the United Kingdom who have time to visit parks and are increasingly interested in developing new interests and skills.

2.6.6 TGI study into attendance at cultural/leisure activity

MOSAIC analysis indicates that residents within the catchment area do not always have a high level of disposable income that can be spent on cultural and leisure activities. Interest in natural and cultural history is reasonably low, and propensity to attend is often determined by the accessibility of the attraction.

The propensity of the catchment population to visit gardens, theme parks and other attractions of historical and natural interest can be seen in Table 4 below. This data was based on research undertaken for the Target Group Index Omnibus Survey (TGI), a lifestyle survey undertaken each year across the country. In the table, the index number in the final column identifies how attendance within the catchment area compares with the Great Britain average of 100.

Table 4: Types of cultural attractions visited in the last year by residents in the 30-minute drivetime catchment

| Leisure visits | 30 minute drivetime¹³ | 30 minute drivetime % | Great Britain % | Index |
|----------------------------------|---|------------------------------|------------------------|--------------|
| Archaeological sites | 78,254 | 4.68 | 5.60 | 84 |
| Beauty spots and gardens | 336,424 | 20.13 | 21.80 | 92 |
| Safari parks | 106,423 | 6.37 | 6.10 | 104 |
| Zoos | 189,732 | 11.35 | 11.51 | 99 |
| Theme parks | 276,269 | 16.53 | 16.29 | 101 |
| Other historical interest | 284,007 | 16.99 | 18.70 | 91 |
| Other places of natural interest | 251,624 | 15.06 | 16.70 | 90 |
| Adults 15+ estimate 2003 | 1,671,220 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Source: Target Group Index Omnibus Survey, Experian Ltd, 2003

Safari parks, zoos and theme parks are the attractions from the above list which local residents have the highest propensity to attend compared with the UK average. This suggests that for Mesnes Park, it is likely to be the themed nature of events, or the wildlife, which are more likely to attract visitors than the architectural and heritage items. This

¹³ Numbers relate to attendances rather than attenders
information permits only a broad analysis of triggers to attendance; the research in chapter 3 outlines areas of interest in further detail.

2.7 Policy and strategic framework

2.7.1 Internal policy and strategic framework

Audience development for Mesnes Park links closely with the strategies which drive Wigan Council and Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust.

Mission statement

Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust's mission statement and primary objective is:

'To improve, in partnership with others, the quality of life of everyone in the Borough.'

Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust strategic framework

The Board of the Trust has developed its vision against the background of the underlying principles of the Community Plan (see below):

'We recognise that leisure and culture makes a major contribution to wider agendas – healthy lifestyles, reducing crime, educational attainment, community cohesion for example. Our contribution will only be beneficial if more people participate in activities.'

The key priority for Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust is therefore 'Getting Wigan Active' and a vision for increasing participation of the community in the Borough has been developed. The Trust's aim is to get the people of Wigan active in relation to becoming more physically active, mentally and creatively active and active in their communities and as citizens.

Individual sections working within Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust Service areas have developed their primary objectives. These priorities provide a framework for service improvement and development and provide another element of the focus for delivery plan objectives.

Key areas within these priorities include:

- Increased participation
- Improved inclusion and access
- Developed and sustainable partnership working
- Improved customer satisfaction
- Income generation
- Consultation
- Service improvements
- Performance Management
- Grass Playing Pitch Strategy.

A Strategy for Wigan's Parks and Open Spaces 2001 – 2006

The draft Strategy was developed from the Environmental Management Service Plans and forms the basis for discussion and consultation with other Departments of the Local Authority, existing partners and community groups, and the wider community who are the primary users of parks and open spaces.

Through its policy and action plan proposals, it seeks to establish mechanisms and networks by which the level of participation and consultation in the future management and maintenance of the Borough's parks and open spaces can be significantly broadened and contribute to the implementation of the Cultural Strategy and wider Council agendas. Although this strategy was never formally agreed or implemented it will form the basis for a Township approach to a planned parks strategy.

Environmental Management and Sustainability Service Area Plan 2005 - 2008

The Service has seven strategic objectives:

- Participation
- Business performance
- Facilities improvement
- Partnership
- Customer satisfaction
- Service improvements
- Diversity

Key Priority 5 of the Plan 2005–2008 is to prepare and implement year one of the Mesnes Park Restoration Plan.

Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust Heritage Strategy

Action 6 and 7 of the Access Plan for the Heritage Service intends 'to improve service access to the community by increasing partnership working within the wider community'. It is intended to achieve this through the Heritage Office (Community Outreach and Education).

Good partnerships have already been established with the Heritage Services section, the Friends of Mesnes Park and the Parks Services Team.

2.7.2 Local strategic framework

Wigan's Community Plan 2005 – 2010

Through the Governments Modernising Local Government agenda, Wigan Council has developed its Community Plan and Local Culture Strategy.

The Community Plan sets out key priorities to assist in making improvements in the quality of life of Wigan's residents. It has been written following discussions between representatives of organisations and the community, commonly known as Wigan Borough Partnership. Meetings, research and consultation has been undertaken with thousands of people living and working in the Town to establish what would make a difference to improving life in Wigan.

The forum have produced six 'Vision Themes', grouped under the three headings of:

- People
- Place
- Image/lifestyle.

The Community Plan looks at these priorities in detail, setting goals and explaining how everyone can play a part in achieving them.

Wigan Council has defined a vision for the Borough with 10 aims stated in the Community Plan, to which the proposals for park restoration and improvement relate.

The Community Plan looks at these priorities in detail, setting goals and explaining how everyone can play a part in achieving them.

The Plan looks at five important principles, which underpin the whole Plan. These are:

- A strong community: one in which people are interested in the place where they live, get involved, help one another and work together
- Promoting social inclusion, so that everyone is entitled to the same opportunities and that special efforts are made to make sure that people who are at a disadvantage are included
- Partnership working to achieve things that are important priorities across the Forum
- Sustainable Development: thinking about the wider consequences of activities
- Learning from Experience: measuring impacts and outcomes of activities and studying what has worked well elsewhere.

The proposals for the restoration of Mesnes Park are considered to address all principles of the Community Plan.

Wigan Cultural Partnership

Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust, in partnership with the Council, have made a start on re-visioning the services that the Trust provides and developing existing partnerships. The key partnership is the Wigan Cultural Partnership.

Established in 1999, Wigan's Cultural Partnership consists of representatives from public and private sector organisations with strategic and operational interests in the development of leisure and cultural activity across the Borough, as well as voluntary organisations active in work at a local level and in advocacy for the fields they represent. The Partnership is committed to improving the lives of individuals and communities across the Borough, increasing the accessibility of cultural resources and developing recreational opportunities reflective of people's needs.

It has interests in the arts, children and young people, heritage, libraries, parks and green spaces, play, sports and tourism.

Six priorities provide a focus for its work:

- Getting more people involved in cultural activities in the area
- Improving access to information and improving communication
- Making the best use of existing facilities and developing new facilities
- Developing the role of culture in the community
- Developing a positive and innovative image for the area
- Focusing on young people's needs and hopes.

The focus upon encouraging active involvement of the people of Wigan in the area's culture, development of the facilities for local communities and the focus upon positive engagement of young people can all be supported through the Mesnes Park development.

The Cultural Strategy

The Local Culture Strategy *Northern Soul*, encompasses many broad ranging issues and includes:

- Sport
- Arts
- Heritage
- Libraries
- Parks and open spaces
- Community development and lifelong learning • Architecture
- Tourism.

The Local Culture Strategy, which again has been produced in partnership with other agencies, will guide arts, cultural and leisure provision in the town for the next 10-15 years. Mesnes Park ties together different strands of the strategy, encompassing not only parks

and open spaces, but also sport, arts, heritage and community development.

Local Agenda 21

The Council adopted the Borough's Agenda 21 Plan in August 2000 following widespread consultation with local people and businesses and various public sector agencies. Its approach was grouped under four main issues:

- Understanding the problems and being part of the solutions
- The economy
- Social issues • The environment.

The plan sets out 26 key themes, which represent the Borough's main priorities in the pursuit of sustainable development. These key themes have informed the Community Plan and the Unitary Development Plan review.

Many of the objectives of Wigan Council's Agenda 21 Strategy are met in Mesnes Park due to the intrinsic nature of parks and the Park's town centre location. The development of the Park allows for proposed action on Agenda 21 objectives, particularly with regard to the following:

- The adoption of 'green' management practices with regard to pesticide use, recycling, composting and procurement of goods and services
- Development proposals that contribute to the vibrancy and variety of Wigan town centre increasing its attraction as a destination for shopping, eating out, recreation, culture and tourism
- Improvements to encourage increased use of the Park as a safe, attractive, off road route for access and exercise
- Restoration and management proposals to conserve sustain and enhance the historic fabric, planting and biodiversity of the Park
- Facilitation of Life Long Learning opportunities in the Park through the provision of appropriate facilities, programmes, events, staffing, training and work placements.

Wigan Centre Plan

Wigan Centre Plan, the development plan for the town centre, shows Mesnes Park lying in the Education Area, an area with boundaries to the south with New Market Street and including Mesnes field with the Drumcroon Arts Centre and all the buildings of Wigan and Leigh College campus. The report recognises both the potential of these elements and their poor links with the town centre. Of the Park it states:

'Mesnes Park is potentially a major asset to the town centre but presently suffers from isolation. This could be addressed by physical measures to better link the Park to the town centre for pedestrians and cyclists and by imaginative events and marketing'.

Other related strategic documents

A number of other key strategy documents influencing the Mesnes Park Restoration Project have been reviewed as part of this project:

- Sport, Health and Physical Education Strategy 2005-10 (SHAPE)
- Revisioning Strategy 2005-07
- Arts Alive Arts Strategy for Wigan 01/06
- Community Playground Development Strategy
- Children Young People and Families Development Strategy
- Youth Participation Strategy
- Street Scene Strategic Plan 2002-06
- Destination Wigan 2004-09
- Greater Manchester Police Policing Plan.

2.7.3 Development plan fit with local strategic framework

The regeneration of Mesnes Park in the centre of Wigan is seen as a key component in the regeneration process of the town. The establishment of Twin Ward Risk Management groups and later Community Safety Groups has already had a beneficial impact on the Park with continuing partnership working with the Community Safety Team. The opening of the Outpatients department adjacent to the site should be an opportunity for Park Services, Active Living Team and Health staff to collaborate on joint healthy living initiatives.

The Cultural Strategy will guide the work of the Cultural Partnership and continue to support the development of arts, sports and play events and facilities in the Park. In addition, many of the Agenda 21 objectives are already integrated into the Park's management and can be incorporated more fully in proposals for restoration and management. There are clearly also numerous opportunities for the Park to help in the delivery of adult learning provision.

Park proposals must also take account of the Community Plan covering action on community regeneration, Agenda 21, sport and recreation, transport and crime reduction.

2.8 **Key stakeholders**

The communities of Wigan Borough are key stakeholders in the development of the Park. The aim is to continue to consult and involve the community in the decision-making about the future of the site and the activities at Mesnes Park as a whole.

The Park has a wide range of local and regional partnerships within the public, voluntary and community sectors and work on programmes of community engagement, learning and programme development in close collaboration with these providers. These include the local colleges, Drumcroon Arts Centre, the Thomas Linacre Outpatients Centre, local businesses and key officers and members of Wigan Council.

In addition, the Friends of Mesnes Park are key stakeholders, as those who invest their funds and in some cases, time as volunteers, in the running of the Park.

Representatives from all of the above organisations have been consulted as part of this investigation and consultation lists can be found in Appendix 3¹².

2.9 Related initiatives

In considering the wider operating environment and position of Mesnes Park, there are a number of related initiatives which tie in with the overall development plan, or audience development objectives.

Restoration and management of the Park must be considered in relation to proposals for the town centre and the Park's immediate neighbours - Wigan and Leigh College, the Health Trust outpatient facility in the former grammar school and Drumcroon Arts Centre. These are highlighted below.

Thomas Linacre outpatient facility

The development of an outpatient facility in the former Grammar School buildings on the corner of Mesnes Park Terrace and Parson's Walk opposite the Drumcroon Arts Centre is drawing more people to the north side of the town centre. There is potential for Mesnes Park to work in partnership with the facility to provide facilities to support patients, visitors or staff.

Wigan and Leigh College development

Wigan and Leigh College development plans will have an impact on the Park. Proposals include vacating Gidlow Mill and constructing purpose built facilities on the adjacent car park beside the north entrance to the Park.

Gidlow Mill may be converted to apartments and potentially this could bring a whole new group of users to the Park and economic benefits to the town. Not only is the college an important Park neighbour, but its

¹² Please note that stakeholder consultations have taken place over the last five years.

students are major Park users and the college has a 'multiplier effect' on the town's economy.

One perhaps less obvious reason for the contribution of students to the economy and development equation is their reliance on transport. Many students have to stay in town for a full day even though their classes may be limited. Much time is spent in the college refectories but could potentially be spent at other town centre, or Park, venues if these were attractive and accessible.

Drumcroon Arts Centre development

The Drumcroon Arts Centre is well established and provides high quality visual arts resources close to the commercial centre of town. Its basic remit is to raise standards in art in Borough schools but it already attracts interest and visitors from outside the Borough. Like the Park, the Centre is a potential contributor and attraction in development proposals, a catalyst for community involvement, an economic asset and an important contributor to Wigan's twenty first century image.

The Drumcroon Arts Centre would welcome joined up thinking between Education and Leisure. Its experience and that of the Friends of Drumcroon Charitable Trust could prove helpful and there are undoubted benefits to be gained from collaboration working particularly on events and marketing.

Wigan town centre development

Park proposals must also take account of Wigan town centre's development and fit with Wigan Centre Plan (see above).

Improving physical and visual links, upgrading the quality of paving, road crossings and street furniture and introducing signage and information panels in the town centre area would all assist in improving access and perceived links with the Park. They could encompass recommendations in the Borough's access for all, cycling and walking strategies. The value of these measures would be enhanced by improvements to the Park boundary, main entrance and lodge.

The Town Centre Manager has aspirations to promote the town centre as a place for a day out and a destination for coach parties. The Park could play a significant part in such promotion, providing contrast, alternative facilities and helping to extend the length of time visitors spend in the town centre. Visits of over two hours have proven economic benefit, as visitors are likely to spend more, often on refreshments. The pavilion in the Park has the potential to provide part of the 'café society' to which the Borough aspires.

Though the town centre has many pedestrian shopping streets, malls and the market, it has one principle meeting point, Market Place. The

Park pavilion was such a venue at one time and has the potential to become so again, a destination and focus.

Any proposals for the Park must in marketing terms consider its packaging. The impression given by the Park to passers by, whatever the mode and speed of transport, is vital. This is particularly important from the main northern approach along Bridgeman Terrace. Good boundary treatment coupled with tantalising glimpses into the Park would invite visitors, create a favourable impression and foster a sense of civic pride. Outstanding quality in the Park would enhance the feel good factor of the town centre, an aid to investment and regeneration and a discouragement to crime.

3 Audiences and barriers

3.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at:

- The current users of the Park
- The results of extensive quantitative consultation with different target groups between 2000 and 2004
- Information from consultation sessions with the Friends of Mesnes Park
- The results of primary research undertaken with current and potential users, stakeholders and influencers in Autumn 2005
- The barriers to engagement and participation.

3.2 Current users

3.2.1 Visitor numbers

The park receives just over 2 million visits per year based on the findings of the user and non-user survey carried out in 2000.

From this survey, broad estimates of total usage figures for the Park have been calculated by the Marketing Section of Wigan Council.

Initial results from postal and on site questionnaires indicate that an estimated 1,718,464 visits are made to the Park each year by the 22,242 residents of Beech Hill and Swinley and that 91.4% of residents of these two wards use the Park (representing 20,329 users in these two wards). Survey findings related to frequency of attendance are applied to the ward population as a whole in the table overleaf.

Table 5: Calculations of Mesnes Park annual user numbers:
Swinley and Beech Hill

| Frequency | Users | Calculation | Total visits per annum |
|-------------------------|-------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| 3 times a week 34.0% | 6,912 | X 3 visits = 20,736 x 52 weeks | 1,078,116 |
| 2 times a week 20.7% | 4,208 | X 2 visits = 8,216 X 52 weeks | 437,632 |

| | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------|------------------|------------------|
| Once a week 15.2% | 3,090 | X 52 weeks | 160,680 |
| Once a month 10.7% | 2,175 | X 12 months | 26,100 |
| 4 times a year 19.6% | 3,984 | X 4 times a year | 15,936 |
| TOTAL | 20,329 | - | 1,718,464 |

This figure does not take into account the number of visits made by people from other areas which constitute 14.7% of overall visits.

Therefore when an overall visitor number is calculated, the remainder are assumed to visit with similar patterns, so an additional 14.7% is added to the total number of visitors as shown in the table below.

Table 6: Calculations of Mesnes Park annual user numbers: total

| Group | % of overall visitors | Total visits |
|------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Swinley and Beech Hill | 84.3 | 1,718,464 |
| Other visitors | 14.7 | 296,147 |
| TOTAL | 100 | 2,014,611 |

The estimated total of 2,014,611 is used as a base figure throughout this Audience Development Plan.

3.3 Findings from research and consultation

A considerable programme of consultation has been carried out over recent years to establish community and stakeholder aspirations for the future of the park and to prioritise development. These have included:

- Initial consultations carried out by Landscape Design Associates in 2000
- Stakeholder consultation through interviews and a staff/stakeholder workshop
- User and non-user survey carried out by Wigan Council's Marketing Section in 2000
- Consultation with young people

- Regular meetings with the Friends of Mesnes Park
- Ongoing visitor surveys
- Citizens Panel survey on a regular basis
- Consultation with 'Youth In Action' in 2004.

3.3.1 Stakeholder consultations

A large number of stakeholders and staff were consulted between 2000 and 2005 to inform the Audience Development Plan process. Initial consultation took place in 2000 with Park Services staff, Planning and Development teams, Economic Regeneration teams and Land and Property teams in Wigan. In addition, Councillors, the Friends of Mesnes Park and youth, education and learning representatives were consulted from the local area.

In Autumn 2005, many of the above representatives were consulted again through a stakeholder workshop to discuss the specific proposals and implications as regards audience engagement.

A full list of consultees is provided in Appendix 3¹³. Key findings from the stakeholder consultations are detailed below.

Links to town centre development

- By working in partnership, audiences who use the commercial centre can be attracted to Mesnes Park. Between 5,000 and 7,000 people work in Wigan town centre every day and 22,000 vehicles use the town centre car parks every week.
- It might be appropriate to develop a collaborative approach to events and activities in the town centre. This could mean performances taking part within the shopping centres which could be relocated to perform in the Park at lunchtimes. The town centre mascot "Wiggy" could be useful in encouraging and promoting Park activities in the centre.
- It might be interesting to explore the opportunity for 'pay on exit' parking tickets to promote the location plan of the Park and visitor information, or offers at Fredericks café.
- An existing business newsletter, put together by the Town Centre Manager on a quarterly basis and distributed to the 500 businesses within the town centre, could be an opportunity to promote events,

¹³ Please note that stakeholder consultations have taken place over the last five years.

recruit new Friends and inform people about developments at the Park.

- Poles are being erected to hang banners, along Standishgate, in the town centre which will be available at a cost to promote businesses, events and similar. This method of promotion would be effective for Environmental Management to promote the Park and its activities.
- The jazz festival brings a worldwide audience to Wigan and there is interest in a greater range of activity within the Park which can attract the festival audiences.
- There is interest in building on the success of the WOW festival with larger arts and community festivals throughout the year.

Community use

- The playshack could be used as a base for a range of groups, to extend the time that they can spend in the Park. It would be useful have staff available to carry out sessions about the Park with visiting groups.
- The café pavilion could be used to host exhibitions, for example of children's art work. There is potential to make better use of the contacts of local artists already involved with the nearby Drumcroom Arts Centre who could contribute to a more diverse events programme.
- The stone 'Play Trail' and gargoyles could be used for orienteering sessions, since this is now a subject on the curriculum.
- The Thomas Linacre outpatients building overlooks the Park, in particular the formal lawns and rose garden. Partnerships have already been established when the rose garden was being restored. The natural surveillance which the building offers from its windows enables staff and visitors alike to easily view the park and this 'parkwatch' scheme has the potential to be developed further by a more robust monitoring regime and better promotion within waiting areas, such as the running of the Mesnes Park Young User group video promotion.
- The Park and in particular the rose garden and café pavilion are wonderful places to spend some time relaxing and taking refreshment for outpatients. Promoting the Park for these purposes with patients, staff and visitors is a way of developing a new user base for the Park.

Engaging young people

- A foremost concern is the positive involvement of young people in the development of the Park through projects involving sports and the college. The JUMP (Joined Up Mesnes Park) project (see 2.3.6) is considered vital in the overall development, to seek ways to develop ownership and pride in the Park among young people through providing diversionary activities and working with other agencies. There is a poor perception of the young people who use the Park, but stakeholders are keen to emphasise that it is a small number of young people who cause problems.
- A video has been produced with a group of young people where they discuss what they would like to see in Mesnes Park. This can be used to design activities for young people and to engage groups in the process.
- Wigan and Leigh College is an important strategic partner which contributes significantly to the Park's user profile. Courses studied which could be linked to events and activities in the Park include sports and fitness therapy, photography, joinery, business studies, graphic design, sports studies, childcare, administration, engineering and construction, leisure and tourism, public services, health and social care, media studies, art and design, fashion design, computing, health, safety and environment.
- Children who go to schools based on the periphery of the town may never have been to Mesnes Park, therefore it would be worth considering summer shows, or school competitions, which could attract pupils from across Wigan to events in the Park.

Ancillary facilities

- Fredericks café would be keen to find ways to extend the length of stay of café users. The café is the key business offer in the Park and has succeeded in attracting much repeat business. It is a key space for socialising, for all types of user, and some will even regularly visit the café for Sunday lunch or for business meetings.
- There are aspirations to bring the upper floor of Fredericks back into use, possibly as an Internet space, or an area for groups to use (e.g. readings, birthday parties).
- There is much interest in seeing the Lodge restored as a public space, whether as an information centre, education space, public toilet facility or as a base for a partner (e.g. the Police) working in the Park.

Sports and recreation

- As the highest point in Wigan, Mesnes Park was historically termed 'the lung of Wigan' as one of the best places to go to breathe fresh air. It could enhance its role as a service to improve health through a range of sports and recreation activities.
- Lots of young people do currently use the Park for recreation and there is much demand for more and better flexible facilities to enable many groups to use the spaces at the same time, for formal and informal sports and recreation. A broader approach to sports and active play, with no fixed boundaries, would help to create this.

3.4 Friends of Mesnes Park priorities

The Friends of Mesnes Park have been regularly consulted as a group throughout the development process. In November 2005, they agreed a list of seven priorities for the development of the Park and discussed the list at the stakeholder session. The seven key areas for development were:

- The future of the lodge buildings and associated ground is a priority and the Friends would like to see the building retained and renovated, preferably with a Park-related function and ideally for community use.
- Security improvements for a safe, secure, unthreatening Park.
- The Park's environment is the foremost concern to permit better use of the space throughout the day and evening. Safe routes through the Park, CCTV and a permanent staff presence would be important considerations.
- The Friends of Mesnes Park believe strongly in the positive involvement of young people and the potential risks if they are disengaged from the development project. They are in support of the proposed JUMP project and are keen to explore the idea of a youth space within the Park.
- The play area is badly in need of updating and renovating. Together with the playshack, this area of the Park provides real potential for development for families and children.
- Public education is important since so many of the problems that beset the Park (dog fouling, litter, minor vandalism, anti-social car parking and abuse of the disabled parking system) are due to uncaring social attitudes. This whole issue of signage, publicity, events and information leaflets should be a priority. On the positive side there is great potential for engagement with community interests such as horticulture, sport and art.

- Fredericks have made a real difference to the fortunes of the pavilion café, as well as to public perceptions of the Park. The Friends would like to see this developed through full use of the pavilion, including the upper floor.

3.5 User and non-user survey

Wigan Council Leisure and Cultural Services Marketing Department carried out a user and non user survey in 2000. The purpose of the report was to provide Wigan Parks Services with information relating to users and non users of Mesnes Park, and to consider what was valued as important for the future development of Mesnes Park.

The surveys investigated:

- Detailed profile of users and non-users
- Numbers of visitors per annum
- Triggers and barriers to using the Park
- Opinion on future developments
- Level of support for securing funding for Park improvements.

The key findings of the results are summarised below.

3.5.1 User survey

An on site survey consisted of a full week (Monday to Sunday) period within the grounds of Mesnes Park undertaken by Park Rangers. Each day a set time period was allocated for the research, with no two days having the same time period. A total of 239 questionnaires were completed in the week. The results of the user survey indicate the views of existing visitors to the Park.

Key findings were:

- The split of male to female respondents was very even, with male 51% and female 49%.
- The age range of existing users is varied. 42% of visitors are aged 45 years and over, with a decreasing number of visitors the younger the audience gets. 30% were aged between 30 and 44 years, and 28% between 16 and 29 years.
- Nearly 90% of users visited the Park each week and 50% visited three times each week.

- 70% said they spent up to an hour in the Park, with 24% spending between one and three hours.
- 45% used the park to take part in exercise or sports, 30% took children to use the play facilities, 12% used the Park to get to somewhere else and 7% visited to socialise.
- When asked about what was important for future development, 25% said that Park security was the most important, closely followed by improvements to the buildings. Improvements to environmental features, play facilities, events and activities and sports facilities were also issues for Park visitors.
- 99% of respondents would support applications for major investment in Mesnes Park.
- Within each category the improvements in the table overleaf were identified as being most important.

Table 7: User priorities for improvements to the Park

| Issue | Most important improvements |
|------------------------|---|
| Park security | Security patrols (32%), staff on site (30%), dog control measures (24%), by-law enforcement (15%) |
| Building improvements | Toilets (32%), lighting (19%), seating and litter bins (15%), wheelchair/pram access (11%) |
| Environmental features | Lake area (25%), wildlife/wildflower areas (22%), annual bedding/lawns (21%), rose garden ¹⁴ (16%) |
| Play facilities | Picnic area improvement (26%), young play equipment (24 %), older play/teenage meeting place (24%) |
| Events and activities | Music concerts (23%), children’s entertainment and activities (19%), sports coaching (10%) |
| Sports facilities | Grass surface for ball games (24%), tennis courts (18%), hard surface for ball games (14%), bowling green (14%) |

3.5.2 Non user survey

A postal survey of 1,800 questionnaires was distributed equally across the Wards of Beech Hill and Swinley which surround the Park. 579 questionnaires were returned (a 32% return rate).

¹⁴ Survey carried out prior to the restoration of the rose garden

The postal survey indicates the views of potential visitors to the Park. It is of note that the survey aimed to target people who were not regular Park users, but did not specifically exclude those who had been in the past. These views are critical in potential audience development. Key findings were:

- 91% of respondents said they had visited the Park in the past.
- When asked how often they had visited the Park in the last 12 months, 57% said they had visited at least once a week, 50% visited occasionally and 13% had visited once a month.
- When asked how long their visit usually lasted, 81% said their visit lasted for up to an hour, 19% said it lasted from one to three hours.
- When asked why they had visited the Park, 33% used the Park for sports or exercise, 27% of respondents visited on their way to somewhere else, 21% visited to take the children to play, 14% visited to socialise and relax and 6% visited to take the dog for a walk.
- 45% of respondents had not visited in the last 12 months because they said the facilities were poor and there was nothing there to interest them, 35% said they felt unsafe and 15% said they did not have the time to visit.
- When asked what would encourage respondents to visit Mesnes Park in the future, priorities were environmental improvements (27%), improved toilet facilities (16%), more security patrols (14%), more litter bins and seating (10%), a better events programme (9%) and better children's play area (8%).
- 30% of respondents said they would like more music and drama when asked what events or activities they would like to see. 24% would like more environmental and gardening activities whilst 16% said they would like to see more children's entertainment.
- When asked what was important for future development, 26% stated Park security and 21% stated building improvements, followed closely by environmental improvements. Equally important for future development were events and play facilities, both at 12%.
- 93% of respondents would support a bid for major investment in Mesnes Park.
- Within each category the improvements in the table below were identified as being most important.

Table 8: User priorities for improvements to the Park

| Issue | Most important improvements |
|------------------------|--|
| Park security | Security patrols (29%), staff on site (28%), dog control measures (26%), by-law enforcement (17%) |
| Building improvements | Toilets (33%), lighting (15%), wheelchair and pram access (12%), buildings (12%), fencing/gates (9%), information signs (3%) |
| Environmental features | Lake area (28%), annual bedding and lawns (25%), wildlife/wildflower area (18%), rose garden ¹⁵ (11%), tree planting (10%), shrub areas (9%) |
| Play facilities | Under 8's play (34%), picnic area (20%), Over 11's play equipment/teenage facilities (20%), 8-11's play (20%), art/statues (7%) |
| Sports facilities | Bowling greens (27%), grass surface for ball games (21%), tennis courts (15%), hard surface for ball games (15%), orienteering trail (8%), skateboard area (8%), basketball court (6%) |

3.5.3 Consultation with young people

In 2000, young people were consulted to identify their aspirations and find out what events they would like to see in the Park in the future. Four methods of consultation were used.

- Survey at 'Mesnes Power', a free arts and music festival.
- 'POD': a temporary drop-in centre consisting of a metal portacabin was set up on the Pagefield College car park adjacent to the Park. Consultation was carried out in partnership with Youth Services who were in contact with young people in the Park.
- Wigan and Leigh College students, as part of the National Spring Clean Campaign and an environmental awareness day. Students were surveyed following litter clearance in the Park.
- Positive Futures outreach work throughout Wigan with young people which involved discussions about Mesnes Park with participating individuals.

The findings are summarised below.

Mesnes Power consultation

¹⁵ Survey done prior to the restoration of the rose garden

93 young people at the Mesnes Power arts and music festival were asked why they visited the Park and were given an opportunity to express their views on its future. Key findings were:

- 73% of respondents visited the Park at least once a week with 27% visiting less than once a week.
- 70% of young people visited to use the Park facilities, relax and to meet friends. 22% visit for other reasons and 7% visit to get to somewhere else.
- 34% of young people would like to see fetes and funfairs in the Park, 25% music and drama events and 27% would like to see sports or exercise events.
- When asked about future developments, 20% said security was equally as important as a skateboarding facility. Meeting places were equally important as improved sports facilities.

POD consultation

- 56% visited the Park to meet new friends.
- When asked about future ideas for events in the Park, 35% would like to see fetes and funfairs, 29% would like to see more music and drama and 17% would like to see fitness and exercise activities.
- When asked about what was important for future development, 28% stated a meeting place, with 22% feeling that the café was important. 17% stated security and 14% a skateboarding facility.

Wigan and Leigh College Students

- 42% of respondents visit the Park more than three times a week.
- When asked about future events, 40% said they would like to see more events in the Park, with a preference for music events. 35% said they would like to see more fetes and funfairs in the Park. 32% of students would like to see more sporting and fitness events and coaching. 9% said they would like to see environmental projects.
- When asked about what was important for future development, 24% said a skateboard facility. Equally important were the café and improved sports facilities. 15% said they would like better toilet provision.

- Further consultation was undertaken with students at the College in 2004 to expand on that which had been carried out in 2000. Key suggestions for improvements included: areas for relaxation, shelters, improved café facilities, toilets, wildlife, more bins, facilities that will assist coursework, lit sports areas, crazy golf, more open tennis and bowling facilities, art in the Park, pedal boats on the lake, walking events, parking, reduced traffic through the Park, improved basketball surfaces and improvements to the lake.

Youth in Action

Positive Futures undertake outreach work throughout Wigan. A group were engaged in the vicinity of Mesnes Park who wanted to be involved in improving the Park for the community. The results of their discussions and Action Plan for the Future are summarised below:

- Young people would like to use the existing facilities within the Park as possible shelters for 'teen meets' and as a regular meeting place for young people and detached workers
- A 'dog park' was suggested for dog owners to use for exercising their pets

- There is a lot of interest in a skatepark, or BMX ramp
- There is concern about safety and a desire to see greater police or staff presence
- A properly marked football pitch would be popular
- Information boards at strategic positions would be useful
- There was a request for more litter bins and toilets
- It was felt that better lighting would be important to improve safety for young people.

3.5.4 Green Space Visitor Surveys

The Rangers carry out quarterly Green Space Visitor Surveys at key sites across the Borough, including Mesnes Park. These surveys allow Environmental Management to:

- Provide a customer-led service
- Help to prioritise the parks' annual work programme
- Undertake comparisons with similar service providers in the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities
- Monitor performance against Wigan Council's Performance Plus system
- Evaluate customer satisfaction.

To date, three surveys have been carried out. The following is a summary of the results:

- Visitors consistently feel that the Park is kept free of litter (92%) and its horticulture is well maintained (93%)
- The park is relatively free from dog mess
- Visitors gave an average satisfaction level of 70% for access and paths
- Seating and picnic tables scored low in the first two surveys, but show an increase to 82% in the last survey reflecting the additional resources allocated to this

-
- Visitors mostly agreed (76%) that signage within the Park is adequate and easy to follow
- Play facilities feature poorly throughout all the surveys with an average of 43%, as do toilets at 12%
Surprisingly, visitors have an 85% satisfaction level of feeling safe using the Park, which compares with the Citizens Panel survey of people feeling safe during the day (see below)
- Overall the average visitor satisfaction level for the Park is 67%.

3.5.5 Citizens Panel

The Citizens' Panel comprises approximately 2,000 adults (aged 18 and over) recruited to be representative of the population of the borough and aims to provide an 'ordinary person's perspective'. It aims to provide a fairly accurate reflection of the views of the majority of the population. To maintain objectivity the panel is refreshed (i.e. new members recruited, existing ones asked to leave) by a third, every year.

Parks, play areas and open spaces have been included several times to date, and although the findings are general, they give a useful insight as to the use of parks and open spaces in Wigan.

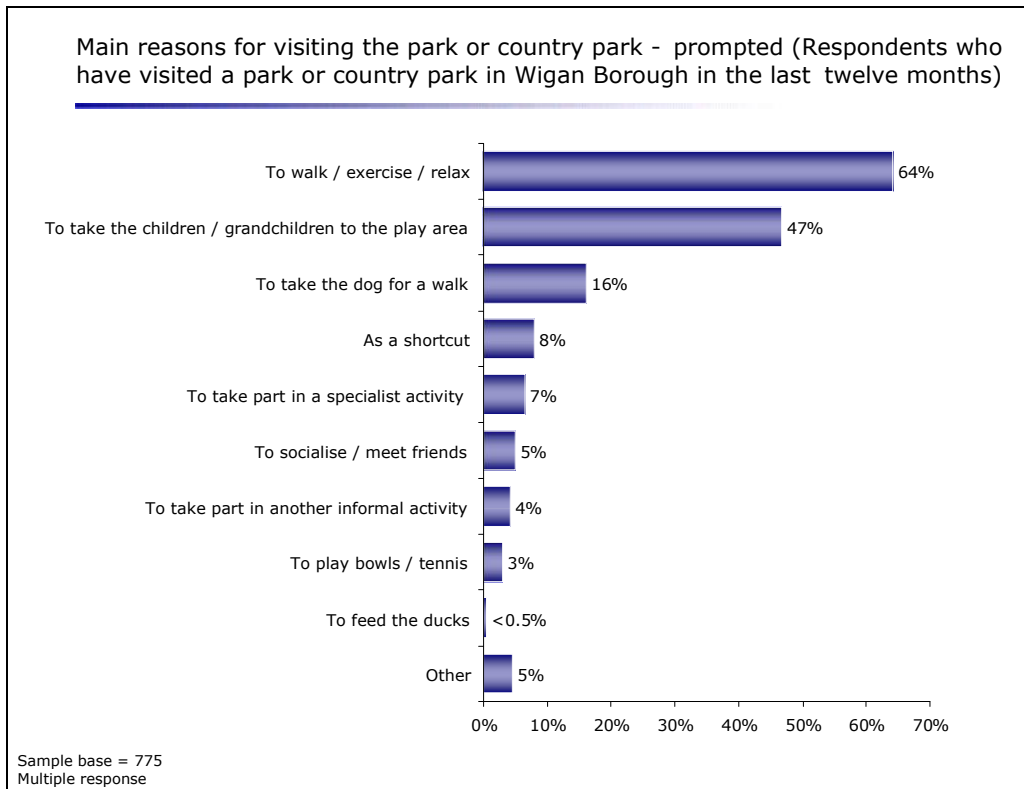
- Three-quarters of respondents (75%) have visited a park or country park in the borough in the past twelve months. Haigh Country Park (44%), Pennington Flash Country Park (27%) and Mesnes Park (25%) are those which have been visited by the largest proportions.
- Of those respondents who have visited parks or country parks, 23% have done so on a weekly basis at least, 33% on a fortnightly or monthly basis, and 43% less frequently than this.
- 64% went to walk, exercise or relax, 47% took children or grandchildren to the play area and 16% took the dog for a walk.
- The majority agree that they feel safe using the Park during the day (81%), that the flower beds, trees and shrubs are attractive and wellmaintained (67%), that the Park's pathways are level and wellsurfaced (62%), and that the Park is tidy and free from litter (58%).
- The majority disagree that the Park has enough public toilets (64%), or that they feel safe using the Park at night (62%).

-
- Of the 25% of respondents who have not visited parks or country parks in the past twelve months, 20% attribute this to a lack of time, 17% that there is nothing to interest them and 15% that they have no children to take there.
- Respondents who have children in the household are more likely than those without to have visited parks or country parks (76%).
- Respondents who have disabilities are less likely than those without to have visited parks and country parks (69%).

The proportion of park users attending these facilities at least on a weekly basis rises with respondent age, particularly amongst those aged 65+: 17% aged 18-24, 21% aged 25-44, 24% aged 45-64 and 36% aged 65+.

- Despite being more likely to use parks generally, when considering park users only, those with children in the household are far less likely to use parks on a weekly basis than those without children.
- Of those respondents who have visited a park or country park in the Borough in the past twelve months, the majority did so in order to walk, exercise or relax (64%), although a significant minority (47%) took their children or grandchildren to the play area.
- Regardless of gender or age, the key activity in parks is walking, exercising or relaxing. However, the majority of females (53%), and those aged 25-44 (56%) also take their children or grandchildren to the play area. This is shown in the chart below.

Chart 1: Main reason for visiting a park in Wigan Borough



3.6 Conclusions from the research

There has been extensive consultation over the past five years about responses to and future priorities for Mesnes Park. There are some very clear themes and issues which appear consistently through consultation. The key conclusions to be drawn from the research are:

- Users of the Park are generally local and many are regular users. Visits tend to be short and people are using it for recreation, social use (especially with children or grandchildren), relaxation or dog walking. The high level of support for investment in improvements to the facilities is indicative of the level of engagement of local people. Users express high levels of satisfaction overall with the Park, but highlight particular areas for attention.
- Security and safety improvements are a priority across all groups, whether old or young. This is particularly an issue at night.
- There are aspirations to make greater use of the existing facilities, including the café (e.g. through poetry / literary reading events or parties) and other buildings (providing exhibition space or places to host events). In addition, there is potential scope to enhance use of facilities (such as the Stone Trail or wildlife features) for education purposes, trails, orienteering and similar.
- Whilst safety improvements and improved facilities are high on the list of improvements people would like to see in the Park, the level of interest in additional events indicates that people are ambitious about what the Park can stand for, and would like to use the space more often. Events people were interested in included music and drama events, fetes, funfairs and sports and fitness events.
- There is much potential for engaging more people through closer partnerships with Mesnes Park's immediate neighbours: Drumcroon Arts Centre, Thomas Linacre outpatients building and the college. There could be a range of courses at the college which could be supported by activities in Mesnes Park, as well as encouraging college students to use the space more for recreation.
- The potential for the Park to be used to support improvements to people's health is supported by users and stakeholders.
- Drives to engage a wider variety of people with activity in the town and to attract more people from outside could be linked to the Park, for instance, co-programming events which flow into the Park (e.g. multicultural events, along the lines of the WOW Festival, or links to the Jazz Festival). In addition, there could be potential to tie in visits to the Park with the anticipated increases in numbers of shoppers with improvements in central Wigan.

3.7 Barriers

3.7.1 Introduction

The market research and stakeholder consultation, situation analysis and sessions with the staff from Mesnes Park and Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust have identified a series of barriers which prevent people from engaging with the Park, or may affect engagement with the proposed new development.

These are considered with reference to organisational, intellectual, social, cultural, financial, physical and sensory barriers.

3.7.2 Organisational barriers

The following relate to the way in which the Park currently operates and is managed, which may in turn serve to exclude or deter potential users:

- Concerns over the safety of the Park, compounded by a sense of a lack of visible staff presence.
- Lack of clearly defined areas for different users in Mesnes Park.
- There is scope for improvements to the Mesnes Park site to give more information about the facilities offered. Although the Park in its proximity to the town centre and its public transport system makes it relatively accessible to visitors, the survey results show that the Park is essentially used by those in the local vicinity. People who are not familiar with the Park will have little chance of finding this out through information available in the town centre.
- Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust is in its infancy, relatively speaking, and there will inevitably still be confusion over who the public perceive delivers the services that the Trust provides.

3.7.3 Intellectual barriers

Barriers may also be created where people have difficulty engaging because of the way that the experience is presented and the information that is provided. For Mesnes Park these include:

- Particular groups have 'claimed' areas or times of day within the Park, putting off other potential users.

- Little involvement of different user groups in gathering and writing interpretation and marketing information.
- Print material (e.g. on information boards) is very text heavy and may not appeal to people with different learning styles or from other cultural backgrounds.
- No specific facilities for young people.
- Nothing specific provided for older people.
- Family play areas are in need of improvement.

3.7.4 Social and cultural barriers

Social and cultural barriers derive from a site which does not address interests and life experiences of people from a range of cultures:

- Aside from the WOW festival, there is low awareness of what the Park can provide for the different communities and cultures of Wigan.
- A lack of publicity and information material (signage etc) which reflects the wider community in terms of images and language. Anecdotal research also suggests that there are a number of Park users for whom English is not a first language.

3.7.5 Financial barriers

Financial barriers are not such a consideration since access to the Park is free and events are mostly free. However, additional costs (e.g. of transport, parking, refreshments and activities such as crazy golf) may prohibit people from engaging fully with the facility.

3.7.6 Physical barriers

The physical barriers at the current site relate both to the physical arrangements affecting access to the site, and to the structures and immediate landscape. More detailed information is provided within the separate Access Plan but the key issues are:

- No accessible parking bays.
- The footpath surfaces are in poor condition and the layout of the Park raises issues for those with physical impairments.

- Buildings and structures were designed many years ago and are not friendly to those with physical impairments. The pavilion which is used as a café, the hub of the Park, is accessed by two flights of steps, which presents problems for people with mobility impairments. Alternative routes are steep and increase the walk to the building.
- Toilets are only available when the café is open.
- When events are held at the bandstand, the surrounding landscape and the lack of seating does not encourage audiences to stay for long periods.
- Accessibility to the Park from the town centre is poor, with a dual carriageway as a physical barrier.

3.7.7 Sensory barriers

The following relate to reasons that those with sensory impairments might be excluded from gaining the most out of the current experience of visiting the Park.

- Few ways for visitors to experience a visit, or events, through different senses, be it aural, visual or tactile information.
- Little availability of alternative format information (e.g. foreign language leaflets, large print).
- Hands-on opportunities are included in several of the spaces on the Park site. However, these are relatively limited and could be extended to appeal to adults as well as children.

3.7.8 Implications

The opportunity exists to address the barriers above through the redevelopment of the Park, bearing in mind that there are areas which can be addressed prior to any major capital investment.

It is also notable that needs relate not only to improvements to the physical spaces and facilities, but also in the events and activity offered, methods of community engagement, education and interpretation, safety and security, marketing and communications and in management systems. These areas therefore form the headings in the action plan in chapter 5.

4 Analysis and assessment of potential audiences

4.1 Introduction

Having analysed the current situation and the current and potential market for Mesnes Park, this chapter draws together a SWOT Analysis of issues affecting the proposal.

The potential for audience development is then examined in detail and a series of audience development objectives are outlined. Potential target groups for the new facility are proposed and numerical targets are set for each group in the short, medium and longer term.

In addition to quantitative targets, a series of qualitative targets are set relating to satisfaction and engagement with the experience of using the Park.

4.2 SWOT analysis

The following strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats have been identified which relate to the Park's potential to engage with different audiences.

Table 9: SWOT analysis

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature of the facility • Staff commitment and knowledge • Support infrastructure • A committed Friends group • Committed team of volunteers • Progress in networking and community development • High level of support across Wigan • Local usage very high • Recently streamlined staff roles • Well located • Fredericks café • Mechanisms for consultation with local communities • History and tradition | <p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better day round use • Links with Wigan and Leigh College • Links to Drumcroon Arts Centre and other local arts organisations • Contributing to health and quality of life support to local communities • Enhancing the biodiversity and ecology • Enhanced events programme • New partnerships with agencies locally • Ownership and positive involvement of young people • Strategic commitment • Links to potential new residencies adjacent to the Park • Enhanced education programme |
| <p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns about safety • Park buildings and infrastructure in poor condition • Events programme not diverse • Family and play areas are inadequate • Limited area for ball games and informal recreation • Staff availability • Limited education provision • Little visibility in town centre • Access poor for those with sensory/mobility impairment | <p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standing still • Crime and vandalism levels • Failure to implement the JUMP project • Risks of not securing major capital investment • Increased competition from other leisure pursuits • Frustration with progress on development among stakeholders |

4.2.1 Strengths

Nature of facility

Unlike other heritage such as museums, libraries or art galleries, parks present few barriers to users. They are free, they are an accepted part of town life, entrances are not intimidating to the majority of users and the majority of users live close by. Furthermore, the enjoyment and benefits people derive from parks are hugely diverse. Parks can appeal to everyone and there is ample opportunity for a great variety of social interaction to take place.

Staff commitment and knowledge:

Consistent positive feedback is received about the dedication, calibre and enthusiasm of the Mesnes Park team and the commitment to making the space more accessible.

Support infrastructure:

The support infrastructure provided by Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust is a strength. The other services that the Trust offers and links to heritage, culture and sports activity across Wigan give Mesnes Park the tools and resources to develop its activities.

A committed Friends group:

The Friends of Mesnes Park are excellent advocates for the Park and keen to develop its usage among a wider range of people. They are additionally actively involved with the development and interpretation of the Park.

Committed team of volunteers:

Volunteers have been instrumental in raising the profile and awareness of the Park and take an influential role in Park management.

Progress in networking and community development:

Much progress has been made in recent years in consulting with and devising cross-agency and community projects, such as the WOW Festival and JUMP (Joined Up Mesnes Park) initiative.

High level of support across Wigan:

96% of respondents said they would support a bid for major improvement work in the Park.

Local usage very high:

91% of respondents to the survey undertaken in local wards in 2000 had visited the Park in the last 12 months.

Recently streamlined staff roles:

Recent restructuring has provided a focus on regeneration and activities, and has rationalised the functions carried out by the top tier structure of the Environmental Management and Sustainability Section. A set of core sites will be derived from the Parks Strategy and will focus resources to a smaller amount of sites. The non-core sites will transfer under the control of the Green Spaces Manager and remove duplication of staff time on sites.

Well located:

The Park is part of the town centre, complements the town centre and serves as a link and thoroughfare between the town centre and residential areas. It is also the only such facility within the immediate catchment area.

Fredericks café:

This is a key meeting place for communities and is a focal point of the Park, lengthening people's time within the Park and attracting people (e.g. business lunches) to visit the Park. Fredericks are also open and enthusiastic about developing their facility to accommodate new uses and users.

Mechanisms for consultation with local communities:

A thorough approach to the collection of survey data regarding Park use, need and interest has been taken over the past 5 years.

History and tradition

Mesnes Park is not only a valued public space within an urban area but also contains many features of considerable heritage merit. This lends it a cultural gravitas which adds value to both the area and Wigan's overall heritage offering. In terms of audience development, opportunities to engage both as a leisure space and a heritage site double the potential offer.

4.2.2 Weaknesses

Concerns about safety:

People perceive that the Park is not a safe place to spend time, particularly at night. This is likely to deter a large number of people from visiting.

Park buildings and infrastructure in poor condition:

Across Mesnes Park, buildings, pathways and other facilities are in a state of poor repair.

Events programme not diverse:

Whilst there have been some recent successes in programming diverse events and engaging a wider range of users, on the whole the events programme is limited and focuses in the main on local family users. In addition, the 'events pack' is off-putting to many event organisers with its focus on risk assessment and form filling. Many organise events within the Park that are not known about ahead of time, a missed opportunity for a joined up programme.

Family and play areas are inadequate:

Whilst Mesnes Park does attract a significant number of people in family groups, facilities for families to play, have a picnic or participate in activities are somewhat limited.

Limited areas for ball games and informal recreation:

Grassed areas for ball games are limited and there are poor surfaces to the tennis and basketball courts, preventing informal recreation or forcing users to find other areas of the Park for games.

Staff availability:

In the past there has been a lack of dedicated staff to implement any proposals for audience development, communications, education and outreach. However, through the recent streamlining of staff and the new structure that has been implemented (see Section 4.2.1) it is hoped that this weakness will be somewhat reduced, as top tier staff within the Environmental Management and Sustainability Section are able to focus on core sites, whilst the Green Spaces Manager takes responsibility for noncore sites.

Limited education provision:

Education (formal and informal) opportunities are not maximised within Mesnes Park and there are few 'ready made' specific educational resources to offer to schools and other groups.

Little visibility in town centre:

There is a perception that Mesnes Park is somewhat cut off from the town centre and not widely promoted by those who work or live around Wigan's centre.

Access is poor for those with sensory/mobility impairment:

As detailed in the accompanying Access Plan, access to Mesnes Park is poor for anyone who has a mobility or sensory impairment. Paths are in a poor state of repair, there are changes of levels, a lack of signage to assist navigation and the visitor facilities do not address many of the needs of potential visitors.

4.2.3 Opportunities

Better day round use:

Enhancing the variety of facilities and their availability at different times and seasons would help realise the Park's potential and increase use.

Links with Wigan and Leigh College:

A variety of potential learning links have been identified with Wigan and Leigh College.

Links to Drumcroon Arts Centre and other local arts organisations:

Collaborative opportunities include activity planning and use of the Park for a variety of arts and community projects.

Contributing to health and quality of life support to local communities:

Careful investment in the Park is likely to have an impact on the quality of life for a large number of people, many of them from deprived areas. There are a number of local agencies working towards improving health of the local community and there is much potential for 'exercise on prescription' as well as other health improvement initiatives with Mesnes Park.

Enhancing the biodiversity and ecology

There is potential to increase the bio-diversity and habitats that the Park provides. In terms of ecology, through management and new planting there is the potential to not only restore the quality and character of historic planting but to increase the variety of planting and therefore habitat diversity. This could include new aquatic and fern plantings by the lake, the planting of native species in underused areas, altering grass management, borders to attract butterflies and other insects, and specimen planting to reflect the Victorian love of tree and plant collecting. This opens up the potential to attract more of the market interested in horticulture.

Enhanced events programme

Apart from active and passive recreation and sport, the Park could accommodate more events. Planning and funding a rich events programme will enable the Park to define itself in its users' minds and establish a buzz and community feeling about the area. It is an opportunity for cultural exchange, social interaction and attracting the family market. The springboards for this programme are numerous and could include specific cultural events, music, sports or heritage.

New partnerships with agencies locally

Partnership working will continue to be critical to the success of the development of Mesnes Park. Development of relationships with the strategic partners located in the vicinity of the Park is key. Other partnerships will include the police, youth service, sports development, local voluntary sports organisations, the Council's education department (including Early Years and Play), the Primary Care Trust and agencies who have first hand contact with the target communities and local community groups.

Ownership and positive involvement of young people

The Park could create a safe environment for organised and non-organised sports, events, training and education. Young people are a notoriously hard target group to market to. They have a bewildering number of choices and popular trends arrive and pass with an ever-increasing rapidity. Understanding young people's needs will come through close partnership with agencies involved with young people and the creative set up of young people's panels, youth clubs and sport groups. There are areas of underused space and facilities in the Park that have the potential to be developed with and for young people. The JUMP initiative is also key to the engagement of young people.

Strategic commitment

Both Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust and Wigan Council stress a strategic commitment to active participation; this is a key opportunity for Mesnes Park to demonstrate its impact and engage with other Trust and Council teams.

Links to potential new residencies adjacent to the Park

There is potentially a new audience to attract if the Pagefield College campus (bordering Mesnes Park) is changed to residential properties.

Enhanced education programme

In terms of formal education, Mesnes Park has the potential to meet a range of curricular needs, providing projects that will go towards initiatives such as 'citizenship' as well as extra curricular activities such as orienteering and sports. The historical traditions of the Park have also real scope for exciting and innovative projects.

4.2.4 Threats

Doing nothing

Sitting still and not going forward is the biggest threat facing Mesnes Park. Although this is unlikely given the drive and enthusiasm of the staff, the Park's facilities and heritage are in real need of overhaul in order to develop the audiences and meet the needs of its current users.

Crime and vandalism levels

Mesnes Park will need to continue to liaise closely with police and community officers. Crime and vandalism is an issue around Mesnes Park and the anti social behaviour associated with the Park, if it continues or escalates, would create a barrier for many current and especially potential users.

Failure to implement the JUMP project:

Failure to secure funding for the JUMP proposal, which has generated considerable commitment from a range of agencies, could be a set back for the momentum of the Park development.

Risks of not securing major capital investment:

An unsuccessful bid for capital funding would reduce the enthusiasm of the Friends group and would jeopardise their continued support.

Increased competition from other leisure pursuits

Although the nearest similar facility to Mesnes Park is located some distance away, there are other potential calls on users' leisure time. Park staff must look to differentiate the Park's offer very explicitly from these other facilities.

Frustration with progress on development among stakeholders:

The development bid has taken a long time to develop and a sense of frustration is apparent with stakeholders. It is important to progress on interim stages of the overall project quickly.

4.3 Vision, aims and objectives for audience development

The vision for Mesnes Park is:

'A town centre park with safe access for all. A green space venue that presents opportunity for quality events and activities, education and training where the integrity of the historic landscape is complemented alongside the provision of good contemporary facilities.'

The following aims and objectives have been developed to address the issues raised in the SWOT analysis.

These encapsulate the audience development ethos for the Park and reflect the development of target audiences and key criteria for success.

4.3.1 Community engagement

Aim: Involvement of the local community in the restoration and development of Mesnes Park

Objectives:

- To maintain and develop relationships with the surrounding neighbourhood
- To engage and provide facilities which address the interests and need of the identified target groups
- To continue to support the Friends of Mesnes Park
- To undertake regular consultation with target groups and act upon findings.

4.3.2 Events

Aim: Offer of a diverse programme of events for visitors

Objectives:

- To restore and upgrade the bandstand as a venue for performances
- To encourage use by community groups, schools and amateur performance groups
- To encourage use of the pavilion as a venue for indoor events and activities
- To develop health promotion activities within the Park
- To develop links with town centre activities.
- Amendment of Events Pack to encourage community groups to use the park for events.

4.3.3 Education and interpretation

Aim: Maximise use of the park for education and interpretation

Objectives:

- To refurbish the playshack as a centre for educational visits and other learning and linked activities
- Develop a programme of educational sessions
- Develop and implement an Interpretation Strategy
- Establish the Park as resource for higher educational coursework.

4.3.4 Heritage merit and landscape character

Aim: Conservation of the heritage merit and landscape character of the Park

Objectives:

- To restore the heritage landscape, buildings and structures of the Park
- To work in partnership with Wigan Council and Friends of Mesnes Park to seek funding to restore the heritage landscape.

Heritage conservation is covered in full in the Conservation Management Plan.

4.3.5 Security, health and safety

Aim: Improvements of security and health and safety for the benefit of all visitors

Objectives:

- To implement management procedures which will improve the sense of security in the Park
- To implement management procedures to improve levels of health and safety in the Park
- To implement the JUMP proposal.

4.3.6 Access

Aim: Mesnes Park will be an accessible complex with high quality visitor services which cater for and welcome everyone

Objectives:

- To provide the highest quality visitor services and facilities to make the visit as enjoyable and comfortable as possible
- To ensure that the Park is easily navigable to people with different needs
- To develop access from the town centre to the Park.

Access is covered in full detail in the Access Plan.

4.3.7 Marketing and profile-raising

Aim: Mesnes Park will have a new recognisable and relevant identity and visible presence across Wigan

Objectives:

- To create a new identity for the Park and to market this effectively locally and further afield
- To develop communications with other event and cultural/leisure providers with a view to joint marketing
- To develop the visibility within Wigan town centre
- To ensure that all communications are clear and welcoming to all potential users.

4.3.8 Management and standards

Aim: Financial security of the Park's operations, involving and developing staff to provide an efficient team who feel equipped to present a competent and welcoming face to the outside world whilst improving the standards of care, horticultural quality and diversity

Objectives:

- To provide opportunities for skill development and training to staff and volunteers further to meet the needs of different audiences, in line with the Trust's employee policies
- To encourage greater levels of volunteering, through developing the established volunteer programme through the Green Spaces Conservation Volunteers initiative
- To pursue and strengthen partnerships and the involvement of the private, voluntary and community sector locally in the life of the Park
- To generate revenue for the Park from leases and events and invest in activity to further Park services to the public
- To develop the Park according to strategic planning aims and measure performance of the Park against agreed targets.

4.4 Implications for management structure

There is demonstrable commitment from staff and stakeholders to improving access to Mesnes Park and acknowledgement of the opportunities that the developed Park could open up for new users, as well as in building relationships with the current user base.

There is, naturally, a need for careful consideration of the range of activities possible and appropriate for the Park and of planning activity and managing targeted communications to manage expectations and external perceptions. Key elements to consider when establishing a new resource include the staffing and financial resources proposed and the development of the 'offer' (i.e. the range of opportunities to engage which are provided) to different target groups.

4.4.1 Staffing resources

Mesnes Park is clearly achieving a significant amount in terms of audience engagement across Wigan within the current staff resource; staff are much praised by all who have a connection with the Park.

However, the opportunities that are presented through this review will not be able to be seized without extra staff resource to develop new networks and partnerships, develop a wider range of activities and manage relationships with users. We would strongly support the steps proposed by the Park to appoint new members of staff to manage these programmes of work, in the period up to the opening of a redeveloped Mesnes Park.

A Senior Ranger post is proposed, who will be dedicated to Mesnes Park, responsible to the Parks Services Manager and take responsibility for the overall management and maintenance.

The responsibilities of this post would include:

- Co-ordination of the work of staff in Mesnes Park
- Co-ordinate the restoration of Mesnes Park
- Planning of maintenance under the overall guidance and in accordance with the management and maintenance plan
- Management of tenants and concessions, including the café and sport facilities
- Communication with user groups such as the bowlers, Friends groups and Parks Forum
- Supporting sub groups of the Friends that deal with specific issues e.g. events, Lake Management group, etc.
- Assist Friends with funding opportunity initiatives inclusive of support training
- Co-ordination of volunteer activities
- Working with the Parks Community Liaison officers to co ordinate events and to encourage use of the park by existing and new sectors of the community, as determined by the Audience Development Plan
- Management of Mesnes Park revenue budget
- Responsibility for standards of care and the maintenance and improvement in quality; cleansing, routine maintenance of park fabric, cleaning of toilets
- Responsibility for health and safety including vehicle movement
- Responsibility for overall security
- Ensuring the implementation of the interpretation strategy
- Ensuring the implementation of the Access Plan

- Representation on the Township Community Safety Group
- Developing any funding/marketing opportunities for Mesnes Park to maximise income
- Liaison with Council Departments, other sections within Leisure & Culture Trust, strategic partners, e.g. Wigan and Leigh College, Drumcroom Arts Centre and the Town Centre Manager to co-ordinate activities.

The following posts will also support the management operations of Mesnes Park:

- Parks Community Liaison Officer. To carry out the day-to-day supervision of the usage of parks, playing fields and open spaces by the development, support and co-ordination of user groups, events and activities.
- Parks and Open Spaces Officer. To carry out the day-to-day supervision of parks and open space maintenance and to monitor the performance of the ground maintenance contractor on behalf of other Client agencies against agreed targets and budgets.
- Parks & Countryside Activities Manager. To carry out day to day management of the Parks Services sector, including line management responsibility for staff and budgetary control, and to assist the Parks and Countryside Manager in developing and implementing policies which will ensure a cost-effective and dynamic service in parks.
- Parks Regeneration Manager. Responsible for the overall strategy for Parks and playing fields, development of parks related improvement schemes, grant applications, negotiation with the Council and external partners, and an advocacy role.
- Performance Manager:
 - To carry out the day-to-day management of the Performance team, including line management responsibility for staff and budgetary control.
 - To plan and monitor the Performance teams work plan and contribute to the Environmental Management & Sustainability project programme.
 - To assist the Executive Director in developing and implementing policies which will ensure a cost-effective, efficient and dynamic service.
 - To contribute to a continuous improvement process for Environmental Management & Sustainability.
 - To be a member of the Environmental Management & Sustainability Management Group.
- Technical Officer (Landscape). To provide support to other sections and departments through a landscape design and advisory service and to assist

the Senior Technical Officer in the production of floral bedding display plans.

- Support Services Technician. To assist in the surveying for, monitoring, maintaining, securing and provision of information from grounds maintenance information systems, maintaining clear and accurate records and reporting of any system performance issues.

In addition the Grounds Services Maintenance teams will provide a supporting role. This includes:

- Grounds Maintenance Services Leading Hand. The overall grounds care and maintenance of grounds in accordance with agreed specification. Providing a flexible and responsible service. Supervising individuals or teams and ensuring compliance with agreed quality standards.
- Gardener/Duty Gardener. General maintenance of grounds including sweeping, hoeing, raking, mowing, strimming, edging, forking, digging, hedge cutting, minor pruning and clearing leaves and litter. Additionally they will be responsible for:
 - Basic horticultural duties including laying turf under supervision and planting e.g. bulbs.
 - Constructional and labouring work e.g. barrowing, ditch clearance etc.
 - Assisting with erecting and dismantling of sports posts and other equipment.
 - General cleaning duties e.g. toilets, canteens, store rooms etc.
 - Patrol and attendance duties e.g. opening and locking gates and patrolling.
 - Assisting more highly skilled and experienced gardeners in their work.
 - Instruct the public to comply with regulations and byelaws.
 - To undertake any other duties in accordance with the grade and job title of the post as required by the Grounds Maintenance Management Team.
- Grounds Maintenance Services Maintenance Manager:
 - To undertake overall responsibility for the management of the Grounds Maintenance service including the Landscape Construction Service; accountability for the financial performance and quality of work throughout the service; the effective management and development of human resources, together with the efficient and safe utilisation of plant, equipment and materials.

- To be responsible for the corporate management and planned development of the Grounds Maintenance service, including the preparation and successful implementation of contract bids, business plans, marketing plans and operational strategies., including grounds maintenance, gardeners, and services maintenance have a day-to-day contact with Park visitors and undertake patrol and attendance duties and well as advising the public on complying with regulations and byelaws.

There are additional staff at Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust whose responsibility it is to deliver activities related to Mesnes Park. This could encompass play, health, sports, citizenship, conservation, local history, vocational training and performing and visual arts, as well as site visits for traditional curriculum subjects.

Play Officers would assist in the development of the play zone to allow for more diverse and creative play and Park Officers are enthusiastic about the range of activities that could be offered with improved facilities.

4.4.2 Development of the 'offer'

The events programme has grown considerably over the last few years providing occasions for all age groups that have attracted local residents and visitors from further afield. With Park improvements and the opening of the outpatients department it is proposed to build on past experience and develop a broad programme of events to take place throughout the year, making greater use of the resource, encouraging use and engaging a wider audience.

The café, in addition, can become more of a hub to visitors to the Park: as the meeting point for walks, a social location close to the town centre and public transport, as a space where information about the Park, facilities and events will be available. In addition to the Health Walks it is proposed to have lunch time or mid morning walks and events focused on particular groups such as parent and toddlers and women's groups. Events may include slide shows on local history, provide the opportunity for performance by local writers and horticultural events such as plant fairs and allotment competitions.

Restoration and improvements to the bandstand will enable wider use and it is proposed to encourage not only regular brass band performance but performances by jazz, classical and steel band ensembles at weekends, in the evenings and lunchtimes, fostering local talent and enabling groups from schools and colleges to participate. Improvements to the bandstand area will enable use by schools, college and professional groups for theatrical performances.

It is planned to expand involvement with town centre events such as the Christmas Parade and to expand events using the sports facilities with opportunities for young people to have coaching sessions in basketball, tennis and bowling during school holidays and evenings.

The momentum created through the 'Mesnes Park - a People's History' reminiscence project and exhibition could be built upon through an interpretation strategy, so that the Park's historical significance adds to 'understanding of both the present and the past.'¹⁶ There is a wealth of historical material and recent events have been recorded and publicised. Following the success and interest generated by the exhibition, it is felt that a small publication could be produced with more detail of the history of the park. It is proposed to reproduce some of the historic photographs for sale to coincide with the restoration of Park features such as the lodge, bandstand and pavilion, and to develop a series of leaflets to enable visitors to read the landscape and to provide information about wildfowl, plants and habitat. Each entrance will have a sign and strategically sited information boards. In addition, the Friends of Mesnes Park are interested in taking the exhibition to venues throughout the borough in order to maximise existing links with the Over 50's Forum and their work.

It is also proposed that Mesnes Park will develop work with primary and secondary schools and higher education establishments and to collaborate on the production of information to meet their needs so that the Park is used more widely as an informal education resource. This would involve the development of ranger led or self guided education packs, with guidelines for teachers, related to the national curriculum and the establishment of 'real' projects for college students to undertake as part of their coursework.

4.5 Target Audiences

The research and analysis that has taken place through this study has led us to identify the following groups as potential audiences to target in the audience development plan. A staff workshop, attended by various community representatives, informed the process.

The park receives around 2 million visits per year based on the findings of the user and non-user survey carried out in 2000. Visitors come to the Park a few times a week, however their visit usually only lasts for up to an hour.

Audience development needs to concentrate on improving the facilities the Park has to offer, assessing the reasons why people do not use the Park and implementing changes to remedy this. Increasing visitor numbers is important to develop new audiences, but it is also important to encourage existing visitors to extend the length of time they stay in the Park and the frequency of visit.

There are particular groups within the local community whom the Park will specifically seek to build relationships with, notably:

- Families – Mesnes Park is already effective in reaching a significant number of families and with an enhanced product offer for families at

¹⁶ PPG 15 Planning and the Historic Environment, Department of the Environment 1994

the new facility, as well as targeted communications to reach family groups, it will be possible to engage a wider number of people

- Town centre workers – between 5,000 and 7,000 people work in Wigan town centre every day and 22,000 vehicles use the town centre car parks every week. There is potential to encourage greater use of Mesnes Park, whether at lunchtime, after work or for business meetings in the café.
- Schools - Mesnes Park does attract school groups but these visits are not always known about nor planned to the best benefit of the school or Park. The development of the site and operation is a key opportunity to build upon these links and enhance provision across all areas of learning, particularly through relationships with organisations such as Drumcroon Arts Centre.
- Young people – already a large number of young people use the park and are seen by some as a problematic element because many tend to congregate in large numbers in the weekends which makes other visitors anxious. In the case of young people, the assumption has been made that, for a large part, they can be engaged with the Park work through specific activities or facilities targeted at people of their age group. Where activities are planned to be relevant and of interest to the lives of people in this age group, through work with partner agencies across Wigan who are in contact with young people, it will be possible to develop a new relationship with them and potentially offer opportunity for skill development (sports, gardening, creative skills).
- Older people - a large number of the Park visitors are already retired and regular users of the facility. The research has identified the potential to build in opportunities to attract more older people, whether for health, social or heritage benefits, as well as to engage them more actively in contributing to the programme of activities.
- College students - the relationship and proximity to Wigan College opens up significant potential to engage students of college age, whether for recreation or social purposes, or for activities which are tied to the course they are studying.
- Visitors to the NHS Outpatients Thomas Linacre Building – the potential has been identified to build the partnership with the centre to encourage people who are there as patients, visitors or staff to make use of the Park to walk, relax, visit the café or learn about the heritage.
- Disabled people - the development of Mesnes Park will improve physical access to the Park and open up the potential for people to engage in different ways, using different senses and through offering interpretation material pitched at different levels of understanding. 'Disabled people' refers to people with any impairment: physical and sensory impairments, learning disabilities and people with mental

health problems. The majority of disabled people have a hidden impairment and disabled people represent about 15% of the population.

4.6 Targets for community engagement

4.6.1 Numerical targets

It is difficult to identify numerical targets for each target group for Mesnes Park, since there is only the user survey. This gives some indications of breakdown of users, but did not detail all of the above groups. However, it is important to prepare broad outline figures for the organisation to work towards, by which audience engagement can be measured. It will be vital for the Park to set in place systems to collect and review data relating to different audience groups so as to revise the estimates where appropriate.

The following targets for audience development are based on comparator data and ABL's experience. It is of note that this table highlights target numbers only for the specified target groups and that there will be a degree of cross-over between these groups, therefore the total visits is not simply a sum of the visits from individual groups.

Across the board, targets for a percentage increase are set for each phase, using the 2,014,611 visits in 2000 as a base.

Table 10: Target visit figures for specific audience targets¹⁷

| Segment | Short term (1-2 years) | Medium term (2-5 years) | Long term (5-7 years) |
|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Target increase on base | 2% | 8% | 10% |
| TOTAL VISITORS | 2,054,903 | 2,175,780 | 2,216,072 |
| Families | 300,000 | 324,000 | 330,000 |
| Town centre workers | 30,000 | 32,400 | 33,000 |
| Schools | 5,000 | 5,400 | 5,500 |
| Young people | 200,000 | 216,000 | 220,000 |
| Older people | 400,000 | 432,000 | 440,000 |
| College students | 400,000 | 432,000 | 440,000 |

¹⁷ In this table 'visits' refer to numbers of trips rather than numbers of visitors

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|
| Visitors to the Outpatients Building | 3,000 | 3,240 | 3,300 |
| Disabled people | 60,000 | 64,800 | 66,000 |

The long term visitor targets for both specific and overall visitors assume that Mesnes Park will have developed operationally by this time; the proposed staff will have been appointed to organise and assist in marketing an enhanced events and education programme, liaising with partners and securing greater resources for audience development. They also assume that projects such as Joined Up Mesnes Park and maintenance improvements will have gone some way towards dispelling fears of safety within the Park.

These figures are estimates and we would recommend that further modelling takes place before they are developed for any business planning purposes.

4.6.2 Qualitative targets

In addition to numerical targets, it is important that qualitative targets are set for the Park relating to visitor attitudes, satisfaction and likelihood of repeat usage and recommendation.

Results of satisfaction statements can be tested with visitors in an annual visitor survey which can be used as starting point benchmarks from which to set year-on-year targets and measure progress.

Satisfaction statements might cover:

- Response to different aspects of the Park facilities
- Likelihood of repeat visit
- Likelihood of recommendation
- Provision of specific benefits (health, education, leisure, social, heritage).

Qualitative response will also be measured through more in depth methodologies, such as advisory or user group panels. These could be an important extra level of research to any surveys conducted.

4.7 Performance measures

The following measures of performance are recommended:

- Regular head counts of visitors to the Park

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- Head counts of attenders at events
- Number of schools / college groups using the facility
- Yearly survey with users
- Surveys at large events
- Advisory or user group panels
- Anecdotal feedback collected by Park staff on site.

5 Action Plan

5.1 Introductions

This chapter looks at:

- An Ansoff Matrix model for exploring the relationships between streams of activity at Mesnes Park and new and potential audiences: how the Park might reach and involve them and what the offer will be
- The benefits that engagement with the Park might offer to the identified target groups
- A timetable for implementing the plan
- An action plan for the work, delivering the objectives set, including measures for success.

5.2 Benefits

It is important to understand the benefits to be gained from engagement with the Park for each target group, as well as triggers to involvement. The benefits have been identified through the market research and analysis.

5.2.1 Social benefits

Through the creation of a more visible and open facility, the Park has the potential to offer a range of social benefits:

- Social interaction
- Entertainment
- Escapism
- Playing, seeing and doing, individually or as a group or family
- Feeling included and welcomed
- Involvement in delivering and developing something tangible
- Diversionary activity
- Community networks – a social space.

5.2.2 Health benefits

Mesnes Park's development will support Wigan Leisure and Culture Trusts' priority to 'get Wigan active' and offer a range of health benefits to users, including:

- Physical health benefits, through sports and recreation or walking

- Support in recuperation for those attending the outpatients department or others with an illness or impairment
- Benefits to the mental health of users.

5.2.3 Intellectual benefits

The new space, with enhanced education and learning facilities, will also offer enhanced provision to people seeking intellectual stimulation through:

- Professional interest in horticulture, sport, or heritage
- Personal interest in horticulture, sport, or heritage • Support to areas of study
- Stimulating children.

5.2.4 Emotional benefits

There is the potential, through involvement with the collections and linked activities to provide users with a level of engagement which can trigger different emotional benefits:

- Deepening / affirming sense of cultural heritage and local heritage
- Aesthetic pleasure
- Personal relevance
- Nostalgia and experiencing the past • Pride.

5.2.5 Environmental benefits

The project will have a positive impact upon users in providing a facility which offers:

- A safe environment to visit
- A comfortable environment to visit
- The opportunity to engage different senses.

5.2.6 Developmental benefits

The research has identified a range of opportunities for personal and skill development through programmes offered at the Park:

- Development of practical skills
- Development of social skills
- Deepening understanding of horticulture, local heritage or other related topics.

5.3 Ansoff matrix

The Ansoff matrix is a useful tool for considering the type of relationships an organisation wants to develop with current and new users. It considers the type of activity or 'product' an organisation can and might offer alongside the types of users it currently and potentially might engage.

There are four types of relationship, based upon whether the activity is current or new, and whether the audiences are current or new users:

- Market Penetration: existing audiences, existing activities. Reaching more of your existing audience to increase use.
- Product Development: existing audiences, new activities. Developing new types of activity to increase the number and level of engagement of existing audiences.
- Market Extension: new audiences, existing activities. Taking the products you have to new audiences.
- Diversification: new audiences, new activities. Combines product development with market extension, which means changing what you offer to reach new audiences.

Table 9: SWOT analysis

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Market Penetration Developing relationships with current Park users through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent collation of user feedback • Targeted communications • Developed relationship with Friends of the Parks group | <p>Product Development Deepening the relationship with existing Park users through new activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A range of public events • Easier access to information about what is on at the Park • Friends activities and involvement • Enhancement of ancillary facilities |
| <p>Market Extension Developing relationships with disabled people, families, college students, older people, town centre workers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of areas of the Park of interest to different groups • Programmes of events and walks of interest • Activity for college students • Fully accessible and easily navigable Park • Information about Park's relevance to people with different interests • Development of Fredericks café to offer | <p>Diversification Breaking into new user groups through the development of new ways to engage with the Park. New user groups include families, visitors to the Thomas Linacre outpatients facility, young people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools projects • New events, programmed and designed with specific groups in mind • Partnership projects • Projects with local community groups • Development of spaces for young people • Family spaces and activities • Play sessions • JUMP project |

Product/Activity **Existing** **New** **Existing**

Users

New

5.4 Action Plan

The action plan is based on the specific objectives and timetable outlined in the previous chapter and describes the actions to fulfil these responsibilities. Broad timescales and responsibilities are detailed for each action and attention is paid to monitoring and evaluating progress through actions which specifically outline consistent processes for measuring results.

The actions are in tabular form and, as in chapter 4, are arranged under the following headings:

- Community engagement
- Events
- Education and interpretation
- Heritage merit and landscape character
- Security, health and safety
- Marketing and profile raising • Management and standards.

Indicative costs are outlined under the following budget bands:

- Staff or volunteer time only
- Low (£0 - £5,000)
- Medium (£5 - 10,000)
- High (£10,000 +).

The 'Low' band is allocated to many actions to ensure that basic costs such as printing, photocopying, postage and refreshments are covered.

Wider provision (e.g. medium to high) has been made for a number of actions where the cost will depend upon the scope of the work to be undertaken (e.g. changing buildings or changes to interpretation).

The broad timetable outlined in the previous chapter is used for the action plan:

- Short term (1 - 2 years, prior to the capital development) •
Medium term (2 - 5 years)
- Long term (5 - 7 years).

Chapter 5: Action Plan

5.4.1 Community engagement

| Objective | Actions | Audience | Resources | Timetable |
|--|--|---------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| To maintain and develop relationships with the surrounding neighbourhood | Continue to engage and develop further links with strategic partners, e.g. Wigan and Leigh College, Drumcroon Arts Centre, Wigan Town Centre and Thomas Linacre outpatients building. | All | Staff/volunteer time | Short term |
| | Continue to be involved with Township planning by attending Township Forum meetings to raise the profile of the Park within the community. | All | Staff/volunteer time | Ongoing |
| | Ensure that local businesses and service providers are kept informed about the Park, its redevelopment and planned events and facilities. | Town centre workers | Staff/volunteer time | Short term |
| | Undertake leaflet drops to nearby residences to inform people about the planned developments at Mesnes Park and focus on the fact that the Park is being developed in response to feedback from local communities. | All | Low | Short term |
| Objective | Actions | Audience | Resources | Timetable |

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| <p>To engage and provide facilities which address the interests and need of the identified target groups</p> | <p>Families</p> <p>Refurbish the play area, in consultation with user families, and potentially through the funding support of Wigan’s Rotary Club as a ‘play zone’ with fencing, vandal-resistant equipment and picnic tables/seating. Consider a ‘kids team’ to support in the development of the new space.</p> | <p>Families</p> | <p>High</p> | <p>Short term</p> |
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| | Organise a competition with local schools/nurseries to design new signage for the play zone. | Families | Low | Short term |
| | Develop a more coordinated programme of play sessions with the Playin' Out Team, complementing the Rangers' GSYTE events and run at weekends and school holidays. | Families | Low – Medium | Ongoing |
| | Offer take-away picnics for families at the café. | Families | Low | Ongoing |
| | Develop 'family friendly' signage for the Park (colourful and visual as opposed to text based). | Families | Low | Medium term |
| | Ensure that all ancillary facilities (the café, toilets, baby changing) are planned under guidance from specialists in family friendly design. | Families | Medium – High | Medium term |
| | Promote and encourage the Stone Trail from the café | Families | Low | Short term |

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| | <p>Town centre workers</p> <p>Run specific events at lunchtime slots to enable town centre workers to attend.</p> <p>Offer a telephone and take-away service at the café and actively promote the facility for small, informal business meetings through, for instance, the Business Newsletter.</p> | <p>Town centre workers</p> <p>Town centre workers</p> | <p>Low – Medium</p> <p>Low</p> | <p>Medium term</p> <p>Medium term</p> |
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| | <p>Young people</p> <p>Work with the Trust’s Extreme Sports Officer in the development of the skatepark site for young people and develop competitions and workshops to encourage use of the facility.</p> <p>Ensure that the youth consultation feedback about events of interest is taken on board in event programming, through appropriate sporting activities, music concerts and other events programmed in partnership with Positive Futures youth workers and other relevant partners.</p> <p>Develop areas of the Park which are designated areas for young people, ideally by involving a team of young people in their design and development. Consult the CABE Space publication ‘What would you do with this space? Involving young people in the design and care of urban spaces’ for ideas and contact details of relevant agencies.</p> <p>Fundraise for and implement the 3 year pilot JUMP project (actions under security, health and safety below).</p> | <p>Young people</p> <p>Young people</p> <p>Young people</p> <p>Young people</p> | <p>Medium</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>Medium – High</p> <p>High</p> | <p>Short term</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Medium term</p> <p>Short – Medium term</p> |
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| | <p>Older people</p> <p>Identify older people’s groups - e.g. University of the Third Age (U3A), Elderly Luncheon Clubs, Help the Aged - and Council support services for older people to discuss opportunities to offer facilities and activities which suit the needs of older users.</p> | Older people | Staff/volunteer time | Short term |
| | <p>Contact retirement homes and sheltered housing to promote and organise accompanied walking sessions around Mesnes Park.</p> <p>Develop (with U3A or otherwise) specialist interest programmes at the Park including history walks, wildlife/conservation tours, gardening sessions or creative workshops in the Park.</p> | Older people | Staff/volunteer time | Short – Medium term |
| | | Older people | Low – Medium | Medium – Long term |

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|--|---|-------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| | <p>College students</p> <p>Offer lunchtime events of appeal to students during term time, by offering space to student bands to perform, at the bandstand and café.</p> | College students | Medium | Medium – Long term |
| | <p>Offer student discounts and appropriate food and drink menu items in Frederick’s café.</p> | College students | Low | Ongoing |
| | <p>Communicate with students (and lecturers) about Park activities via the college Intranet system.</p> | College students | Staff/volunteer time | Medium term |
| | <p>Encourage lecturers to use the Park as an educational resource (see education and interpretation actions).</p> | College students | Staff/volunteer time | Ongoing |
| | <p>Visitors to the Thomas Linacre outpatients facility</p> <p>Promote the rose garden (which is adjacent to the building) as an area for relaxation and the café facilities to have refreshments through posters inside the building in waiting rooms and reception areas.</p> | Visitors to outpatients | Low | Ongoing |

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| | Ensure signage is clear to people entering the outpatients building which highlights the Park's facilities. When the Pulham and Sons feature is redeveloped, promote this and the lake to staff and visitors as a key feature and rest point. | Visitors to outpatients Visitors to outpatients | Low – Medium Low | Short term Medium term |
|--|--|--|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Objective | Actions | Audience | Resources | Timetable |
| To continue to support the Friends of Mesnes Park | Assist the Friends to recruit new Friends through actively encouraging them to become 'ambassadors' and to sell the benefits of the Park to their friends and contacts. | All | Low | Short term |
| | Ensure that the Friends of Mesnes Park are supported in their aspirations of the Park and regularly consulted about the overall development. | All | Staff/volunteer time | Short term |
| Objective | Actions | Audience | Resources | Timetable |
| To undertake regular consultation with target groups and act upon findings | Continue to determine aspirations and views of the community by means of green space visitor surveys on a quarterly basis. | All | Low | Ongoing |
| | Continue to involve the Friends of Mesnes Park committee and support sub groups to look at specific areas related to the development of the Park. | All | Staff/volunteer time | Short term |

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| | Establish an annual Parks Forum – Wigan’s Parks & Countryside Friends / user network - to review the management and maintenance plans. | All | Low | Ongoing |
| | Develop advisory or user panels to support the development of particular areas, e.g. families, young people, disabled people (possibly through the existing Access Committee). | All | Low | Ongoing |

5.4.2 Events

| Objective | Actions | Audience | Resources | Timetable |
|--|---|-----------------|------------------|------------------|
| To restore and upgrade the bandstand as a venue for performances | Encourage regular brass band performances through links to local groups, but also performances by jazz, classical and steel band ensembles at weekends, in the evenings and lunchtimes. In the first instance, work with Wigan Music Collective, a network of local amateur musicians who have expressed an interest in using Mesnes Park as a venue for performance. | All | Medium – High | Medium term |
| | Ensure that the programme fosters local talent, by enabling groups from schools and colleges, as well as local music and drama groups, to participate. | All | Medium | Medium term |
| | Apply for a Public Entertainment Licence and install a new electricity supply to allow for more diverse performances. | All | Medium | Short term |
| Objective | Actions | Audience | Resources | Timetable |

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|--|--|--------------|---------------|---------------------|
| To encourage use by community groups, schools and amateur performance groups | Complete a user-friendly events pack to make sure that events comply with safety protocols and proactively encourage event organisers to request a visit to talk through the pack, in order to encourage greater use of the facility. | All | Low | Short term |
| | Build upon links already in place with Drumcroon Arts Centre and others to expand the use of the Park spaces with more visual and performing arts events. | All | Low - Medium | Short - Medium term |
| | Investigate the potential of working with local history groups to offer a structured programme of history walks and tours which involve users in the Park's history. This could include re-enactments of the traditional 'Sunday stroll' with associated activities such as Victorian cake and stalls and music from the period. | All | Low | Long term |
| | Market the events programme through local nurseries or through the Black Bag system that many schools operate. | Families | Low | Ongoing |
| | Expand the events using the sports facilities with opportunities for young people to have coaching sessions in basketball, tennis and bowling during school holidays and evenings. | Young people | Medium - High | Long term |

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|---|--|-----------------|------------------|--------------------|
| | Investigate local wildlife and natural history group interest in running wildlife or nature trails in the Park. | All | Low | Medium term |
| Objective | Actions | Audience | Resources | Timetable |
| To encourage use of the café pavilion as a venue for indoor events and activities | Use the café as a starting point for walks. In addition to the Green Spaces walks, hold lunch time or mid morning walks and events focused on particular groups such as parent and toddlers and women’s groups. | All | Low | Medium term |
| | Run events at the café, which may include slide shows on local history, or may provide the opportunity for ‘performance’ by local writers and horticultural events such as plant fairs and allotment competitions. | All | Medium - High | Medium – Long term |
| | Consider offering the upstairs space of the café as a venue for children’s birthday parties. | Families | Low - Medium | Medium term |

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| Objective | Actions | Audience | Resources | Timetable |
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| To develop health promotion activities within the Park | Continue to develop the relationship with the Sports Development and Active Living team to develop health walks and participatory activities, particularly focussing on people with medical conditions through the GP referral scheme for 'exercise on prescription'. This should include development of relationships with staff at the Thomas Linacre outpatients building to encourage them to promote the Park to their patients. | All | Low | Medium term |
| | Develop circuits for exercise and orienteering in accordance with the physical activity strategy. | All | Low | Medium term |
| | Investigate potential partners and funding for 'cook and taste' events where barbecues, or cooking from different cultures, could take place in the Park, to promote healthy eating. | All | Staff/volunteer time | Medium – Long term |
| | Provide details of joggers' and cycling routes and communicate on internal signs, but also in health and sports centres locally and in the College sites. | All | Staff/volunteer time | Medium term |
| | Investigate interest in classes such as Tai Chi, or gardening sessions as a means to providing exercise. | All | Low - Medium | Long term |
| Objective | Actions | Audience | Resources | Timetable |

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| To develop links with town centre activities | Create further links with the Arts and Festivals Team at WLCT to organise large-scale events, building upon the success of the WOW festival and family fun days. | All | Medium – High | Ongoing |
| | Investigate use of the Park in linking to other community projects organised by the Arts and Festivals Team across the Borough, e.g. use of the Park for performances from community projects, or use of the Park for inspiration in painting projects or poetry. | All | Low - Medium | Medium – Long term |
| | Investigate involvement with town centre events, such as the Christmas Parade. | All | Low | Short term |
| | Continue to host the annual Holocaust Ceremony in Mesnes Park. | All | Low | Ongoing |

5.4.3 Education and interpretation

| Objective | Actions | Audience | Resources | Timetable |
|---|--|--------------------|------------------|------------------|
| To refurbish the playshack as a centre for educational visits | Use the playshack as a base for groups, as a classroom, lunch area and shelter, through creating seating areas inside and outside and offering Ranger staff for support. | Schools / Families | Medium - High | Medium term |

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| and other learning and linked activities | Develop a structure for consulting with local primary and secondary schools to collaborate on the production of information to meet their needs so that the Park is used more widely as an informal education resource. | Schools | Staff/volunteer time | Short – Medium term |
| | Investigate Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programmes for local teachers, who could provide support in developing packs for schools. | Schools | Staff/volunteer time | Short term |
| | Develop Ranger-led or self guided education packs, with guidelines for teachers, related to the national curriculum and the establishment of 'real' projects for college students to undertake as part of their coursework. These could relate to geography (orientation, weather, mapping, orienteering), science (biology, plant and tree life), history (The Victorians), or citizenship (parks as spaces for the public). | Schools | Low | Medium term |
| | Run an education roadshow in the Park, to launch new programmes to local teachers. | Schools | Low | Medium term |
| | In partnership with key teachers or education officers, develop the Stone Trail so that it can assist with orienteering, or other, study areas. | Schools | Low | Short term |
| | Offer a lunch pack option for groups, provided through Frederick's café. | Schools | Low | Medium term |

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| | Consider hosting summer shows or school competitions which could bring together schools from across the Borough to the Park. | Schools | Low - Medium | Medium – Long term |
| | Work with WLCT Play Officers in the development of the playzone to allow for more diverse and creative play. Create a meeting point by the playshack. | Schools / Families | Medium | Medium term |
| Objective | Actions | Audience | Resources | Timetable |
| Develop a programme of informal educational sessions | Contact voluntary and community groups, e.g. scouts and guides, heritage groups, horticulture groups to investigate interest in use of the Park for activities. | All | Low | Short term |
| | Using the contacts already made with local artists, investigate the potential to run arts education sessions in the Park. | All | Low | Short – Medium term |
| | Continue to offer Crown Green Bowling Association training to bowlers interested in becoming instructors, through the existing Bowling Forum. | All | Low | Ongoing |

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|--|--|-----------------|------------------|------------------|
| Objective | Actions | Audience | Resources | Timetable |
| Develop and implement an Interpretation Strategy | Reproduce some of the historic photographs for sale to coincide with the restoration of Park features such as the lodge, bandstand and pavilion and develop a series of leaflets to enable visitors to read the landscape and to provide information about wildfowl, plants and habitat. | All | Low | Medium term |

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| | At each entrance, produce clear signage and maps and strategically site information boards and interpretation panels next to key features (Powell Monument, Pulham Feature, Rose Garden etc.) | All | Medium | Medium term |
|--|---|------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| | Work with the Friends of Mesnes Park to produce a small publication with more detail of the history of the Park. | All | Low - Medium | Medium term |
| | Consider the inclusion of public art in the redevelopment of the Park which interprets the Park's heritage from a modern perspective. | All | Medium | Medium term |
| | Ensure that the exhibition and information point at the café is well promoted to all users. In the longer term, consider the use of space within the lodge building as an exhibition space and the hub for interpretation material about Mesnes Park. | All | Medium - High | Medium - Long term |
| Objective | Actions | Audience | Resources | Timetable |
| Establish the Park as resource for higher educational coursework | Establish links with Wigan and Leigh College through horticultural apprenticeship schemes, using the Park as an educational resource. | College students | Low | Short - Medium term |
| | Consult again with Wigan and Leigh College staff about the potential of the Park for practical work, training and work placement in many syllabus subjects. As well as horticulture, these might include nursery nursing, construction, catering, and travel and tourism, as well as performing arts. | College students | Staff/volunteer time | Medium term |

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| | Investigate the potential to use the café to display students' work on creative courses. | All | Staff/volunteer time | Medium term |
| | Use the Staff Bulletin (monthly) and Chatback newsletter (biannual) to encourage the use of the Park as a learning resource for students. | College students | Low | Ongoing |

5.4.4 Heritage merit and landscape character

| Objective | Actions | Audience | Resources | Timetable |
|--|---|-----------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| To restore the heritage landscape, buildings and structures of the Park | Involve the Conservation Officer with all aspects of the restoration of the Park and seek expertise from external agencies where necessary to ensure compliance with the conditions set under the Conservation Area in which the Park lies. | All | Staff/volunteer time | Short term |
| | Integrate new contemporary facilities sensitively within the historical framework. | All | Medium - High | Medium term |
| Objective | Actions | Audience | Resources | Timetable |
| To work in partnership with Wigan Council and Friends of Mesnes Park to seek funding to restore the heritage landscape | Reshape the beds in the historical area to provide a facility representative of the initial scheme. | All | Medium - High | Medium term |
| | Create a colourful planting scheme and redefine rhododendron beds to original design in historical area. | All | Medium - High | Medium term |
| | Develop a tree trail through the Park and promote to those with horticultural and natural history interests. | All | Low | Medium - Long term |

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5.4.5 Security, health and safety

| Objective | Actions | Audience | Resources | Timetable |
|---|---|-----------------|----------------------|------------------|
| To implement management procedures which will improve the sense of security in the Park | Undertake regular patrols so that staff are available as a point of contact and information. | All | Staff/volunteer time | Ongoing |
| | Build on good relationships with Greater Manchester Police and Police Community Support Officers to ensure that security procedures are implemented in a joined up way. | All | Staff/volunteer time | Short term |
| | Develop a programme of activities to encourage evening use of the Park. | All | Medium – High | Ongoing |
| | Create lit routes through the Park and install monitored CCTV at strategic points in the Park. | All | Medium – High | Medium term |
| | Provide information (e.g. to students) about the safest routes through the Park at night which use the well lit routes and direct pathways. | All | Low | Ongoing |
| | Undertake selective vegetation removal to reduce opportunities for anti-social behaviour. | All | Low | Medium term |
| Objective | Actions | Audience | Resources | Timetable |
| To implement management | Improve the footpath surfaces so that hazards to visitors are reduced. | All | High | Medium term |

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|---|---|-----------------|----------------------|------------------|
| procedures to improve levels of health and safety in the Park | Continue to regularly inspect the Park, including a daily inspection on buildings, infrastructure, graffiti and dog fouling and a weekly inspection of play facilities and equipment. | All | Staff/volunteer time | Ongoing |
| | Undertake an annual risk assessment for the site. | All | Staff/volunteer time | Ongoing |
| | Undertake a detailed buildings condition survey every 5 years and an annual building check (e.g. services, fire equipment). | All | Staff/volunteer time | Ongoing |
| Objective | Actions | Audience | Resources | Timetable |
| To implement the JUMP proposal | Develop a rapport with young people and a team of dedicated staff to support their needs and challenge any unlawful behaviour. | Young people | Staff/volunteer time | Short term |
| | Develop youth mediation accommodation in the Park. | Young people | Medium | Medium term |
| | Provide a coordinated programme of activities to engage young people. | Young people | Medium | Ongoing |

5.4.6 Access

| Objective | Actions | Audience | Resources | Timetable |
|--|---|-----------------|------------------|---------------------|
| To provide the highest quality visitor services and facilities to make | Implement priority improvements set out in the Access Plan to ensure that the Park is a welcoming site to all visitors. | All | High | Short – Medium term |

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| the visit as enjoyable and comfortable as possible | Consider programmes of activity which allow visitors to use all senses in engaging with the Park, through aural, visual and tactile information. A policy where the whole landscape is enriched in terms of sensory interest, as opposed to a specific area, or sensory 'garden', is recommended. This could be supplemented by sensory trails for a variety of visitors, from education to recreation. | All | High | Medium term |
| | Ensure that information is available to aid planning a visit which offers honest details about access issues in the Park and the facilities available to support people with different needs. | All | Medium | Short – Medium term |
| Objective | Actions | Audience | Resources | Timetable |
| To ensure that the Park is easily navigable to people with different needs | In liaison with the Access Committee, Access Officer and Friends of Mesnes Park, develop and install easily navigable signage in key locations throughout the Park. | All | Medium | Medium term |
| | Provide clear information on walks and routes to key facilities that provide the most interesting and easily navigable routes for those with physical and sensory impairments, as well as those who have pushchairs. | All | Low | Medium term |
| Objective | Actions | Audience | Resources | Timetable |

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|--|---|-----|----------------------|--------------------|
| To develop access from the town centre to the Park | Consult with planning and transport officers about solutions to the difficult approaches to the Park through consideration of improvements to physical and visual links, upgrading the quality of the paving, road crossing and street furniture. | All | Medium - High | Medium – Long term |
| | Investigate the potential of improved signage from the town centre to Mesnes Park to improve access and perceived links to the Park. | All | Medium – High | Medium – Long term |
| | Work with the Cycling and Walking Strategy team to devise cycle and walk routes which encompass Mesnes Park. | All | Staff/volunteer time | Medium term |
| | Ensure good boundary treatment, especially at the approach to the Park along Bridgeman Terrace to create a good impression and foster a sense of civic pride. | All | Medium | Medium term |
| | Install safe 'drop off' points outside key entrance/s to the Park. | All | Low - Medium | Medium term |

5.4.7 Marketing and profile raising

| Objective | Actions | Audience | Resources | Timetable |
|--|---|----------|-----------|-------------|
| To create a new identity for the Park and to market this | Consider a brand identity and the potential to market Mesnes Park as distinct from other local green spaces, ensuring that messages convey its Green Flag status. | All | Medium | Medium term |

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| effectively locally and further afield | Continue to market Mesnes Park through the 'Green Spaces – Yours to Enjoy' leaflet, proactively distributing to local groups, schools, as well as key public outlets. When the leaflet is reprinted, include clear practical information which draws out the key selling points of Mesnes Park and the benefits to different target groups. | All | Medium | Ongoing |
| | On launching the new space, run a high profile press and media launch with a variety of events. | All | Medium | Medium term |
| Objective | Actions | Audience | Resources | Timetable |
| To develop communications with other event and cultural/leisure providers with a view to joint marketing | Keep in communication with other cultural and leisure providers to investigate opportunities to package events together in promotions. Ensure that links exist on others' website and that Mesnes Park events are listed on local information sites. | All | Staff/volunteer time / Low | Ongoing |
| | Likewise, coordinate joint marketing with partners – especially Drumcroon Arts Centre - to build new audiences. | All | Staff/volunteer time / Low | Ongoing |
| | Seek opportunities to participate in and gain profile from key anniversaries and events (e.g. May Day, Mothers and Fathers Day, multicultural celebrations, Youth Democracy Week, seasonal celebrations). | All | Staff/volunteer time / Low | Ongoing |

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| Objective | Actions | Audience | Resources | Timetable |
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| To develop the visibility within Wigan town centre | Develop a presence for Mesnes Park through inclusion of information about the Park in key public buildings (e.g. library) and through any town centre maps and signage. | All | Low | Ongoing |
| | Negotiate space on the town centre banners, on Standishgate, to promote large events in the Park. | All | Medium | Medium term |
| | Investigate use of the town mascot to promote key events at the Park on the shopping streets. | All | Staff/volunteer time | Ongoing |
| | Investigate use of the pay on exit parking tickets to promote offers in the café or at key events. | All | Low | Medium term |
| Objective | Actions | Audience | Resources | Timetable |
| To ensure that all communications are clear and welcoming to all potential users | Ensure that all user information in the Park and marketing material used to promote outside, is accessible to people of different ages, abilities and backgrounds. Refer to the Plain English website www.plainenglish.co.uk for broad guidelines and tips on checking that language is accessible. Seek additional specialist advice relating to communications with people with learning disabilities and those for whom English is not a first language. | All | Low | Ongoing |
| | Refer to the RNIB 'Clear Print Guidelines' for advice on planning accessible information. | All | Low - Medium | Ongoing |

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| | <p>Ensure that any printed material in the Park is developed to represent different ethnic groups in imagery and use of language (e.g. a sign may incorporate the word 'welcome' in many languages while the main information is in English). Where possible, pictures should be used instead of words for signage.</p> | All | Medium | Medium term |
|--|---|-----|--------|-------------|

5.4.8 Management and standards

| Objective | Actions | Audience | Resources | Timetable |
|---|--|-----------------|------------------|---------------------|
| <p>To provide opportunities for skill development and training to staff and volunteers further to meet the needs of different audiences, in line with the Trust's employee policies</p> | <p>Ensure that an understanding is held of audience development issues and working with different groups across all members of the Mesnes Park team by running a half day session to discuss the issues of working with different target groups.</p> | All | Low - Medium | Short - Medium term |
| | <p>Encourage a system of visits to other parks and open spaces to include meetings with groups involved in their management, to inspire staff about the potential for Mesnes Park.</p> | All | Low | Short term |
| | <p>Where relevant, investigate training or workshop sessions are offered in customer care, access and equality and supporting users with different needs.</p> | All | Low - Medium | Ongoing |
| Objective | Actions | Audience | Resources | Timetable |

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| To encourage greater levels of volunteering, through developing the established volunteer programme through the Green Spaces Conservation Volunteers initiative | Agree targets and mechanisms for new volunteer recruitment which may be project-based (e.g. planning a specific area for the development, gardening, event organisation) or could offer skill development opportunities (especially to older people or college students seeking work experience) | All | Staff/volunteer time | Short term |
| | Develop horticultural skills within Park staff by offering training in conservation skills through the training BTCV programme. | All | Low | Ongoing |

| Objective | Actions | Audience | Resources | Timetable |
|--|--|----------|----------------------|-----------|
| To pursue and strengthen partnerships and involvement of the private, voluntary and community sector locally in the life of the Park | Ensure that Mesnes Park's redevelopment and potential to link to other leisure and cultural facilities is considered in the wider work of WLCT. | All | Staff/volunteer time | Ongoing |
| | Work with the different partnerships of the Wigan Community Plan to investigate ways in which a partnership with activity at Mesnes Park can help to achieve joint agendas, especially the Community Safety, Health and Social Care, Cultural and Education and Lifelong Learning Partnership. | All | Staff/volunteer time | Ongoing |
| | Continue to liaise with the Town Centre Manager to ensure that Mesnes Park is connected to the overall development of central Wigan. | All | Staff/volunteer time | Ongoing |

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| | Liaise with tourism promoters (Destination Wigan) and events teams seeking to attract people to Wigan from outside. | All | Staff/volunteer time | Ongoing |
|---|--|-----------------|----------------------|------------------|
| Objective | Actions | Audience | Resources | Timetable |
| To generate revenue for the Park from leases and events and invest in activity to further Park services to the public | Develop a pricing strategy for hire of facilities (e.g. the bandstand, café, Park as a whole) for events, ensuring that it is commercially viable whilst not excluding groups who would otherwise visit. Set income targets for these areas of activity. | All | Staff/volunteer time | Medium term |
| | Investigate other areas of income generation for the Park which also provide an enhanced facility in the longer term (e.g. a crèche, hire out of facilities for meetings etc.). | All | Staff/volunteer time | Long term |
| | Launch Lifestyle, a Customer Management System to provide quality information on users of all trust facilities in order to market and promote facility use more effectively and therefore increase participation and revenue for paid events. | All | High | Ongoing |

| Objective | Actions | Audience | Resources | Timetable |
|--|--|-----------------|----------------------|------------------|
| To develop the Park according to strategic planning aims and measure performance | Implement the management and maintenance plan. | All | High | Ongoing |
| | Use this document to agree responsibilities and appropriate action plans for the Park. | All | Staff/volunteer time | Short term |

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| of the Park against agreed targets | Implement Performance Management benchmarking as determined by AGMA (Association of Greater Manchester Authorities) and attend AGMA meetings to keep up to date with practice in other sites and authorities. | All | Staff/volunteer time | Ongoing |
| | Implement the 10 Year Maintenance and Management Plan | All | High | Ongoing |
| To promote and encourage the use of 'Green' management practices throughout the Park. | Recycling of cans at Fredericks Café and the bowling pavilion | All | Staff/volunteer time | Ongoing |

Appendix 1

Staff structure

Appendix 1 Staff structure

Environmental Management & Sustainability – Staff Structure

Forward Planning Group

Performance Manager

- Sites inventory
- Asset surveys
- Landscape design
- Procurement
- Overall performance information for the Division
- Project & programme management

Parks Regeneration Manager

- Overall strategy for parks, pitches, etc.
- Development of parks related improvement schemes
- Grant applications
- Negotiation with the Council and external partners
- Advocacy role

Wildlife & Countryside Regeneration Manager

- Overall strategy for wildlife, countryside & biodiversity -
Development of wildlife related improvement schemes
- Grant applications
- Negotiation with the Council and external partners
- Advocacy role
- Angling strategy

Grounds (& Green Spaces) Manager

- Maintenance of, and customer services to, parks and leisure
housing estates, school grounds, highway verges
- Grass cutting
- Tree works
- Landscape construction Schemes
- Area management

- Enterprises

Parks & Countryside Activities Manager

- Presentation of Major Town and Country parks
- Countryside Rangers
- Park Rangers
- Sports pitch bookings etc.
- Events in the park - Allotments
- Angling activities

Cemetery & Crematorium Services Manager

- All cemetery and crematorium issues
- Grave digging
- War memorials etc.

Haigh Hall & Country Park Manager

- All Haigh Hall and Country Park issues
- Developments
- Hall functions
- Catering
- Country Park & visitor centre
- Play Haigh Golf Course
- Events at Haigh
- Enterprises

Appendix 2

Research list

Appendix 2 Research list

Category

Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust

Mesnes Park: 10 Year Management Plan. Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust

Mesnes Park: Access Plan. Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust

Mesnes Park: Audience Development Plan. Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust

Mesnes Park: Restoration Plan. Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust

Mesnes Park: A Report on its Historic iron Structures (December 2004). Heritage Engineering of Glasgow

Mesnes Park: Conservation Management Plan (2005). Bertram Hyde

Environmental Management and Sustainability Service Area Plan (2005). Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust

Wigan Council

Wigan's Heritage: A Strategy for Wigan (2003-2007). Wigan Council

Destination Wigan: A Tourism Strategy for Wigan Borough (2004-2009). Wigan Council.
DRAFT ONLY

Wigan Centre Plan (1998). Planning & Regeneration, Wigan Council.

Appendix 3

Consultation list

Appendix 3 Consultation list

Mesens Park, Wigan

Access Plan

Final Report: March 2006

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APPENDICES

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1 Background to the plan

1.1 The brief and methodology

The Access Plan details priorities for access at Mesnes Park up to and following its proposed capital development (see 1.2), with timed and quantified targets for sustainable and realistic growth of user numbers and engagement.

ABL Cultural Consulting has worked closely with the Steering Group and management team at Mesnes Park during the period from October to December 2005 in compiling the Access Plan.

The overall project has been managed by a Steering Group at Wigan Culture and Leisure Trust as follows:

- - Parks & Countryside Activities Manager
- - Project and Facilities Development Officer
- - Executive Director, Environmental Management and Sustainability
- - Parks Regeneration Manager.

The Access Plan was undertaken in parallel to an Audience Development Plan, and a Conservation Management Plan undertaken by Bertram Hyde. The two teams worked in close communication to ensure that plans were complementary.

The following have been undertaken in preparation of this Access Plan:

- Desk research into organisational plans, policies and research, existing feasibility documents and other relevant local and regional information
- An analysis of the local catchment, population and competition
- Consultation with key stakeholders in Wigan, especially the local Access Group and Access Officer
- A stakeholder workshop to discuss issues, potential and action plans.

1.2 Mesnes Park background and development project overview

1.2.1 Background

Mesnes Park was Wigan's first municipal park, opened on 6 August 1878. It safeguarded open recreational space from development and provided a 'green lung' in an otherwise industrial town. It occupies twelve hectares of former manorial demesnes land known as the 'Mesnes' adjoining the town centre. The design was the result of a competition won by John McClean of Castle Donnington. His layout utilised the sloping site to create terraces surmounted by a pavilion and overlooking a formal garden. An ornamental lake was created from former marl pits and provision was made for recreational areas. Sport and play facilities were added to the park within the design framework and the garden areas were renowned for their bedding displays and horticultural excellence.

Today the Park occupies the same area and retains the framework and features of the original design. These include the entrance gates and lodge, bandstand, pavilion, ornamental gardens, walks, lake and rockwork.

1.2.2 Restoration proposals

With local industrial decline, Mesnes Park, in common with many other municipal parks, suffered a period of lack of attention and investment resulting in the loss of features and deterioration of the historic fabric. A concerted effort to address issues and reverse the decline began in 1996 when the Park's national importance was recognised and it was placed on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest. The Friends of Mesnes Park were formed in 1998 and have worked together with Parks staff (The Green Spaces Team) to instigate and undertake urgent work, consult with the public and actively encourage public participation. Noticeable progress has been made since 1999, appreciated and supported by the large number of Park users.

The proposed restoration of Mesnes Park is detailed in full in the accompanying Conservation Management Plan. The first phase of the restoration focuses on the heritage and community benefits that would be seen from:

- The restoration of the pavilion, which is used as a café and forms the hub of the Park
- The bandstand, which will be upgraded so it becomes a venue for the proposed diverse events programme
- Dalton's steps, which lead visitors to the pavilion and from the top, offer views across the Park and into the town centre
- The lodge which has been unused and boarded up for some time, although development is at feasibility stage and ideally parts of the building will be brought back into public use.

1.3 **Scope of the plan**

The role of the Access Plan is to illustrate how Mesnes Park will provide an inclusive facility for people with a range of disabilities, cultural and social backgrounds and ages. It proposes an inclusive approach for people to experience, learn and participate in all aspects of the Park's activity

The Plan establishes:

- A framework within which access provision and the development plans can be taken forward
- The management steps the organisation has to take to ensure the long term success of the access recommendations and which allow effective implementation of the Plan.

1.4 **Methodology**

Following the familiarisation session with the steering group and a desk review of relevant documents, meetings have been held with key representatives from the Park and from the wider community.

These have identified current practices and have gathered information about the access priorities for the Park.

The extensive phase of consultation which formed part of the audience development process also covered issues of access and explored perceptions of the Park in general.

It identified barriers to attendance and the factors affecting engagement for different target groups, including physical, sensory, organisational, social and cultural, intellectual and financial access issues. Barriers to physical and sensory access to the Park have been assessed, and are dealt with in detail in the Access Audit report in Appendix 3.

A workshop on the key barriers and issues of access was held for stakeholders in November 2005, where options for access improvements were presented and preferred options agreed to be taken forward as an architectural feasibility study.

2 The current picture

2.1 Location and context

Mesnes Park is in a prime location, creating a significant green space in the heart of Wigan, which forms an important link between the commercial centre and nearby housing.

Mesnes Park is a classic example of a Victorian park, which is listed Grade II on the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens maintained by English Heritage. The Park also forms part of the Mesnes Conservation Area designated in 1980.

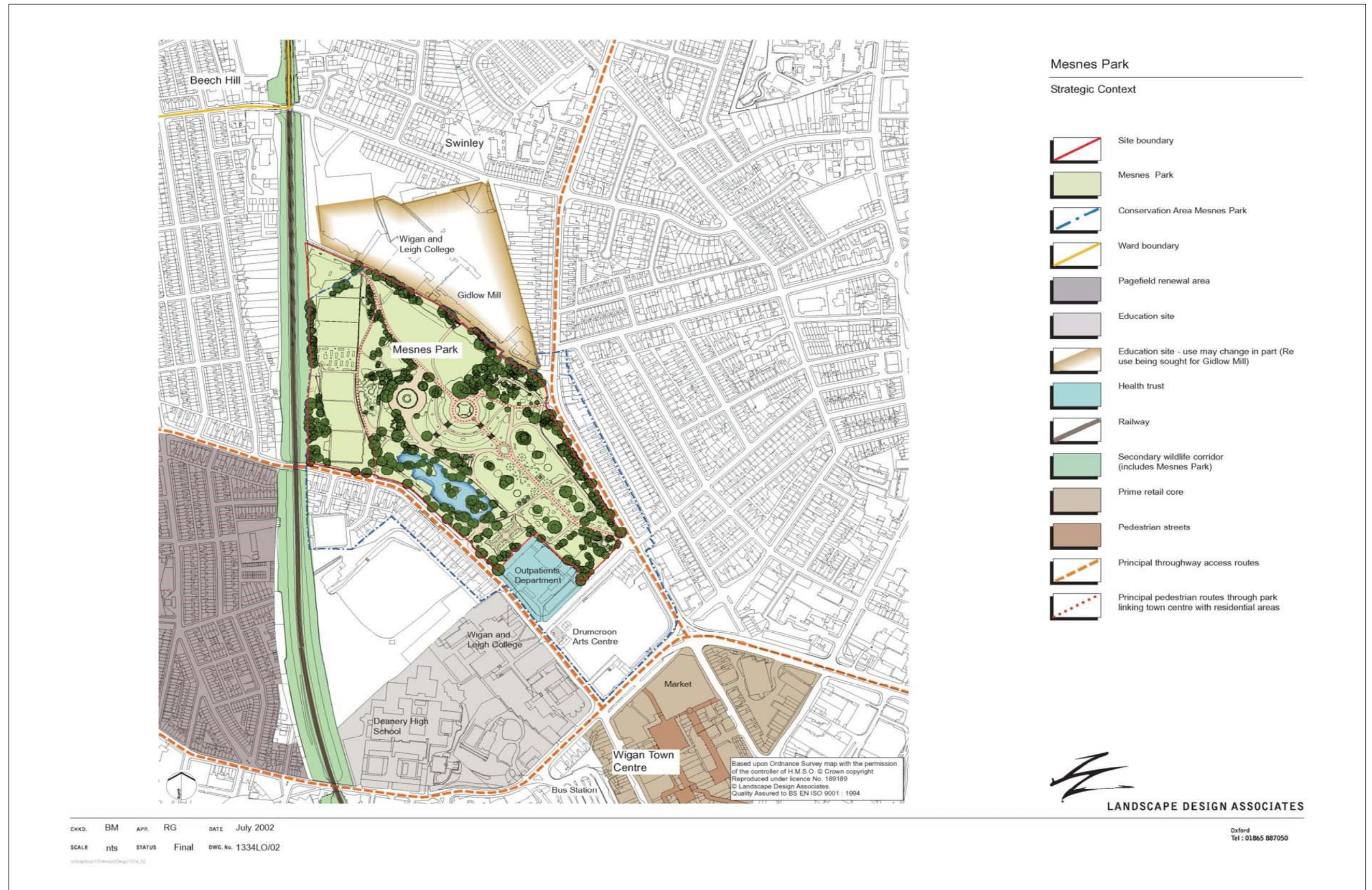
The Park retains the framework and features of the original design. It contains seven listed buildings and structures, as follows:

- Entrance lodge (1880)
- The main entrance gateway (1878)
- The Powell Monument to Sir Francis Sharp Powell, a local politician and hero (1910)
- The pavilion (1880)
- Two flights of Dalton's Steps (1878)
- The bandstand (1890).

The Park also has rockwork created by James Pulham, a lake, ornamental gardens, and provides a variety of sports facilities and activities, such as walks and family events.

The plan overleaf shows the Park in relation to its town centre location and strategic partners. The Thomas Linacre Outpatients Unit, Drumcroom Arts Centre and two sites of Wigan and Leigh College (key partners in the development) are directly adjacent to the Park.

Map 1: Mesnes Park, Strategic Context



2.2 Description of services

2.2.1 Permanent facilities

Mesnes Park has the following permanent public facilities.

Sports and play facilities:

- Children's play areas and playshack (build to RoSPA¹ standards):
 - Under 5's Play Provision
 - 5 – 12's Play Provision
- Basketball pitches
- Extreme sports facility
- Tennis pitches
- Crazy golf
- A bowling green
- An informal recreation area.

Ancillary facilities:

- A café, Fredericks which offers hot and cold meals, drinks and icecream
- Toilets within the café.

Natural heritage facilities:

- A lake, recently developed, further to feedback from users
- The rose garden and formal bedding displays
- A stone 'Play Trail' with a leaflet and plan of the Park, directing trail users to a series of stone gargoyles.

Exhibitions and interpretation:

- The Friends of the Park collected extensive historical information during the production of the exhibition 'Mesnes Park - A People's History'. The Heritage Services team supported the Friends through the project and Wigan History Shop displays the exhibition occasionally. Selected information and memories formed the sixteen panels which make up the exhibition which are displayed in the café area, although much information was not used due to the lack of space. An aspiration of the Friends is to publish a Mesnes Park history booklet, containing all the information which was collated.
- The Friends also contributed to Wigan's Parish Map, which was created to celebrate the Millennium and was co-ordinated through the Heritage Services team.

¹ The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents

- Mesnes Park is the focus of many articles found in the Heritage Services magazine Past Forward. The Friends of Mesnes Park have used the opportunity to recruit new volunteers through this means and help them to find out information about the Park.

2.2.2 Events

The 'Green Spaces Yours to Enjoy' events programme, organised by the Rangers, is the way that the Parks Services team encourages the public to be involved with Mesnes Park. Events for families, older people, schools, young people and special interest groups have recently included:

- Natural history walks
- Green Spaces conservation volunteer programmes
- Feed the birds and bird feeder making sessions
- Health walks
- Brass band performances
- Pumpkin carving session for families
- Christmas decoration making session
- Arts events.

If an organisation wishes to hold an event in Mesnes Park, an events pack is offered to support groups through the event planning procedure so booking, risk, insurance, and facilities are covered.

2.2.3 Community projects

Encouraging use of facilities by Wigan's diverse communities is a key theme for the Trust and the festivals team have worked in partnership with the Parks Team and other agencies to organise the WOW (Wigan One World) Festival. The pinnacle of the festival for the last two years has been a large event in Mesnes Park.

This has been the opportunity for local ethnic community groups from around the Borough to express their culture through dance, music and food.

Partnership working with Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust's Heritage Services section has led to Mesnes Park hosting the annual Holocaust Ceremony.

2.2.4 Educational activities

The Park is used formally and informally as an educational resource.

Apart from particular links established with one school that lacks grounds for external activities, several schools use the Park without making direct contact with the Ranger Service. Primary classes have undertaken bulb planting, scouts manoeuvred the stonetrail and brownie packs participated in Christmas workshops.

Children attending workshops at the Drumcroon Arts Centre sometimes use the Park as a visual resource and for lunch breaks.

However, Parks Community Officers acknowledge that there is much more scope for informal cross-curricular education and more potential to develop more active and regular links with schools locally.

2.3 Organisational set-up

Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust (WLCT) is a new organisation formed on 1 April 2003. The current organisation was formally Wigan Council's Leisure and Cultural Services Department. WLCT works in partnership with Wigan Council in providing a wide range of leisure and cultural opportunities. With a remit to improve, develop and expand the range of opportunities provided for both residents and visitors.

Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust is a non-profit distributing organisation, which must reinvest its surplus to improve services. The Trust is a registered charity, which brings some financial advantages, and is maintained by external funding and income generation that includes an annual grant from Wigan Council. In addition, buildings and facilities are leased from the Council.

The Board of Trustees (listed below) represent different service areas and meet regularly to review and determine the Trust's priorities. There are eleven Trustees, two Council nominees, community representatives and specialists.

The Board for 2004/2005 included the following representatives:

- - Environment & Sustainability / Community & Regeneration
- - Executive Director WLCT
- - Finance & Performance / Sports & Healthy Living
- - Human Resources / Libraries, Information & Heritage / Environment & Sustainability

- – Finance & Performance / Sports & Healthy Living
- – Council representative
- – Human Resources / Community Regeneration

- – Human Resources / Environment & Sustainability
- – Human Resources / Environment & Sustainability

- – Finance & Performance / Libraries, Information & Heritage

- – Council representative

- Vacant (Vice – Chair) – Finance & Performance.

Under the umbrella of the Trust there is also a trading company: Wigan Leisure and Culture Enterprises. The Enterprises part of the organisation has responsibility for the development and management of those services that are not deemed to be charitable (such as Leisure Halls).

The Park falls under the remit of the Wigan Central and Wigan West Ward Councillors and the Wigan North Township Manager. These are consulted regularly in relation to Park issues.

3 Identifying Priorities

In considering plans for the development of the Park and improving access to all communities, it is important to understand the target audiences in the form of a demographic profile.

This section is an edited version of Section 2 Local Population Analysis in the Audience Development Plan.

3.1 Local population analysis

Mesnes Park lies immediately north of Wigan town centre separated from the market and central commercial area by New Market Street and Mesnes Field. The Park forms an important area of green space in the heart of Wigan, creating a wedge linking the commercial centre with surrounding housing.

Mesnes Park is located adjacent to the new National Health Trust Outpatients Department, faculties of Wigan and Leigh College and Drumcruon Arts Centre. Many properties on Bridgeman Terrace to the east are now occupied by businesses but housing areas extend north, west and east of the Park. The Park is readily accessible by public and private transport by way of the town centre. Wigan is around 10 miles from Bolton and 14 miles from Bury and 20 miles from Manchester to the East and 10 miles from St Helen's to the South West.

To the West of Wigan is the M6 connecting to Carlisle in the North and Birmingham to the South. To the East of Wigan is the M61, with connections into Greater Manchester and Eastbound into Yorkshire.

Rail links connect Wigan to Bolton, Warrington, St Helens and Preston in under 20 minutes and Manchester in 40 minutes. Direct services are also available to Liverpool (50 minutes), Birmingham (90 minutes), Carlisle (90 minutes) and London (2 hours 30 minutes).

The railway station is a fifteen minute walk from Mesnes Park, and the bus station is approximately five minutes' walk away. Mesnes Park also serves as a pedestrian through route to and from the commercial centre.

Its location and relationship to the town centre means that it is accessible to both the local community and to a wider range of visitors who come to the town as a regional centre for shopping, work or study. Its central location means that many Council policies impact on the Park, which makes it well placed to be a vehicle to realise local aspirations.

3.2 General and gender profile

According to the mid-2003 population estimates there were 303,900 people residing in Wigan, of whom 49.2% were male and 50.8% were female.

In the twenty years between 1982 and 2002 the population of Wigan declined by 1.2%, compared with a decrease of 2% for the North West region as a whole. Population density of Wigan averaged 1,603 people per square kilometre, compared with an average of 480 for the region and 380 people per square kilometre for England overall.

3.3 Age profile

The population of Wigan is reasonably consistent with the UK average for those under 44, but has a higher proportion of those aged 45-64 and a much lower proportion of over 65s than the region or the country average. The average age of the population in Wigan was 38.3 years. This compared with an average age for England and Wales of 38.6 years.

3.4 Cultural diversity

The Wigan area is predominantly White, especially when compared with the rest of the North West; 98.7% of the local population is White, compared to 91.3% of the population of England and Wales, and 94.4% of the population of the North West.

3.5 Disability and health

Table 3 in the Audience Development Plan also identifies that there is additionally a significantly higher proportion of people who are permanently sick or disabled in Wigan, nearing twice the country average at 9.5% (5.5% in England and Wales).

In addition, the proportion of people whose general health is described as 'not good' is higher than the region or country average: 11.96%, compared with 10.95% for the North West and 9.22% for England and Wales as a whole. 23% have a limiting long term illness in Wigan.

Use of greenspace by disabled people

The under-use of greenspace by disabled people has been reported by various researchers. 20% of people in the UK have impairments but surveys for a 1995 the DEMOS report² indicated that the presence of

² Park Life: Urban Parks and Social Renewal, Greenhalgh and Warpole, 1995

people with impairments never amounted to more than 0.5% of all users.

The number of disabled people is greater if it includes people who at any one time experience temporary impairments, for example a broken limb, heart condition or general fatigue. Older people may not consider themselves disabled but can experience many of the same barriers because of stamina, mobility and sensory activity.

3.6 Social exclusion

Table 3 in the Audience Development Plan illustrates the economic activity, and identifies that the percentage of employed people is higher than the region or country average. 65.5% of residents are in employment, compared with 62.2% in the North West and 63.9% in the country as a whole.

According to the 2001 Census, of the people in Wigan who were unemployed, 16.8% were aged 50 and over, 8.2% had never worked and 28.0% were long-term unemployed.

There are a number of other factors that provide a picture of the standard of living in Wigan:

- Attainment of qualifications in Wigan is lower than the national average. 12.9% of people are qualified to degree level or higher, compared to 19.8% in England and Wales and 17.2% for the North West region. This reflects, in part, the lower proportion of students in the area. The proportion of the local population who have no qualifications (35.3%) is higher than the national average (29.1%).
- In September 2004, 12.8% of people claiming work-related benefits in Wigan had been doing so for more than 12 months; this compared with 16% in September 1999. Between September 1999 and September 2004 the number of young people aged 18 to 24 years who were claiming work related benefits reduced by 37.5% in Wigan, compared to a reduction of 30.7% in Great Britain overall.
- The proportion of people that rent from the Council is higher than the average for England and Wales as a whole (17.7%, compared with 13.2%).

- The 2004 Indices of Deprivation gives Wigan an overall rank of 53 out of 354 local authority areas.³ The area ranks at 40 on the Rank of Income scale and 9 on the Rank of Employment scale. Individual ward profiles are detailed below.

3.7 Wards neighbouring Mesnes Park

Due to its town centre location, the Park is accessible by Aspull, New Springs, Whelley, Wigan West, Douglas, Ince, Pemberton and Worsley Mesnes.

Densely populated areas lie within one mile of the Park.

Wards have been ranked⁴ according to key statistics, which allows for comparison between wards. Data shows the following key differences, of relevance to Mesnes Park:

- Wigan Central ward has the highest number of people over the age of 65 in the Borough (22% as opposed to a Borough average of 14.4%). The ward has the lowest number of children aged under 4 (4.2% as opposed to 5.8% for Wigan Borough).
- The Borough ward with the highest number of single parent households is Pemberton (14.1% compared with 10.4% for the Borough).
- Pemberton also has the highest proportion of residents with limiting long term illness (26.3%).
- Ince has the lowest proportion of residents aged 16-74 not in employment (5.1% unemployed).
- Six clusters of deprivation among the highest 10% in the country exist within the above wards. All of these clusters lie within one mile of Mesnes Park.

³ The Indices of Multiple Deprivation are calculated by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. They combine information relating to income, employment, education, health, skills and training, barriers to housing and services and crime into an overall measure of deprivation.

⁴ Wigan Council estimates based on best fit of 2001 Census Output Areas to new ward boundaries in 2004.

3.8 Barriers to access

This section should be read in conjunction with Chapter 4 (Audiences and Barriers) of the Audience Development Plan, which analyses data collected through the situation analysis, market research, stakeholder consultations and stakeholder workshop session. These sessions have identified a series of barriers which prevent people from engaging with Mesnes Park or may affect engagement with the proposed development.

An audit taking into account physical considerations has been carried out by Norfolk Property Services (NPS), who are responsible for maintaining Wigan Council's buildings and facilities. A further audit was undertaken by ABL in November 2005, to review the NPS document with key staff and discuss key issues in resolution of barriers to access.

The following representatives have been involved in the preparation of this plan:

- Wigan Council's Access Group are regularly consulted via Wigan Council's Access Officer who has been involved with the approval of the designs for the new toilet facility in the café pavilion.
- The follow up visit by ABL to review the NPS document was undertaken in consultation with Wigan Council's Access Officer and Conservation Officer, as well as two members of WLCT staff responsible for the Park's development.
- A representative from Wigan Access Committee, who has impaired vision and uses the Park regularly with his wife, has carried out a site visit and offered recommendations which have fed into the Access Audit.
- A consultation programme has taken place with a range of communities between 2000 and 2005. These have included users and non users of the Park, young people, Citizens' Panels and Friends of Mesnes Park.
- A range of stakeholders representing different community needs have been involved over the last five years in influencing decisions about Mesnes Park's development. A stakeholder workshop was

also held by ABL as part of the preparation of the Access Plan. A full list of consultees for the years 2000-2005 is attached in Appendix 2.

The full physical and sensory audits are located in Appendix 3.

3.8.1 Physical barriers

The physical barriers at Mesnes Park relate to the physical arrangements affecting access both to and within the Park. The following are the key barriers identified through the Access Audit which may be problematic for wheelchair users, pushchair users and ambulant disabled people.

Approach and parking

- No accessible parking bays
- Accessibility to the Park from the town centre is poor, with a dual carriageway as a physical barrier
- Approach to the main gates on Mesnes Park Terrace is hazardous as the wide junction makes it difficult to delineate the entrance area of the park
- No designated drop off bay.

Entrance/s

- Hazardous pavement edges at main entrance and uneven footpaths at secondary entrances
- Entry to the playshack is hampered by inadequate doors.

Steps

- No contrasting treads or nosings on any steps
- No handrails nor tactile warning strips.

Circulation

- The footpath surfaces are in poor condition and the layout of the park raises issues for those with physical impairments
- Walkden Avenue path is cobbled and in a state of disrepair
- Hazards around the playshack and play area and the rockery due to uneven surfaces

- No provision for segregation of cycles and pedestrians in the Park.

Visitor facilities

- Buildings and structures were designed many years ago and are not friendly to those with physical impairments. The Pavilion which is used as a café, the hub of the Park, is accessed by two flights of steps, which presents problems for people with mobility impairments. Alternative routes are steep and increase the walk to the building
- Chairs and tables within the café are difficult for navigation and use by wheelchair and pushchair users
- There is a lack of disabled WC provision and the toilets are only available when the café is open
- The exhibition 'Mesnes Park – A People's Exhibition' is too high and small for people to view from a wheelchair
- When events are held at the bandstand, the surrounding landscape and the lack of seating does not encourage audiences to stay for long periods.

3.8.2 Sensory barriers

People with sensory impairments might be excluded from gaining the most out of the current experience of visiting the Park, because:

- There are few ways for visitors to experience a visit, or events, through different senses, through aural, visual and tactile information
- There is little availability of alternative format information (e.g. foreign language leaflets, large print)
- No historical information about the Sir Francis Powell statue which explains its significance and traditions
- Lack of clear navigational support for people with visual or learning difficulties
- The colour scheme in the café does not provide adequate tonal contrast for people with visual impairment
- Hands-on⁵ opportunities are included in several of the spaces on the Park site. However, these are relatively limited and could be extended to appeal to adults as well as children.

⁵ Involving active participation

3.8.3 Organisational barriers

The following relate to the way in which the Park currently operates and is managed, which may in turn serve to exclude or deter potential users:

- Concerns over the safety of the Park, compounded by a sense of a lack of visible staff presence
- Lack of clearly defined areas for different users in Mesnes Park.
- There is scope for improvements to the Mesnes Park site to give more information about the facilities offered. Although the Parks proximity to the town centre and its public transport system makes it relatively accessible to visitors, the survey results show that the Park is essentially used by those in the local vicinity. People who are not familiar with the Park will have little chance of finding this out through information available in the town centre
- Currently, information is offered about the GSYTE events programme, but information about the Mesnes Park site and its facilities is limited
- Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust is in its relative infancy, and there will inevitably still be confusion over who the public perceives delivers the services that the Trust provides.

3.8.4 Intellectual barriers

Barriers may also be created where people have difficulty engaging because of the way that the experience is presented and the information that is provided. For Mesnes Park these include:

- Particular groups have 'claimed' areas or times of day within the Park, putting off other potential users
- Little involvement of different user groups in gathering and writing interpretation and marketing information
- Print material (e.g. information boards) is very text heavy and may not appeal to people with different learning styles or from other cultural backgrounds
- No specific facilities for young people

- Nothing specific provided for older people
- Family play areas are in need of improvement.

3.8.5 Social and cultural barriers

Social and cultural barriers derive from a site which does not address interests and life experiences of people from a range of cultures:

- Aside from the WOW festival, there is low awareness of what the Park can provide for the different communities and cultures of Wigan
- A lack of publicity and information material (signage etc) which reflects the wider community in terms of images and language. Anecdotal research also suggests that there are a number of Park users for whom English is not a first language.

3.8.6 Financial barriers

Financial barriers are not such a consideration since access to the Park is free and events are mostly free. However, additional costs (e.g. of transport, parking, refreshments and activities such as crazy golf) may prohibit people from engaging fully with the facility.

4 Framework for action

4.1 Introduction

The following recommendations arise from information collected through consultation sessions and follow best practice. Where there is an overlap with the actions in the Audience Development Plan these are included here with the reference **ADP**.

The actions are detailed according to issues of access covering:

- Physical access
- Sensory access
- Intellectual access
- Social and cultural access.

Broad timescales and responsibilities are detailed for each action, and attention is paid to monitoring and evaluating progress through actions which specifically outline consistent processes for measuring results.

Throughout the actions refer to the partnerships and staff who will be responsible for each action.

The broad timetable outlined in the previous chapter is used for the action plan:

- Short term (1 – 2 years, prior to the capital development)
- Medium term (2 – 5 years)
- Long term (5 - 7 years).

4.2 The Access Chain

It is advisable to consider access in relation to the full 'access chain' which leads from a person's decision to visit a site through the journey, arrival and visit to the site and its facilities, then the journey home. If any one of the links in the access chain is broken the visit may either end unsatisfactorily or may not happen⁶.

Table 1: The Access Chain

| Visitor experience | Things to consider |
|---------------------|---|
| Decision to visit | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access information in accessible formats - Good publicity, good distribution - Welcoming image - Information about accessible facilities |
| Journey and arrival | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Accessible public transport - Timetables and route information available - Close to bus / train station - Accessible car parking - Welcoming entrance - Staff on hand - Free entry (where relevant) to supporter, enabler or carer |
| On-site experience | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Routes and signposting for all levels of disability - Accessible information, interpretation and facilities - Highlights of site are accessible, or alternative of equal quality is provided - Highlights are identified in collaboration with disabled people and are made accessible |

⁶ Sensory Trust 2005

Return home

- Accessible public transport
- Timetables and route information available
- Close to bus / train station
- Accessible car parking
- Feedback encouraged and learned from

4.2.1 Physical access

| Objective | Actions | Audience | Resources | Timetable |
|--|--|-----------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| To improve levels of safety throughout the park | Produce and implement emergency evacuation procedures for the café and other buildings, and the park overall | All | Medium | Short – Medium term |
| | Produce guidance for disabled WC procedures | All | Low | Short – Medium term |
| To provide the highest quality visitor services and facilities to make the visit as enjoyable and comfortable as possible (physical) | Implement priority improvements set out in the Access Audit recommendations to ensure that the Park is a welcoming site to all visitors. ADP | All | High | Short – Medium term |
| | Contact retirement homes and sheltered housing to promote and organise accompanied walking sessions around Mesnes Park. ADP | Older people | Staff / volunteer time | Short – Medium term |
| | Ensure that information is available to aid planning a visit which offers honest details about access issues in the Park and the facilities available to support people with different needs. ADP | All | Medium | Short – Medium term |
| | Review guided walk and event programmes to ensure that activities cover a range of activities. | All | Staff/volunteer time | Short – Medium term |
| | Review big event plans to ensure that disabled facilities are included. | All | Staff/volunteer time | Ongoing |
| Objective | Actions | Audience | Resources | Timetable |
| To ensure that the Park is easily navigable to people with different needs | In liaison with the Access Committee, Access Officer and Friends of Mesnes Park, develop and install easily navigable signage in key locations throughout the Park. ADP | All | Medium | Medium term |
| | Refer to English Heritage guidance 'Easy Access to Historic Properties' (re-issued in 2004) to gain useful guidance on alterations to historic properties for access | All | Low | Short – Medium term |

| | Provide clear information on walks and routes to key facilities that provide the most interesting and easily navigable routes for those with physical and sensory impairments, as well as those who have pushchairs. ADP | All | Low | Medium term |
|---|---|-----------------|----------------------|------------------|
| | Develop advisory or user panels to support the development of particular areas, e.g. families, young people, disabled people (possibly through the existing Access Committee). ADP | All | Low | Ongoing |
| Objective | Actions | Audience | Resources | Timetable |
| To implement management procedures to improve levels of health and safety in the Park | Improve the footpath surfaces so that hazards to visitors are reduced. ADP | All | High | Medium term |
| | Continue to regularly inspect the Park, including a daily inspection on buildings, infrastructure, graffiti and dog fouling and a weekly inspection of play facilities and equipment. ADP | All | Staff/volunteer time | Ongoing |
| | Undertake an annual risk assessment for the site. ADP | All | Staff/volunteer time | Ongoing |
| | Undertake a detailed buildings condition survey every 5 years and an annual building check (e.g. services, fire equipment). ADP | All | Staff/volunteer time | Ongoing |
| Objective | Actions | Audience | Resources | Timetable |
| To develop access from the town centre to the Park | Develop links with local community transport organisations to ensure that the Park is included in their operation. | All | Staff/volunteer time | Medium term |
| | Promote access routes to the Park from the nearby mobility scooter centre. | All | Low | Short term |

| | | | | |
|--|--|-----|----------------------|--------------------|
| | Consult with planning and transport officers about solutions to the difficult approaches to the Park through consideration of improvements to physical and visual links, upgrading the quality of the paving, road crossing and street furniture. ADP | All | Medium - High | Medium – Long term |
| | Investigate the potential of improved signage from the town centre to Mesnes Park to improve access and perceived links to the Park. ADP | All | Medium – High | Medium – Long term |
| | Work with the Cycling and Walking Strategy team to devise cycle and walk routes which encompass Mesnes Park. ADP | All | Staff/volunteer time | Medium term |
| | Ensure good boundary treatment, especially at the approach to the Park along Bridgeman Terrace to create a good impression and foster a sense of civic pride. ADP | All | Medium | Medium term |
| | Install safe 'drop off' points outside key entrance/s to the Park. ADP | All | Low - Medium | Medium term |

4.2.2 Sensory access

| Objective | Actions | Audience | Resources | Timetable |
|---|--|----------|-----------|-------------|
| To provide the highest quality visitor services and facilities to make the visit as enjoyable and comfortable as possible (sensory) | Develop the Mesnes Park site so that the whole landscape is enriched for sensory access, with interest which encourages users to explore, touch, pick plants or interact with objects throughout the Park. | All | High | Medium term |
| | Consider involving artists in producing stimulating settings for all-season sensory experiences. | All | | |

| | | | | |
|--|--|-----|--------|---------------------|
| | This could be supplemented by sensory trails for a variety of visitors, from education to recreation. Ensure that areas and features with high sensory interest are located on accessible routes. ADP | All | Medium | Medium term |
| | Ensure that information is available to aid planning a visit which offers honest details about access issues in the Park and the facilities available to support people with different needs. ADP | All | Medium | Short – Medium term |

| | | | | |
|--|--|-----------------|------------------|------------------|
| | Develop 'family friendly' signage for the Park (colourful and visual as opposed to text based). ADP | Families | Low | Medium term |
| Objective | Actions | Audience | Resources | Timetable |
| To ensure that all communications are clear and welcoming to all potential users | Accessible information should allow users to make informed choices, so any leaflets / information boards should be produced with maps indicating distances, gradients, positions of seats and hazards. Ensure that symbols, names of features and other information across the Park mirror this. | All | Medium | Medium term |
| | Ensure that all user information in the Park and marketing material used to promote outside, is accessible to people of different ages, abilities and backgrounds. Refer to the Plain English website www.plainenglish.co.uk for broad guidelines and tips on checking that language is accessible. Seek additional specialist advice relating to communications with people with learning disabilities and those for whom English is not a first language. ADP | All | Low | Ongoing |

| | | | | |
|--|---|-----------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| | Refer to the RNIB 'Clear Print Guidelines' for advice on planning accessible information. There are many definitions of accessible information; not all blind users will read Braille and people with learning difficulties might read Rebus symbols, or the Widgit system, most easily. ADP | All | Low - Medium | Ongoing |
| | Ensure that any printed material in the Park and in printed communications is developed to represent different ethnic groups in imagery and use of language. (e.g. a sign may incorporate the word 'welcome' in many languages while the main information is in English). Where possible pictures should be used instead of words for signage (e.g. Widgit/Rebus as above) ADP | All | Medium | Medium term |
| | At each entrance, produce clear signage and maps and strategically site information boards and interpretation panels next to key features (Powell Monument, Pulham Feature, Rose Garden etc.) ADP | All | Medium | Medium term |
| | Ensure that the exhibition and information point at the café is well promoted to all users. In the longer term, consider the use of space within the lodge building as an exhibition space and the hub for interpretation material about Mesnes Park. ADP | All | Medium - High | Medium – Long term |
| Objective | Actions | Audience | Resources | Timetable |
| To implement management procedures which will improve the sense of security in the Park for people with sensory impairment | Undertake regular patrols so that staff are available as a point of contact and information. ADP | All | Staff/volunteer time | Ongoing |
| | Create lit routes through the Park and install monitored CCTV at strategic points in the Park. ADP | All | Medium – High | Medium term |

4.2.3 Intellectual access

| Objective | Actions | Audience | Resources | Timetable |
|--|---|----------|---------------|-------------|
| <p>To engage and provide facilities which address the interests and need of the identified target groups</p> | <p>Families</p> | | | |
| | <p>Refurbish the play area, in consultation with user families, and potentially through the funding support of Wigan's Rotary Club as a 'play zone' with fencing, vandal-resistant equipment and picnic tables/seating. Consider a 'kids team' to support in the development of the new space. ADP</p> | Families | Medium – High | Medium term |
| | <p>Organise a competition with local schools/nurseries to design new signage for the play zone. ADP</p> | Families | Low | Short term |
| | <p>Develop a more coordinated programme of play sessions with the Playin' Out Team, complementing the Rangers' GSYTE events and run at weekends and school holidays. ADP</p> | Families | Low – Medium | Ongoing |
| | <p>Market the events programme through local nurseries or through the 'Black Bag' system that many schools operate. ADP</p> | Families | Low | Ongoing |
| | <p>Ensure that all ancillary facilities (the café, toilets, baby changing) are planned under guidance from specialists in family friendly design. ADP</p> | Families | Medium - High | Medium term |

| | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| | <p>Young people</p> <p>Work with the Trust’s Extreme Sports Officer in the development of the skatepark site for young people and develop competitions and workshops to encourage use of the facility. ADP</p> <p>Ensure that the youth consultation feedback about events of interest is taken on board in event programming, through appropriate sporting activities, music concerts and other events programmed in partnership with Positive Futures youth workers and other relevant partners. ADP</p> <p>Develop areas of the Park which are designated areas for young people, ideally by involving a team of young people in their design and development. Consult the CABE Space publication ‘What would you do with this space? Involving young people in the design and care of urban spaces’ for ideas and contact details of relevant agencies. ADP</p> <p>Fundraise for and implement the 3 year pilot JUMP project (actions under security, health and safety below). ADP</p> | <p>Young people</p> <p>Young people</p> <p>Young people</p> <p>Young people</p> | <p>Medium</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>Medium – High</p> <p>High</p> | <p>Short term</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Medium term</p> <p>Short – Medium term</p> |
|--|--|---|--|--|

| | | | | |
|------------------|---|-------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| | <p>Older people</p> <p>Identify older people’s groups (e.g. University of the Third Age – U3A, Elderly Luncheon Clubs, Help the Aged) and Council support services for older people to discuss opportunities to offer facilities and activities which suit the needs of older users. ADP</p> <p>Develop (with U3A or otherwise) specialist interest programmes at the Park including history walks, wildlife/conservation tours, gardening sessions or creative workshops in the Park. ADP</p> | Older people | Staff/volunteer time | Short term |
| | | Older people | Low – Medium | Medium – Long term |
| | <p>College students</p> <p>Offer lunchtime events of appeal to students during term time, by offering space to student bands to perform, at the bandstand and café. ADP</p> <p>Encourage lecturers to use the Park as an educational resource (see education and interpretation actions). ADP</p> | College students | Medium | Medium – Long term |
| | | College students | Staff/volunteer time | Ongoing |
| | <p>Visitors to the Thomas Linacre outpatients facility</p> <p>Promote the rose garden (which is adjacent to the building) as an area for relaxation and the café facilities to have refreshments through posters inside the building in waiting rooms and reception areas. ADP</p> | Visitors to outpatients | Low | Ongoing |
| | | | | |
| Objective | Actions | Audience | Resources | Timetable |

| | | | | |
|--|---|-----------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| To provide opportunities for skill development and training to staff and volunteers further to meet the needs of different audiences, in line with the Trust's employee policies | Appoint an Access Champion for the Mesnes Park development. | All | Staff/volunteer time | Short term |
| | Ensure that an understanding is held of audience development issues and working with different groups across all members of the Mesnes Park team by running a half day session to discuss the issues of working with different target groups. ADP | All | Low - Medium | Short - Medium term |
| | Where relevant, investigate training or workshop sessions are offered in customer care, access and equality and supporting users with different needs. Ensure that this includes sessions on disability awareness training. | All | Low - Medium | Ongoing |
| Objective | Actions | Audience | Resources | Timetable |
| To pursue and strengthen partnerships and involvement of the private, voluntary and community sector locally in the life of the Park | Work with the different partnerships of the Wigan Community Plan to investigate ways in which a partnership with activity at Mesnes Park can help to achieve joint agendas, especially the Community Safety, Health and Social Care, Cultural and Education and Lifelong Learning Partnership. ADP | All | Staff/volunteer time | Ongoing |
| | Ensure that publicity material is distributed through local disability networks and groups. | All | Staff/volunteer time | Ongoing |

4.2.4 Social and cultural access

| Objective | Actions | Audience | Resources | Timetable |
|--|--|-----------------|----------------------|------------------|
| To maintain and develop relationships with the surrounding neighbourhood | Continue to engage and develop further links with strategic partners, e.g. Wigan and Leigh College, Drumcroon Arts Centre, Wigan Town Centre and Thomas Linacre outpatients building. ADP | All | Staff/volunteer time | Short term |

| | Continue to be involved with Township planning by attending Township Forum meetings to raise the profile of the Park within the community. ADP | All | Staff/volunteer time | Ongoing |
|--|---|-----------------|----------------------|------------------|
| | Undertake leaflet drops to nearby residences to inform people about the planned developments at Mesnes Park and focus on the fact that the Park is being developed in response to feedback from local communities. ADP | All | Low | Short term |
| | Ensure that the programme fosters local talent, by enabling groups from schools and colleges, as well as local music and drama groups, to participate. ADP | All | Medium | Medium term |
| Objective | Actions | Audience | Resources | Timetable |
| To encourage use by community groups, schools and amateur performance groups | Expand the events using the sports facilities with opportunities for young people to have coaching sessions in basketball, tennis and bowling during school holidays and evenings. ADP | Young people | Medium - High | Long term |
| | Investigate local wildlife and natural history group interest in running wildlife or nature trails in the Park. ADP | All | Low | Medium term |
| | Consider offering the upstairs space of the café as a venue for children's birthday parties. ADP | Families | Low - Medium | Medium term |
| | Create further links with the Arts and Festivals Team at WLCT to organise large-scale events, building upon the success of the WOW festival and family fun days. ADP | All | Medium - High | Ongoing |

| | | | | |
|--|--|-----------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| | Investigate use of the Park in linking to other community projects organised by the Arts and Festivals Team across the Borough, e.g. use of the Park for performances from community projects, or use of the Park for inspiration in painting projects or poetry. ADP | All | Low - Medium | Medium – Long term |
| Objective | Actions | Audience | Resources | Timetable |
| To develop health promotion activities within the Park | Continue to develop the relationship with the Sports Development and Active Living team to develop health walks and participatory activities, particularly focussing on people with medical conditions through the GP referral scheme for 'exercise on prescription'. This should include development of relationships with staff at the Thomas Linacre outpatients building to encourage them to promote the Park to their patients. ADP | All | Low | Medium term |
| | Investigate potential partners and funding for 'cook and taste' events where barbecues, or cooking from different cultures, could take place in the Park, to promote healthy eating. ADP | All | Staff/volunteer time | Medium – Long term |

Appendix 1

Research list

Appendix 1 Research list

Category

Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust

Mesnes Park: 10 Year Management Plan. Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust

Mesnes Park: Access Plan. Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust

Mesnes Park: Audience Development Plan. Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust

Mesnes Park: Restoration Plan. Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust

Mesnes Park: A Report on its Historic iron Structures (December 2004). Heritage Engineering of Glasgow

Mesnes Park: Conservation Management Plan (2005). Bertram Hyde

Wigan Council

Wigan's Heritage: A Strategy for Wigan (2003-2007). Wigan Council

Destination Wigan: A Tourism Strategy for Wigan Borough (2004-2009). Wigan Council. DRAFT ONLY

Environmental Management and Sustainability Service Area Plan 2005 – 2008. Wigan Council

Appendix 2

Consultation list

Appendix 2 Consultation list

Name and position

Organisation

Appendix 3

Access Audit

1 Access audit - introduction

This Access Audit is a supplement to the Access Plan for Mesnes Park. At this point in time there are no detailed architects' proposals for development of the Park, only a schematic diagram on how the area might be developed in future.

1.1 Report format

The report has been written for the purposes of the Access Plan, and is divided into three main sections:

- Section 1 introduces the report and the legislative framework
- Section 2 identifies the barriers to full disabled access within the existing arrangements and sets out short and long term recommendations
- Section 3 summarises the recommendations.

An audit taking into account physical considerations was carried out by Norfolk Property Services (NPS), who are responsible for maintaining Wigan Council's buildings and facilities, in 2004. A review of the audit was undertaken by ABL in November 2005, to revisit the NPS document with key staff and discuss key issues in resolution of barriers to access.

1.2 Legislative context

1.2.1 Disability Discrimination Act (1995) Part III

Under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 Part III (Rights of Access to Goods, Facilities, Services and Premises), the provision of services includes the provision of goods or facilities to the public - whether in the private, public or voluntary sectors. As goods, facilities or services are made available to the general public, the management has duties as a service provider. These duties are as follows:

- Since 1st October 2004 service providers have to take reasonable steps to remove, alter, or provide reasonable means of avoiding physical features that make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to use a service.
- The duty to make reasonable adjustments under Part III of the DDA is an anticipatory duty owed to disabled people at large. It is not simply a duty to individuals. The duty to make reasonable adjustments, in relation to providing auxiliary aids and overcoming physical barriers to access, applies to the areas of the property where the service is provided and the access to these areas.

1.2.2 Disability Discrimination Act (1995) Part II (in force since December 1998)

Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 Part II (Employment), there is a duty placed on employers of 15 or more employees to make reasonable adjustments to enable disabled people to take employment.

In October 2003 this was extended to employers with fewer than 15 employees. Employers must take reasonable steps to alter arrangements made, or alter any physical feature that puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage. The duty to make adjustments is not anticipatory but is specific to the needs of individuals. There is no requirement to make wholesale changes in anticipation.

1.3 Historic properties under the DDA

A key issue affecting access is how to reconcile access requirements to alter physical features with conservation objectives. The 1995 Act does not override conservation legislation; what is 'reasonable accommodation' must take account of the architectural and historic nature of the buildings.

English Heritage guidance 'Easy Access to Historic Properties' (re-issued in 2004) also provides useful guidance on alterations to historic properties for access. It provides the following guidance:

- 'The access aim is to promote simple, uncomplicated movement up to, into and around historic properties. For those who can move or propel themselves independently, this should avoid their being carried, lifted or assisted in other ways. Ideally, it means using the property in the same way as everyone else in an easy dignified manner.'
- It is preferable to provide independent means of access to allow visitors to 'use the property in the same way as everyone else'. In some cases a changed route may be the only option to avoid features such as steps. But any 'alternative route must be reasonable and not pose an undue burden.'

1.4 Access standards

1.4.1 Building Regulations Part M

The design and construction of a new building, or the material alteration of an existing one, must comply with Building Regulations. For buildings in England and Wales, Part M of the Building Regulations (access to and use of buildings) is intended to ensure that reasonable provision is made for people to gain access to and use buildings.

Guidance accompanying the Building Regulations (known as 'Approved Document M' or AD M) sets out a number of 'provisions' as suggested ways in which the requirements of the Regulations might be met. It is unlikely to be reasonable for a service provider or employer to have to make an adjustment to a physical feature of a building which it occupies, if that feature accords with the relevant provisions of the most up to

date version of AD M, which came into effect in May 2004. Any works carried out under the previous versions of AD M are deemed to be acceptable for ten years from the construction date under DDA legislation.

1.4.2 BS 8300

As the Building Regulations standards provide only a baseline standard of accessibility for new buildings and building undergoing redevelopment, a second document is essential reference when assessing the access requirements of disabled people to existing buildings; the British Standard 8300:2001, Design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people – Code of Practice.

It is unlikely to be reasonable for a service provider or an employer to have to make an adjustment to a physical feature of a building it occupies, if the design and construction of the physical features of the building is in accordance with the guidance in BS8300.

1.4.3 Other guidance

There are other best practice guides. These include:

- The Centre for Accessible Environments: *Designing for Accessibility*, which gives advice concerning design issues not covered in Part M or BS8300
- The *Sign Design Guide*, providing useful information on signage
- Sensory Trust *Guidelines to Outdoor Access*
- *Easy Access to Historic Landscapes*: English Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund
- *By All Reasonable Means*: The Countryside Agency, English Nature, Rural Development Service and DERFA
- *Space for Learning*: A Handbook for Education Spaces in Museums, Heritage Sites and Discovery Centres. A collaboration between: Arts Council England, Arts Council of Northern Ireland and the Scottish Arts Council, the Clore Duffield Foundation, the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) and the Design Commission for Wales (DCFW), the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA)
- *Inspiring Learning for All*, guidance on developing accessible heritage environment which can stimulates and supports learning, defining learning in its widest sense.

Mesnes Park, Wigan: Access plan
Appendix 3: Access Audit - Introduction

2 Access audit – summary and recommendations

This is a description of the existing facilities, highlighting the barriers presented by the current arrangements for people with disabilities.

2.1 Approach

Approach covers aspects of reaching the Park from outside, as well as transport to Mesnes Park.

2.1.1 Approach to site

A key factor on approach to the Mesnes Park entrances is that there is no consistency in signage. There is no directional signage from and to the Park, hampering access from the town centre.

In addition, there is a lack of visitor information or a plan on the noticeboard displaying information about facilities or events in the Park.

Recommendations

- Review signage around the Park, and as a short term measure, upgrade some of the provision before the development occurs.
- All posters and information should consider users with visual impairments. Consider welcome to the park and information about Park facilities in alternative formats (large print, pictorial navigation, Braille or other tactile information).
- Display a detailed, clear plan of the Park on the main noticeboards.
- Besides the noticeboard, create an information point using different mediums of displaying information (e.g. plan of the Park, site information, and updates, opening times, forthcoming events, Friends of Mesnes Park activities, a suggestion box.) Investigate the potential of a help point, or visitor centre.
- Provide better signage identifying Park entrances from town centre approaches – e.g. vertical banners on Standishgate, maps in Wigan centre.

2.1.2 Parking

Disabled parking had been available at the Park Road entrance, but has been temporarily closed due to Health and Safety managerial issues. There are, however, aspirations to provide disabled parking spaces within two areas of the Park: peripheral parking for four cars at the Park Road entrance in the short term and up to ten spaces near to the Bridgeman Terrace entrance in the medium term.

In terms of general parking, there is no provision within the Park itself and parking is difficult within the immediate surroundings. The lack of parking is cited by some as a barrier.

Recommendations

- Agree the policy and implement short and long term solutions to disabled parking.
- Develop information about public transport links to the town centre and route from there to the Park and promote within marketing print and online and within transport information.
- Provide suitable signposts from the entrance to the disabled parking bays and clear signage showing access from the bays to key areas of the Park, with details of gradients and resting places.

2.1.3 Accessible drop off point

There is no designated drop off bay, but currently it is possible for disabled visitors to be driven up to the entrances.

In the main, the Bridgeman Terrace layby is used as a drop off point. There is an issue here with the lack of road markings presenting a hazard for pedestrians moving towards the entrance.

Recommendations

- Consider defining vehicle and pedestrian areas around the main entrance so that a safe drop-off can be achieved without risk to other people.

2.1.4 Public transport

This report does not cover public transport, but there are a number of buses which run up Parsons Walk and Bridgeman Terrace. Buses to Parsons Walk run from Wigan to Standish, Shevington Moor, Shevington

Vale, Appley Bridge and from Bridegman Terrace to Red Rock, Robin Park, Kitt Green, Pemberton, Norley Hall, Moston, Harpurhey, Collyhurst, Middleton and Manchester.

The train and bus stations are at the far side of the town centre, around ten to fifteen minutes' walk from the Park. There are no specific recommendations to improve access from either of these public transport facilities.

2.2 Entrances

This audit report covers entrances to the Park itself, buildings within the Park, and gives some short term recommendations for improvements to access.

2.2.1 Main entrance

The pavement edges extend into the Park at the two access points, creating a small lip. In terms of the externals, the railings to the veranda create issues with the step area for users.

Recommendations

- Concrete the lip to create a smoother transition. As regards the hazard, fill in the steps to provide level surface or provide barrier to protect the edge.
- Ensure that the threshold is renewed when the footpaths are reconstructed in the longer term.

2.2.2 Mesnes Park Terrace entrance and Parsons Walk entrance

In both cases, entrances have uneven footpaths.

Recommendations

- At the Mesnes Park Terrace entrance, ensure level surfaces, drop kerbs and provide tactile paving and post mounted signs.
- At the Parsons Walk entrance, ensure a level threshold area to eliminate standing water and ice hazards.

2.2.3 Walkden Avenue entrance

At present, building work which is being undertaken by the college has narrowed the path entrance and the path is in poor condition. This is the main access to the Park for people from the Beech Hill area.

Recommendations

- Once the college building work is finished, ensure that the paths are adequate width and are well maintained.
- Negotiate with college, contractor (Tottie) for improvements to surfacing and lighting as part of planning conditions.

2.3 Steps

2.3.1 Dalton's Steps

Dalton's Steps do not have contrasting treads or nosings. There are no handrails to the steps, nor tactile warning strips to the top and bottom of the steps.

Recommendations

- Alter to comply with British Standard 83000 (standard for accessible design). Relaxation may be required in respect of flight length; consultation with the Access Committee and Access Officer would be recommended in this case.
- Provide suitable handrails and tactile warnings to the top and bottom of the steps.

2.3.2 Playshack steps

The steps do not meet criteria. There are two ramps to the playshack entrances but these are steep and uneven.

Recommendations

- Consider the renewal of the steps and ramp to comply.

2.3.3 Tennis/skatepark steps

There is no level access to the tennis courts and steps are in a poor condition. Steps do not have contrasting treads and nosings. There are no handrails to the steps and no tactile warnings to the top and bottom of the steps.

Recommendations

- Repair defective areas.
- Alter to comply with BS 83000.
- Provide suitable handrails and tactile warnings to the top and bottom of the steps.

2.3.4 Café pavilion steps

As with other steps, the café steps do not have contrasting treads and nosings, there are no handrails to the steps and there are no visual tactile warnings to steps.

Recommendations

- Provide contrasting nosings and treads, handrails and tactile warnings.
- Ramp to be included in restoration.

2.3.5 Access steps to bandstand

The steps to access the bandstand also do not have contrasting treads and nosings, there are no handrails to the steps and there are no visual tactile warnings to steps.

Recommendations

- Provide contrasting nosings and treads, handrails and tactile warnings.
- Look into the option of lowering the bandstand to ground level.

2.3.6 Bowls pavilion

The steps to access the bowls pavilion are in need of repair and do not have contrasting treads and nosings. There are no handrails to the steps and there are no visual tactile warnings to steps.

Recommendations

- Provide contrasting nosings and treads, handrails to steps and platform edge and visual and tactile warnings.

2.3.7 Stone steps from the college

The stone steps from the college have no handrails, contrasting markings to nosings or tactile warnings.

Recommendations

- Provide handrails to the steps.

2.4 **Visitor facilities**

2.4.1 Fredericks café area

Fredericks café is a well used facility by a range of visitors to Mesnes Park. The seating arrangements do not cater for people with a variety of disabilities. The key issue here is that the chairs have no arms and the tables are small so would not be easy for a wheelchair user to sit at. In addition, the sofas are too low for use by those with mobility impairments.

The entrance is too near the counter to allow easy access around the space and the clearance with the existing approach to the door does not comply. In addition, the counter and self service area do not allow for easy viewing and access for wheelchair users.

As regards people with a visual impairment, the existing colour scheme does not provide adequate tonal contrast to identify walls, floors, ceilings and building features.

The 'Mesnes Park - A People's Exhibition' exhibition is displayed on the café wall, but the text is very small and not at eye level.

The route into the café from the rear entrance (currently the only entrance for anyone in a wheelchair or buggy) is hampered by the pavement edge to the café area.

Recommendations

- Make available alternative chairs with arms and if possible an alternative larger table suitable for wheelchair users, taking into account that the whole area is very restricted.
- Provide a ramp and level entry to the café.

- Provide a new door and frame.
- Review the serving area to cater for chair users and ambulant disabled people.
- Allow closer access to the exhibition to enable close viewing, by hanging pictures lower and clearing the area around the exhibition.
- Consider future decoration schemes to provide contrast.

2.4.2 The playshack

The playshack's main and secondary doors do not comply with legal requirements. The double doors' individual leaf clearance is inadequate and also do not comply.

Recommendations

- Upgrade the ramp to standard.
- Provide suitable clear signage to aid those with visual impairment.
- Provide a new door and a half to achieve the correct door clearance.

2.4.3 WCs

There is a lack of disabled WC accommodation in the café pavilion: the existing facilities do not cater for ambulant disabled people.

The WC cubicles in the playshack, likewise, do not make provision for ambulant disabled people. The existing door lock is unsuitable for people with limited dexterity.

Recommendations

- Enlarge one cubicle, ideally within the café, and fit out with new grabrails, taps, controls, door, flooring etc to AD M standards.
- Provide a suitable lock and upgrade facilities within the Playshack WC to ensure people with limited mobility can use the cubicle (taps, grabrails, flooring, door).
- Create inclusive facilities within both buildings within the longer term.

- Create inclusive toilet facilities within existing store room.

2.4.4 Bandstand

No provision for wheelchair users; there is a change of level. Feedback from disabled users has also suggested that it is difficult to know when you are entering the bandstand area.

When events take place at the bandstand, the temporary seating which is provided does not provide suitable support for people with limited mobility.

Recommendations

- Provide a ramp for the level change.
- Investigate changes in surface to help define the transition to the bandstand area.
- Where temporary seating is used for events, ensure that staff are available to support those who may be using the seating for support.

2.4.5 Tennis court / basketball court area

Existing pathways are in a poor state of repair and unsuitable for people with mobility difficulties or wheelchair users.

There are additionally no facilities for viewing sports other than standing or sitting on the grass slopes surrounding the area.

Recommendations

- Provide seating along the pathway for viewing tennis and basketball areas.
- Redevelop the pathway.

2.4.6 Bowls pavilion

The double doors' individual leaf clearance is inadequate and does not comply with legal standards.

Recommendations

- Provide a new door and a half to achieve the correct door clearance.

2.4.7 The lodge

The lodge itself has not been audited, since the building is currently closed. However, the step to the ground floor would be a problem if this area of the building is to be used for public access.

Recommendations

- Investigate ramped access into the main lodge entrance from the main Park entrance gates.

2.4.8 Sir Francis Powell Statue

The main barrier to access with the statue is that there is no historical information about Sir Francis Powell on site, limiting understanding about the significance and traditions of the statue.

However, there is also a potential hazard with the plinth, which people have used as steps to stand on to touch Powell's foot, as has become tradition. There was an incident of someone slipping on the plinth.

Recommendations

- Install an interpretation board to offer information. Consider offering tactile and diagrammatic interpretation.
- In the longer term, a full restoration of the statue, chains and lighting is required; interpretation should be further developed at this stage and balanced with agreed conservation approach for the statue.

2.5 **Circulation in general around the Park**

2.5.1 Paths (general)

Paths in general are in a poor state of disrepair which could be problematic for wheelchair users, pushchair users and ambulant disabled people.

The Walkden Avenue Path, which exists as a cobbled path, is likewise in a state of disrepair and unsuitable for people with mobility and visual impairment.

The pathways offer no suitable signage around the Park and no clearly visible navigational support for people with visual or learning impairments.

Recommendations

- Reconstruct footpaths and address issues of drainage.
- Provide navigational signage which is appropriate for people with visual impairments or learning difficulties.
- Upgrade the Walkden Avenue path.
- Reduce camber on some paths.

2.5.2 Bridgeman Terrace

Access to the café pavilion is difficult, since there is no directional signage, nor navigational support. Furthermore, the area around the rockery could be hazardous to people with mobility or visual impairment.

General paths along Bridgeman Terrace are in a poor state which could prove problematic for wheelchair users, pushchair users and ambulant disabled people.

The condition of the footpath to the gate area is, likewise, uneven and problematic.

Recommendations

- Provide directional and navigational signage and tactile information.
- Treat defective macadam surface to create a clean edge to rocks.
- Reconstruct footpaths and drainage.

2.5.3 Paths around the bowling greens

The slope to the access gate is unsuitable for wheelchair users and ambulant disabled people and there are areas of the footpath that require maintenance to make it smooth, safe and level. There is insufficient space for wheelchairs to pass and signage is poor.

Recommendations

- Consider the provision of a new entrance gate to the higher level to link with a ramp to the lower section and leave the existing double gates for maintenance access only.
- Renew pathways and relay to allow surface water to drain.
- Provide suitable passing places.

2.5.4 Playshack and play area

The uneven paving, holding water and uneven edges all are potential trip hazards. The dwarf wall and roundabout pole are potential hazardous for people with visual impairments and children and low level pipe boxing is a potential trip hazard.

Recommendations

- Carry out remedial repairs to remove hazards in the short term.
- Review the layout of the space to re-position pipe boxing.

2.5.5 Resting places

There are insufficient benches and resting places throughout the Park (recommended guidelines⁷ are to provide a resting place every 100m to 300m in key zones). Notably, there are fewer benches in the area around the Park Road entrance, which has steeper gradients, since they had been removed at one time to accommodate vehicle access.

Recommendations

- Install benches or resting areas at least every 100m around the Park Road zone of Mesnes Park.
- Ensure that benches are available at 300m distances along the key routes through the Park.

2.5.6 Cycle routes

There is no provision for segregation of cycles and pedestrians in the Park.

Recommendations

⁷ Fieldfare Trust Guidelines for key zones in public spaces

- Create defined cycle lanes on main through routes.

3. Summary of recommendations

3.1 Introduction

The table overleaf outlines the recommendations produced by NPS from the initial Access Audit of Mesnes Park, as outlined in the previous chapter.

These have been prioritised according to Priority 1, Priority 2, Priority 3 and Priority 4, and details of budget costs and solutions provided are

offered. Priority 1 identifies problems that require rectification as soon as possible and decrease in order of necessity through to Priority 4.

Mesnes Park, Wigan: Access plan
Appendix 3: Access Audit - Summary of recommendations

3.1.1 Priority 1

| Area | Problem | Possible solution | Supporting evidence | Outcome | Budget cost | Potential funding source |
|----------------------|--|---|--|---|---|---|
| ROUTE | General Paths are in a poor state of disrepair which could be problematic for chair users and ambulant disabled people | Reconstruct footpaths and drainage | Access audit Site inspections; Number of alleged claims of falls as a result of defects in the footpaths | Level footpaths | Phased programme of reconstruction | Wigan Council / WLCT |
| MAIN ENTRANCE | Pavement edges extend into the park at the two access points, creating a small lip | Concrete the lip to create a smoother transition | Comments from a chair user; access audit. | Same footpath level throughout. | £100 Part of reconstruction of main driveway | Parks revenue budget Wigan Council – Planned Works |
| EXTERNAL STEPS | Dalton’s Steps do not have contrasting treads and nosings | Alter to comply with BS83000 – relaxation may be required in respect of flight length | Access audit | Contrasting surfaces | £2,500 | HLF/Wigan Council - Planned works |
| | No handrails to the steps | Provide suitable handrails or provide and promote alternative appropriate route to access other areas of the park | Access audit | Support Provision of alternative appropriate route | £7,000 | Wigan Council – Planned works |
| | No tactile warnings to the top and bottom of the steps | Provide tactile warnings to the top and bottom of the steps | Access audit | Contrasting surfaces | £8,000 | HLF/Wigan Council - Planned works |
| TENNIS COURT STEPS | Steps are in a poor condition | Repair defective areas | Access audit | Reconstruct steps | £1,500 | Wigan Council – Planned works |
| | Steps do not have contrasting treads and nosings | Alter to comply with BS83000 | Access audit | Reconstruct steps | £200 | |
| | There are no handrails to the steps | Provide suitable handrails | Access audit | Support | £400 | |
| | No tactile warnings to the top and bottom of the steps | Provide tactile warnings to top and bottom of steps | Access audit | Contrasting surfaces | £200 | |
| GENERAL WC PROVISION | Lack of disabled WC accommodation in café pavilion | Create new inclusive facilities | Access audit; comments from Wigan Access Committee | Toilet facilities for all | £3,000 | WLCT Investment Fund |
| | Lack of disabled WC accommodation in playshack | Create new inclusive facilities | Access Audit | Toilet facilities for all | £3,300 | Wigan Council – Planned works |

3.1.2 Priority 2

| Area | Problem | Possible solution | Supporting evidence | Outcome | Budget cost | Potential funding source |
|------------------------------|--|---|---------------------|--------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|
| APPROACH TO SITE | Walkden Avenue - No directional signage from to Park along | Erect signage | Access audit | Way markers to Park | £400 | Parks revenue budget |
| MESNES PARK TERRACE ENTRANCE | Uneven footpaths | Level surfaces, drop kerbs, provide tactile paving and post mounted signs | Access audit | Creates a welcoming Park | £1,500 | Wigan Council – Planned works |
| PARSONS WALK ENTRANCE | Uneven footpaths | Level threshold area to eliminate standing water/ice | Access audit | Creates a welcoming Park | £100 | Wigan Council – Highways |

Mesnes Park, Wigan: Access plan
Appendix 3: Access Audit - Summary of recommendations

| | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|--|---------------------------------|---------|---|
| PARKING | Lack of parking in Park | Develop information about public transport links to the town centre and route from there to the Park | Consultation indicates that visitors are local | Better informed visitors. | £500 | |
| ROUTE - BRIDGEMAN TERRACE | Access to the café pavilion – no suitable signage for people with visual impairments | Provide suitable signage | Access audit | Creates a welcoming Park | £400 | Parks revenue budget |
| ROUTE – ROCKERY | Area around the rockery could be hazardous to people with disabilities | Improve the defective macadam surface to create a clean edge to rocks | Access audit | A defined rock edge to footpath | £100 | Parks revenue budget (carried out Jan 2005) |
| GENERAL PATHS | General paths in a poor state which could prove problematic for chair users and ambulant disabled people | Reconstruct footpaths and drainage | Access audit; site inspections | Level footpaths | | Wigan Council – Planned works |
| | No suitable signage for people with visual impairments | Provide suitable signage and tactile information | Access audit | Inclusive information | £3,000 | |
| PATHWAYS AROUND THE BOWLING GREENS | No suitable signage for people with visual impairments | Provide suitable signage | Access audit | Information point | £200 | Parks revenue budget |
| | The slope to the access gate is unsuitable for wheelchair users and ambulant disabled people | Consider the provision of a new entrance gate to the higher level to link with a ramp to the lower section and leave the existing double gates for maintenance access only | Access audit | Access to all levels | £2,500 | Wigan Council – Planned works |
| | There are areas of the footpath that require maintenance to make smooth and level | Renew pathways and relay to allow surface water to drain | Access audit | Improves access | £18,000 | Wigan Council – Planned works |
| PLAYSHACK | Uneven paving and holding water and some edges forming potential trips | Carry out remedial repairs | Access audit | Improves access | £800 | M & R Fund |
| PLAY AREA | The dwarf wall is a potential hazard for people with visual impairments | Remove the hazard | Access audit | Creates level surface | £150 | Play maintenance fund? |
| | The roundabout pole is a potential hazard for people with visual impairments | Remove the hazard | Access audit | Remove hazard | £50 | Play maintenance fund |
| STEPS NEAR PLAYSHACK | The steps do not meet criteria | Consider renewal to comply | Access audit | Improves access | £500 | Wigan Council – Planned works |
| STEPS TO THE TENNIS COURTS/ SKATEPARK | There is no level access to the tennis courts | Consider the provision of a ramp | Access audit | Improves access | £4,000 | Wigan Council – Planned works |
| CAFÉ PAVILLION ENTRANCE STEPS | The steps do not have contrasting treads and nosings | Provide contrasting nosings and treads | Access audit | Contrasting surfaces | £150 | Wigan Council – Planned works |
| | There are no handrails to the steps | Provide handrails | Access audit | Support | £200 | HLF/Wigan Council - Planned works |
| | There are no visual tactile warnings to steps | Provide tactile warnings | Access audit | Contrasting surfaces | £400 | HLF/Wigan Council - Planned works |
| ACCESS STEPS TO | Steps do not have contrasting nosings | Provide contrasting nosings | Access audit | Contrasting surfaces | £200 | HLF/Wigan Council - Planned works |

Mesnes Park, Wigan: Access plan

Appendix 3: Access Audit - Summary of recommendations

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|--|--------------|-------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|
| BANDSTAND | No handrail to steps or platform edge | Provide handrails | Access audit | Support and reduces hazard | £2,500 | HLF/Wigan Council - Planned works |
| | There are no visual tactile warnings to steps | Provide tactile warnings | Access audit | Contrasting surfaces | £600 | HLF/Wigan Council - Planned works |
| BOWLS PAVILION | The steps do not have contrasting treads and nosings | Provide contrasting nosings and treads | Access audit | Contrasting surfaces | £150 | Wigan Council - Planned works |
| | No handrail to steps | Provide handrails | Access audit | Support | £200 | |
| | There are no visual tactile warnings to steps | Provide tactile warnings | Access audit | Contrasting surfaces | £400 | |
| CAFÉ ENTRANCE | Existing approach to door does not comply | Provide ramp | Access audit | Improves access | £2,000 | HLF/Wigan Council - Planned works |
| BANDSTAND | No provision for wheelchair users | Provide ramp | Access audit | Improves access | £8,500 | |
| PLAYSHACK MAIN ENTRANCE | Existing door does not comply | Upgrade ramp | Access audit | Improves access | £300 | Wigan Council - Planned works |
| PLAYSHACK SECOND ENTRANCE | Existing door does not comply | Upgrade ramp | Access audit | Improves access | £300 | |
| MAIN ENTRANCE | Railings to the veranda creates potential hazard to the step areas | Fill in the steps to provide level surface or provide barrier to protect the edge | Access audit | Reduces hazard | £500 | |
| CAFÉ PAVILION CANOPY ENTRANCE | Door clearance does not comply | Provide new door and frame | Access audit | Improves access | £900 | |
| CAFÉ PAVILION COUNTER ENTRANCE | Door clearance does not comply | Provide new door and frame | Access audit | Improves access | £700 | |
| CAFÉ PAVILION ASSEMBLY AREA | Counter and self service area do not allow for easy viewing and access for wheelchair users | Review the serving area to cater for chair users and ambulant disabled people | Access audit | More visitor friendly | £500 | |
| PLAYSHACK WC PROVISION | The existing cubicles do not make provision for ambulant disabled people | Provide suitable access | Access audit | Improves access | £300 | |
| | The existing door lock is unsuitable for people with limited dexterity | Provide suitable lock | Access audit | Improves fixture | £40 | |
| | The existing facilities do not cater for ambulant disabled people | Upgrade facilities | Access audit | Provides inclusive facilities | £1,000 | |
| SENSORY – CAFÉ PAVILION | Large noticeboard displaying information | All posters and information should consider users with visual impairments. Welcome to the park and information about park facilities in Braille. Plan of the park to be displayed in the noticeboard | Site visit | Clear | Parks budget | N/a |

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|--|--|---|--------|-----------------|
| INFORM – ATION | Lack of visitor information | Create an information point using different mediums of displaying information (e.g. plan of the Park, site information, and updates, opening times, forthcoming events, FOMP activities, suggestion box) | FOMP suggestion | Better informed visitors. Encourage attendance at events. | £200 | WLCT/Fredericks |
| CYCLE ROUTE | No cycle/pedestrian segregation | Create defined cycle lanes on main through routes | Comments from FOMP and incidents which have occurred | Safer park environment | £1,000 | WLCT |

3.1.3 Priority 3

| Area | Problem | Possible solution | Supporting evidence | Outcome | Budget cost | Potential funding source |
|--|--|---|---------------------|--------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|
| APPROACH TO SITE – WALKDEN AVENUE PATH | Existing cobbled path in a state of disrepair and unsuitable for people with disabilities | Upgrade path | Access audit | Improves access | £4,000 | Wigan Council - Planned works |
| BRIDGEMAN TERRACE ENTRANCE | Condition of the footpath to the gate area is uneven and could prove problematic for wheelchair users and ambulant disabled people | Improve the defective footpath | Access audit | Improves access | £100 | |
| STONE STEPS FROM COLLEGE | Steps have no handrails and contrasting markings to nosings and tactile warnings | Install handrails | Access audit | Improves access | £700 | |
| GENERAL PATHS IN THE PARK | No suitable signage for people with visual impairments | Provide signage | Access audit | Provides inclusive information | £4,000 | |
| PATHWAYS AROUND THE BOWLING GREENS | Insufficient space for wheelchairs to pass | Provide suitable passing places | Access audit | Improves circulation | £500 | |
| TENNIS COURT AREAS | Existing pathways are unsuitable for people with disabilities | Provide a new pathway | Access audit | Creates level access | £2,000 | Wigan Council - Planned works |
| MAIN ENTRANCE PLAYSHACK | Signage is unsuitable for people with visual impairments | Provide suitable signage | Access audit | Provides inclusive information | £200 | |
| PLAYSHACK DOORS | The double doors individual leaf clearance is inadequate and does not comply | Provide new door and a half to achieve the correct door clearance | Access audit | Improves access | £600 | |
| PLAYSHACK SECOND ENTRANCE DOORS | The double doors individual leaf clearance is inadequate and does not comply | Provide new door and a half to achieve the correct door clearance | Access audit | Improves access | £600 | |
| PLAYSHACK KITCHEN SERVERY | The double doors individual leaf clearance is inadequate and does not comply | Provide new door and a half to achieve the correct door clearance | Access audit | Improves access | £600 | |
| BOWLS PAVILION | The double doors individual leaf clearance is inadequate and does not comply | Provide new door and a half to achieve the correct door clearance | Access audit | Improves access | £600 | |

| | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|--|--|----------------------------|--|---------|------------------|
| CAFÉ PAVILION | Existing colour scheme does not provide adequate tonal contrast to identify walls, floors, ceilings, and building features | Consider future decoration schemes to provide contrast | Access audit | More visitor friendly | £300 | |
| | Seating arrangements do not cater for people with a variety of disabilities | Provide a variety of seating offering various heights and some with arms | Access audit | More visitor friendly | £400 | |
| PLAYSHACK KITCHEN | Kitchen area unsuitable for people with disabilities | Alter to comply | Access audit | Improves access | £500 | |
| PARKING | No disabled parking | Provide parking facilities in at least two zones of the Park and provide suitable signposts from the entrance to the disabled parking bays | | | | |
| PLAYSHACK | Low level pipe boxing is a potential trip hazard | Review the layout | Access audit | Improves access and reduces trip | £300 | |
| SENSORY - EXHIBITION | Mesnes Park – A People’s History exhibition is displayed on the café wall, but the text is small and not at eye level. | Allow access to the exhibition to enable close viewing | Site visit | Enable visually impaired visitors to view exhibition better | N/a | N/a |
| SENSORY - POWELL MONUMENT | No historical information about Sir Powell on site. | Install an interpretation board to offer information | FOMP aspiration to restore | Increase awareness of the service that Sir Francis offered the people of Wigan | £1,500 | Parks budget |
| | | Consider different languages and visual impairments | | | £30,000 | English Heritage |
| | | Full restoration of the statue, chains, interpretation and lighting required | | | | |

3.1.4 Priority 4

| Area | Problem | Possible solution | Supporting evidence | Outcome | Budget cost | Potential funding source |
|-------------------------|--|--|---------------------------------|--|-------------|----------------------------|
| BRIDGEMAN TERRACE | The road junctions and crossing require a drop kerb with tactile warnings | Contact Highways section | Access audit | Improves access | | Wigan Council |
| PARSONS WALK ENTRANCE | The road junctions and crossing require a drop kerb with tactile warnings | Contact Highways section | Access audit | Improves access | | Wigan Council |
| WALKDEN AVENUE ENTRANCE | Footpath access to the Park is unmarked | Provide signage at entrance which shows entrance to Park | Access audit | Provides inclusive information | £200 | Wigan Council |
| | Path surface is uneven and cobbled in places It is unlit and is located below the level of the surrounding area | Consider lighting and resurfacing as part of redevelopment of College grounds and car park Also could fall within JUMP proposal | Planning approval consideration | Reduces intimidation factor and increase perceptions of safety | £20,000 | Wigan & Leigh College/JUMP |

Mesnes Park, Wigan: Access plan

Appendix 3: Access Audit - Summary of recommendations

| | | | | | | |
|---------------|---|---|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| | Staggered barrier to reduce speed of cyclists entering park is dark in colour | Paint a bright colour or attach a reflective panel Consider an alternative means of access | Site inspection; access audit | Improves access | £700 | |
| POWELL STATUE | Foot rubbing tradition – health and safety issue | Reinstate chains surrounding statue Include in information provided, to make people aware that the plinth is not steps | Claim made for slipping off plinth | Restricts access to statue for all | Part of restoration | English Heritage |

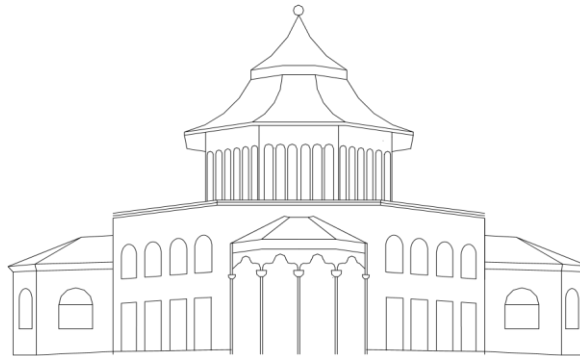
Mesnes Park, Wigan: Access plan
Appendix 3: Access Audit - Summary of recommendations

W I G A N
LEISURE & CULTURE
T R U S T

Mesnes Park

10 Year Management & Maintenance Plan

1st Issue – March 2006



In partnership with

Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust

Produced by the Parks Regeneration Team
Environmental Management & Sustainability
Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust

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Mesnes Park**10 year Management and Maintenance Plan (MMP)****Frontispiece**

Mesnes Park forms part of the portfolio of the Executive Director for Environmental Management and Sustainability, within Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust (WLCT).

Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust is committed to adopting the proposals in the Restoration Plan and 10-year Management and Maintenance Plan (MMP) for Mesnes Park.

The Environmental Management & Sustainability section has adopted MMP as a working document and agrees to uphold and manage the standards of management and maintenance as indicated in the MMP.

Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust recognises the financial implications and resources that are required to implement the MMP on an annual basis and supports any requisite additional funds for a minimum period of ten years after the completion of the restoration scheme.

The Board of Trustees of Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust have approved the MMP and it forms part of the management agreement between WLCT and Wigan Council for the delivery of services.

1.0 Introduction**1.1 Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust (WLCT)** See appendix MMP1

1.1.1 The Trust is a new organisation formed on the 1st April 2003. It was formally Wigan Council's Leisure & Cultural Services Department. WLCT works in partnership with Wigan Council in providing a wide range of leisure and cultural opportunities. With a remit to improve, develop and expand the range of opportunities provided for both residents and visitors.

1.1.2 Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust is a non-profit distributing organisation, which must reinvest its surplus to improve services. The Trust is a registered charity, which brings



some financial advantages, and is maintained by external funding and income generation that includes an annual grant from Wigan Council. In addition, buildings and facilities are leased from the Council. A board of Trustees have the responsibility for ensuring the Trust is managed appropriately.

1.1.3 Under the umbrella of the Trust there is also a trading company: Wigan Leisure and Culture Enterprise. The Enterprise is part of the organisation and has responsibility for the development and management of those services that are not deemed to be charitable such as Leisure Halls and Grounds Maintenance for external customers other than the Trust.

1.1.4 WLCT by operating as a Trust brings about financial advantages that will help to address some of the issues caused by a lack of investment over a number of years. WLCT's priorities in line with Wigan Council's Community Plan 2005 –2008 are set out within this strategic document.

1.2 Objective of the Trust

1.2.1 The primary objective of Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust is:

“To improve, in partnership with others, the quality of life of everyone in the Borough”

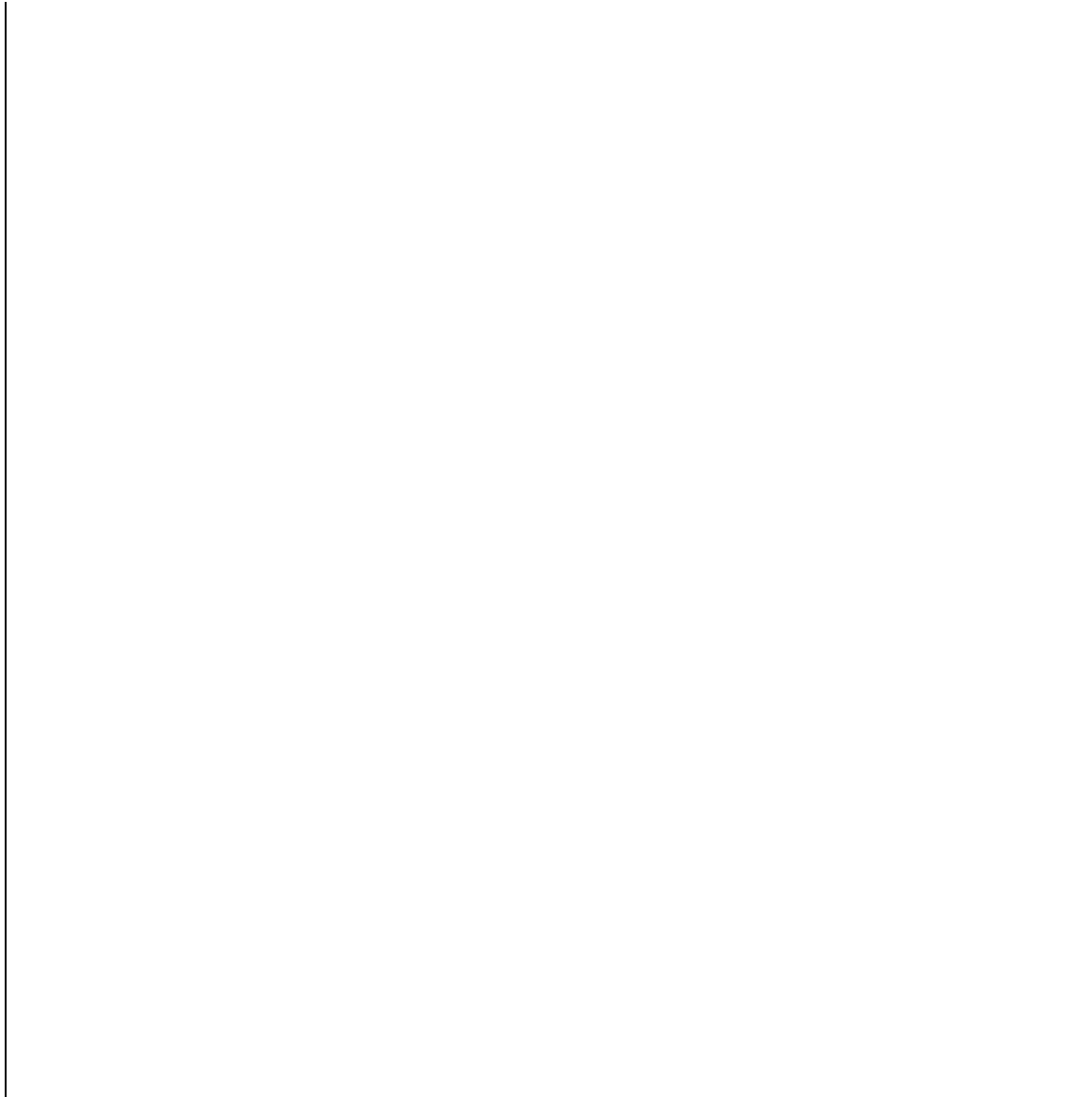
1.3 Board of Trustee's

1.3.1 A board of Trustee's (listed below) represents different service areas and meet regularly to review and determine the Trust's (WLCT) priorities. There are 11 Trustees who consist of Community representatives & specialists including 2 Council nominees.

1.3.2 Members of the board of Trustees

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|--|
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1.4 Links with the Council

1.4.1 Mesnes Park is represented politically by the Councillors of the wards of Wigan Central and Wigan West. The representing link from the Township (see 8.6) is by the Wigan North Township Manager. All are consulted regularly on issues relating to Mesnes Park.



2.0 The need for a Management and Maintenance Plan

2.1 The management and maintenance of Mesnes Park has developed in the past without a specific long-term vision for the future. There has been an aspiration by the local community to be involved with the development of Mesnes Park, and it was through public demand that the Friends of Mesnes Park group (to be known as FOMP) was formed in 1998.

2.2 Since then, the FOMP have been an important element of the park by advising on day to day issues, applying for funding, raising the profile of the park, representing the community on strategic forums and generally being ambassadors for the local community.

2.3 The MMP is a working document that aims to set a framework for the development of Mesnes Park. It also documents the existing features and facilities, describes how these are maintained and by whome.



3.0 Who's Involved

3.1 The MMP for Mesnes Park has been prepared using the guidance from the Heritage Lottery.

3.1.1 The MMP has been prepared with stakeholders and those who have an interest in the park. This includes Park Officers, Elected Members, strategic partners, members of the public and the Friends of Mesnes Park (FOMP). It offers an insight into the maintenance and management operations that creates the park as we see it today.

3.1.2 The MMP covers a 10 year period and is based on the following supporting documents: Restoration Plan for Mesnes Park created in 2000 by Landscape Design Associates, Conservation Management Plan produced by Bertram Hyde Ltd in 2006 and the Audience and Access Development Plans produced by ABL consulting in 2006. Extensive consultation has informed all the supporting documents.

3.1.3 The MMP will be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis by the Parks Steering Group and will be updated following the outcomes of the review. It is intended to put forward the park for the Green Flag Award. The comments and feedback from Green Flag Judges will also form part of the review process.

3.1.4 Members of the Mesnes Parks steering group include:

- WLCT - Executive Director, Environment & Sustainability

- WLCT - Parks Regeneration Manager

- WLCT - Parks & Countryside Activities Manager

- WLCT - Project & Facilities Development Officer

- WLCT - Grounds Maintenance Services - Area Manager

- WLCT - Grounds Maintenance Services - Leading Hand

- WLCT - Park Ranger

- Friends of Mesnes Park – Secretary

- Friends of Mesnes Park – Chair

- Planning & Regeneration Department Wigan Council

- Chief Executives Department Wigan Council

- Township Manager Wigan Council

4.0 The Existing Park



4.1 A Brief History

4.1.1 Mesnes Park is Wigan's first municipal park, opened on the 6th August 1878. It safeguarded open recreational space from development and provided a 'green lung' in an otherwise industrial town.

4.1.2 It occupies 12 hectares of former manorial demesnes land known as the 'Mesnes' adjoining the town centre.

4.1.3 The design of the park was the result of a competition won by John McClean of Castle Donnington.

4.1.4 His design utilised the sloping site to create terraces surmounted by a pavilion and overlooking a formal garden. An ornamental lake was created from former marl pits and provision was made for recreational areas. Sport and play facilities were added to the park within the design framework and the garden areas were renowned for their bedding displays and horticultural excellence.

4.1.5 Today the park occupies the same area and retains the framework and features of the original design. These include the entrance gates and lodge, dalton steps, pavilion, ornamental gardens, walks, lake and rockwork and subsequent features such as the bandstand.

5.0 Significance of the Park

5.1 Mesnes Park is a key component in the regeneration of Wigan due to its town centre location.

5.2 The park was added to the National Register of Historic Parks and Gardens, maintained by English Heritage in 1996. It also has seven Grade II listed structures 🕒 the pavilion

- 🕒 lodge
- 🕒 main entrance gate
- 🕒 bandstand
- 🕒 two flights of Dalton's steps
- 🕒 Powell statue.

Appendix MMP2 shows the details contained in the register.



- 5.3 The park is significant to the local community this can be demonstrated through the Friends of Mesnes Park who are excellent advocates for the Park and keen to develop its usage among a wider range of people. They are additionally actively involved with the development and interpretation of the Park. An example of this can be evidenced by the restoration of the rose garden. Through the life of the project WLCT will actively work with the Friends of Mesnes Park to increase its membership.
- 5.4 Another example is the 'Mesnes Park – ***A People's History***' exhibition'. The group gave the opportunity for local people to contribute their memories and photographs of the park. There was a huge response! The group was supported by WLCT's Heritage Services and produced the 16-panel exhibition. A small version is on view in the café pavilion, which generates continued interest from visitors.

6.0 **Ownership and Boundaries**

- 6.1 Appendix MMP3 shows the Strategic Context of Mesnes Park.
- 6.2 The red site boundary indicates the land that is owned by Wigan Council.
- 6.3 The park forms part of the Mesnes Park Conservation Area, marked by a bluehashed line on the plan.
- 6.4 The strategic partners Wigan & Leigh College, Drumcroon- Outpatients Department and Wigan Town Centre are shown.
- 6.5 On the 28th March 2003, Mesnes Park was transferred to WLCT by virtue of a Transfer agreement Appendix MMP4 between Wigan Borough Council and Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust, for the provision of Mesnes Park to operate Charitable Activities and Services, as part of WLCT.



7.0 Strategic Context

7.1 Regional Context

7.1.1 The Borough of Wigan is the largest in Greater Manchester comprising rural and industrial communities with a population of over 300,000, and two major centres, Wigan and Leigh. Wigan was originally a Roman settlement.

7.1.2 It became a Lancashire Borough in 1246 and grew as a market town with trade in local produce and textiles. By the 17th century Wigan was noted for its fine Canals, coal and ironworks.

7.1.3 Industry was stimulated in the 18th century by improvements in water transport with the opening of the Leeds-Liverpool canal and in 1831 by the arrival of the railway. Rapid expansion of the town in the early 19th century resulted in it becoming one of the unhealthiest in the country with abnormally high death rates.

7.1.4 The second half of the century was characterised by municipal enterprise with the development of new streets and housing areas and the opening of a board school, infirmary, library, park, swimming baths and technical college.

7.1.5 In first half of the 20th century Wigan was a thriving industrial town, but the decline of the Coalfield areas caused industrial impact and high unemployment.

7.1.6 Since the 1980's there has been substantial new investment. The town centre is classed as a major regional centre with its daily market, new shopping areas interwoven with Victorian arcades and surviving medieval street pattern and civic buildings. Wigan Pier, JJB Stadium, Robin Park retail park, the Grand Arcade town centre shopping development are evidence of the Borough's successful regeneration strategy but the town still has unemployment and deprivation levels considerably higher than the national average.

7.1.7 The strong Labour council has developed strategies for improvement, implementation and evaluation in all areas of its governance that endorse and deliver the policies of national government.

7.2 Local Policy Context

7.2.1 Wigan's Community Plan Appendix MMP 5



7.2.2 Through the Governments Modernising Local Government agenda, Wigan Council has developed its Community Plan and Local Culture Strategy.

7.2.3 The Community Plan sets out key priorities to assist in making improvements in the quality of life of Wigan's residents. It has been written following discussions between representatives of organisations and the community, commonly known as Wigan Borough Partnership. Meetings, research and consultation has been undertaken with thousands of people living and working in the Town to establish what would make a difference to improving life in Wigan.

7.2.4 The partnership have produced seven 'Thematic partnerships', grouped under the three headings of:

- 🕒 People
- 🕒 Place
- 🕒 Image/lifestyle

7.2.5 The Community Plan looks at these priorities in detail, setting goals and explaining how everyone can play a part in achieving them.

7.2.6 Wigan Council has defined a vision for the Borough with 8 main goals stated in the Community Plan, to which the proposals for park restoration and improvement relate. These are

- 🕒 Standards of living
- 🕒 Better health
- 🕒 Education
- 🕒 Strong local economy
- 🕒 Improved transport
- 🕒 Decent homes, safe, clean neighbourhood
- 🕒 Greener borough
- 🕒 Participation in community & culture

7.3 Wigan's Cultural Strategy Appendix MMP6



7.3.1 The Local Culture Strategy *Northern Soul*, encompasses many broad ranging issues and includes:

- 🕒 Sport
- 🕒 Arts
- 🕒 Heritage
- 🕒 Libraries
- 🕒 Parks and open spaces
- 🕒 Community development and lifelong learning
- 🕒 Architecture
- 🕒 Tourism

7.3.2 The Local Culture Strategy, which again has been produced in partnership with other agencies, will guide arts, cultural and leisure provision in the town for the next 10-15 years. Established in 1999, Wigan's Cultural Partnership is made up of representatives from public & private sector organisations with strategic and operational interests in the development of leisure & cultural activity across the Borough, and voluntary organisations active in work at a local level and in advocacy for the fields they represent. The Partnership is committed to improving the lives of individuals and communities across the Borough, increasing the accessibility of cultural resources and developing recreational opportunities reflective of people's needs. It has interests in the arts, children & young people, heritage, libraries, parks & green spaces, play, sports and tourism.

7.3.3 Six priorities provide a focus for its work:

- 🕒 Getting more people involved in cultural activities in the area
- 🕒 Improving access to information and improving communication
- 🕒 Making the best use of existing facilities and developing new facilities
- 🕒 Developing the role of culture in the community
- 🕒 Developing a positive and innovative image for the area
- 🕒 Focusing on young people's needs and hopes

7.3.4 These priorities are embodied in ***Northern Soul***, the Borough's current Cultural Strategy, and reflected in the action plans to which commitments are made on an annual basis.



7.4 Local Agenda 21

7.4.1 The Council adopted the Borough's Local Agenda 21 Plan Appendix MMP7 in August 2000 following widespread consultation with local people and businesses and various public sector agencies. Its approach was grouped under four main issues:

- 🕒 Understanding the problems and being part of the solutions
- 🕒 The Economy
- 🕒 Social issues
- 🕒 The Environment

7.4.2 The plan sets out 26 Key Themes, which represent the Borough's main priorities in the pursuit of sustainable development.

7.4.3 These Key themes have informed the Community Plan and the Unitary Development Plan review. They have also influenced the sustainability criteria used in the Sustainability Appraisal of the Plan.

7.4.4 Many of the objectives of Wigan Council's Agenda 21 Strategy are met in Mesnes Park due to the intrinsic nature of parks and the park's town centre location (see appendices). The development of the park allows for proposed action on Agenda 21 objectives, particularly with regard to the following:

7.4.5 The securing of ISO 9001 and 14001 by WLCT Grounds Maintenance service and the adoption of "Green" management practices with regard to pesticide use, recycling, composting and procurement of goods and services— objectives 1.3, 4.2 and 4.3.

7.4.6 Development proposals like the Grand Arcade that contribute to the vibrancy and variety of Wigan town centre increasing its attraction as a destination for shopping, eating out, recreation, culture and tourism – objectives 4.5 and 7.1, 16.1.

7.4.7 Improvements to encourage increased use of the park as a safe, attractive, off road route for access and exercise – objectives 11.1 and 12.1, 13.1, 13.2, 15.1.

7.4.8 Restoration and management proposals to conserve sustain and enhance the historic fabric, planting and biodiversity of the park - objectives 22.1, 23.1, 23.2 and

24.1.



7.4.9 Facilitate Life Long Learning opportunities in the park through the provision of appropriate facilities, programmes, events, staffing, training and work placements – objectives 1.2, 2.1 and 3.1

7.5 Wigan Council Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Appendix MMP8

7.5.1 Wigan's UDP is the sole development plan for all of Wigan Borough and provides a framework to encourage and stimulate appropriate new development, control the location and quality of development and safeguard environmental quality. It is principally concerned with the development and use of land and is used as the basis for fair and consistent decisions on planning applications, which the Council, as local planning authority, is required to determine. It covers the period until April 2016.

7.5.2 The proposals set in the Mesnes Park MMP uphold the following principles stated in the UDP:

- ⌚ EVA4A Development and Design in Conservation Areas.
- ⌚ EVA4B Listed Buildings.
- ⌚ EVA4C Buildings & structures of Local Architecture or Historic Interest.
- ⌚ EVA4D Historic Parks, Gardens and Cemeteries.

7.6 Wigan Council Corporate Plan Appendix MMP9

7.6.1 The Council has four major political principles:

- ⌚ People
- ⌚ Place
- ⌚ Partnership
- ⌚ Performance

7.6.2 A range of operational values backs up these Principles, especially 'valuing employees' and 'using a mixed economy' these 'values' link up to the Community Plan and is part of the Service planning for WLCT.



7.7 Townships

7.7.1 The Wigan Borough has been split into ten areas and each area is called a Township. Each Township has a Township Manager and a Township Co-ordinator and their role is to work with Councillors and local residents to develop more opportunities for local people to have a say about their area.

7.7.2 Each of the Township areas also has a Forum. The Forum is made up of a number of agencies, organisations, local Councillors and local groups. Township Forums are responsible for producing local action plans that reflect the long-term vision for the future of the Township area.

7.7.3 The action plans are based around eight themes;

- 🕒 community safety
- 🕒 economy
- 🕒 education
- 🕒 environment
- 🕒 health
- 🕒 leisure and recreation
- 🕒 neighbourhood development
- 🕒 traffic and transport

7.7.4 These plans detail what the Forum sees are important issues for the Township. Township Staff work closely with the Forums in a supporting and advising role to encourage improvements in services where needed.

7.7.5 Each forum works on the same eight themes (above) but may have approached these in different ways. Some forums may have worked on themes together, for instance by combining Environment with Traffic and Transport. Some forums have made a start on each of the themes, others may have concentrated on some and are collecting information about others. Each forum has tackled this work in the way that works for them and that reflects the needs and opportunities of their area – not all townships are the same.

7.7.6 The Wigan North action plan Appendix MMP10 includes an item LC4 – “Mesnes Park to be restored and residents across the Borough encouraged to use it” as an action point for their plan.



7.8 Wigan & Leisure Culture Trust Strategic Priorities 2005 – 2008

7.8.1 Environmental Management & Sustainability and Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust are committed to developing these corporate priorities through the Parks Strategy 2001 – 2006 (draft), delivery service plans and annual work programmes.

7.8.2 The new and developing vision for Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust provides the context for the strategic objectives for the period for 2005-2008 Appendix MMP11.

7.8.3 The Board has developed its vision against the background of the underlying principles of the Community Plan.

7.8.4 We recognise that Leisure & Culture makes a major contribution to wider agendas – healthy lifestyles, reducing crime, educational attainment, community cohesion for example. Our contribution will only be beneficial if more people participate in activities.

7.8.5 The Trust's vision is therefore:

Participation: to get as many people of Wigan as active as possible:

- ⌚ physically active
- ⌚ mentally and creatively active
- ⌚ active in our community and as citizens

7.8.6 Individual sections working within WLCT Service areas have developed their primary objectives. These priorities provide a framework for service improvement and development and provide another element of the focus for delivery plan objectives.

7.8.7 Key areas within these priorities include:

- ⌚ Increase participation
- ⌚ Improve inclusion and access
- ⌚ Develop and sustain partnership working
- ⌚ Improve customer satisfaction
- ⌚ Income generation
- ⌚ Consultation
- ⌚ Service improvements
- ⌚ Performance Management



- ⌚ Development of a Parks Strategy
- ⌚ Updating of the existing Grass Playing Pitch Strategy

7.9 A Strategy for Wigan's Parks & Open Spaces 2001 – 2006 (draft) Appendix MMP11

7.9.1 The draft Strategy was developed from the Environmental Management Service Plans and forms the basis for discussion and consultation with other Departments of the Local Authority, existing partners and community groups, and the wider community who are the primary users of parks and open spaces.

7.9.2 Through its policy and action plan proposals, it seeks to establish mechanisms and networks by which the level of participation and consultation in the future management and maintenance of the Borough's parks and open spaces can be significantly broadened and contribute to the implementation of the Cultural Strategy and wider Council agendas. Although this strategy was never formally agreed or implemented it will form the basis for a Township approach to a new parks strategy.

7.10 Environmental Management & Sustainability Service Area Plan 2005 – 2008

Appendix MMP12

7.10.1 Through service delivery:

'We aim to enhance the quality of life by providing sustainable green space for the community to enjoy'.

7.10.2 We have 7 strategic Objectives

- ⌚ Participation
- ⌚ Business performance
- ⌚ Facilities Improvement
- ⌚ Partnership
- ⌚ Customer satisfaction
- ⌚ Service Improvements
- ⌚ Diversity

7.10.3 Key Priority 5 of the plan 2005 – 2008, is to prepare and implement year one of the Mesnes Park Restoration Plan.



7.11 Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust's Heritage Strategy Appendix MMP13

- 7.11.1 Action 6 and 7 of the Access Plan for the Heritage Service intends “**to improve service access to the community by increasing partnership working within the wider community**”. It is intended to achieve this through the Heritage Office (Community Outreach & Education).
- 7.11.2 Good partnerships have already been established with the Heritage Services section, the Friends of Mesnes Park and the Parks Services Team.
- 7.11.3 Heritage service organise the annual Holocaust memorial ceremony. The ceremony has historically been held in Mesnes Park and the Friend of Mesnes Park have contributed to the ceremony.
- 7.11.4 Mesnes Park is the focus of many articles found in the Heritage Services magazine Past Forward. FOMP have used the opportunity to recruit new volunteers through this means and help them to find out information about the park.
- 7.11.5 The FOMP contributed to Wigan's Parish Map with a panel specifically for Mesnes Park. This was created to celebrate the Millennium, and was co-ordinated through the Heritage Services team.
- 7.11.6 A vast amount of historical information was collected during the production of the exhibition 'Mesnes Park - A People's History'. The Heritage Services team supported the Friends through the project and the History Shop displays the exhibition from time to time. Selected information and memories formed the 16 panels, which make up the exhibition, however a lot of information wasn't used due to the lack of space. One of FOMP's aspirations is to publish a Mesnes Park history booklet, containing all the information that was collated. The idea is to sell the booklets as a means of raising the profile of the park within the community and to raise funds for the Park.



7.12 Other related Key strategy documents

7.12.1 Listed below is a number of key strategy documents which form the basis of the Environmental Management & Sustainability Services Delivery Plan, and therefore the Mesnes Park Management & Maintenance Plan:-

- ⌚ Sport, Health and Physical Education Strategy 2005-10 (SHAPE) Appendix MMP14
- ⌚ The Arts Factor An Arts Strategy for Wigan Borough 06/12
Appendix MMP15
- ⌚ Community Playground Development Strategy
Appendix MMP16
- ⌚ Children & Young Peoples Participation Strategy
Appendix MMP 17
- ⌚ Street Scene Strategic Plan 2002-06
Appendix MMP18
- ⌚ Destination Wigan 2004-09
Appendix MMP19
- ⌚ Greater Manchester Police Policing Plan 2004-2005 Appendix MMP20

8.0 By-laws



- 8.1 The existing by-laws for Mesnes Park were introduced in 1922 Appendix MMP21. A review of the by-laws is well over due. This will require assistance from Wigan Council's Legal and Property Services and resources from within the park services team. Their enforcement of existing or new by-laws will be considered as part of this review.
- 8.2 Since 1st October 2000, it has been an offence under the Dogs (fouling of land) Act 1996, not to clean up if your dog fouls in a public place. The Rangers currently carry out an educational role by issuing 'poop' bags and an information leaflet to dog owners. The leaflet provides information about the law and promotes responsible dog ownership. The Rangers gather information and monitor the site then liaise with the Council's Animal Warden Service who is responsible for enforcing the by-law.

9.0 Leases and Covenants

- 9.1 The Lodge has covenants which exist through the Diocese of Liverpool which specify that its use should be in relation to the park. Appendix MMP22 shows details of the conditions.
- 9.2 Any lease arrangements in relation to parks' facilities (e.g. Crazy golf) will be managed through the Parks Services Team. Formal and long term leases, e.g. café pavilion will be managed through Wigan Council's Legal & Property Services Department, who will also be responsible for termination of leases, in conjunction with the Trust's Environmental Management & Sustainability Team and the Councils Facilities Management.

9.3 .

10.0 Existing Management and Maintenance

- 10.1 The park is currently managed by Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust's, Environmental Management & Sustainability section. The Parks Services team is responsible for the management whilst the Grounds Maintenance Services teams is responsible for the maintenance of soft landscapes.



10.2 The existing management structure reflects the impact of Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) of the late 1980's and early 1990's where local authorities split to form 'Client' and 'Contractor' functions.

10.3 In January 2004 was appointed as Executive Manager for Environmental Management & Sustainability and commenced on a reorganisation of the current structure. The new structure will recover the lost flexibility encountered through CCT, reaffirm ownership within one service and remove the barriers of 'Client' & 'Contractor', facilitate community engagement through Townships and focus resources via a Parks strategy to effectively deliver a programme of strategic improvements.

11.0 **Soft Landscape Maintenance**

11.1 In compliance with the Local Government Act 1988, the Council subjected the maintenance of the Borough's parks to competition. The contract for Mesnes Park within a larger geographical package was won by Grounds Maintenance Services (GMS) and is still undertaken by them.

11.2 Grounds Maintenance Services (GMS)

11.3 A detailed frequency based specification exists for all maintenance operations carried out in the park. Appendix MMP23.

11.4 The specifications consists of three elements:

- ⌚ The written specification that details all aspects of individual operations.
- ⌚ The Bill of Quantities (BoQ) that is priced against a set frequency and quantity of regular, routine operations over the year.
- ⌚ The Schedule of Rates (SoR) a priced library of operations that may be called upon ad-hoc throughout the year.

11.5 The specification also includes the details of the timing of operations by the use of a frequency profile. Performance monitoring and a default process are detailed in the contract.

11.6 Gardeners carry out the routine maintenance work (as per the schedules contained in the specification) and additional works are specified and monitored by the Parks & Open Spaces Officer responsible for the site.



- 11.7 There is currently only one dedicated member of Grounds Maintenance staff accommodated within the specification. This is covered under the term 'Duty Gardener' which was an attempt to include response, flexibility, a responsible visual inspection and a community interface within what is essentially a rigid frequency based specification. The duty gardeners role is usually carried out by the leading hand within the park but can be carried out by any other member of staff by agreement. Any remedial works following an inspection are responded to and reported through a management structure from Parks & open Spaces Officer, Parks Community Liaison Officer to the Parks & Countryside Activities Manager.
- 11.8 Other Grounds maintenance operatives are used to support the workloads in the park and although the same staff are consistently allocated to the park, under the current framework this cannot be guaranteed. The number of operatives fluctuates to match the peaks and troughs of changing workloads.
- 11.9 Specialist operations such as herbicide application and arboriculture works are undertaken via the Grounds Maintenance specialist teams that work Borough wide.
- 11.10 All Grounds Maintenance operatives work a standard contract of 37 hours per week in winter and 40 hours per week in summer.

11.11

| | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|--------------------|-----------------|--------|-----------------|------------------|--------------------|-----------------|--------|-----------------|
| Summer hours are | Monday to Thursday | 7.30am – 4.30pm | Friday | 7.30am - 2.00pm | Winter hours are | Monday to Thursday | 7.45am - 4.00pm | Friday | 7.45am – 2.15pm |
|------------------|--------------------|-----------------|--------|-----------------|------------------|--------------------|-----------------|--------|-----------------|

- 11.12 Hours are varied by agreement to accommodate events that call for attendance outside the core hours.
- 11.13 All Grounds Maintenance staff report through a management structure from leading hand to the Grounds Maintenance Area Manager to the Green Spaces Manager.
- 11.14 Appendix MMP24 shows the old structure of the Grounds Maintenance Services, Parks and Development Service Teams within Environmental management & Sustainability.

12.0 Parks Services Team

- 12.1 Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust is committed to a high quality park with management that will ensure the establishment and long-term success of the proposals for Mesnes Park. This service is delivered through a well-defined management structure. The included Environmental Management & Sustainability structure charts demonstrate the changes from the CCT driven service to the part established structure for regeneration and activities.
- 12.2 Historically the Parks Manager (acting) had overall responsibility for Mesnes Park along with the other parks and green spaces within the Borough. A team of 2 Parks and Open Space Officers, 4 Parks Community Liaison Officers, and 10 rangers supported the manager this is shown in Appendix MMP26.
- 12.3 The new structure Appendix MMP 27 has a focus on regeneration and activities and rationalises the functions carried out by the top tier structure of the Environmental Management and Sustainability Section. A parks strategy will produce a smaller number of core sites that will focus resources to better effect. The non-core sites will transfer under the control of the Green Spaces Manger and remove duplication of staff time on sites. This is due to take place in April 2006.
- 12.4 The Parks Regeneration Manager is responsible for the development of a Parks Strategy, the development of parks related improvement schemes, grant applications and project delivery.
- 12.5 The Parks & Countryside Activities Manager is responsible for the presentation of the core sites, the ranger service and all issues relating to events and activities. The structure of Community Liaison Officers and ranger staff currently remains the same as the historical structure chart as work is undertaken to assess the best use of resource to meet the demands of the new senior role.
- 12.6 Officers are based in the Parks and Cemeteries offices approximately quarter of a mile from Mesnes Park, enabling good daily communication and



interaction between staff. The rangers based in Mesnes Park provide ranger services for the west of the borough.

12.7 The Park & Countryside Activities Manager manages the capital and revenue budgets and is responsible for delivering the service plan.

12.8 Parks Community Liaison Officers are responsible for day to day contact with rangers, user groups, community groups and committees, co-ordinate the events programme and organise many of the events in liaison with others. As the project has developed, the role of the Community Liaison Officers has grown in Mesnes Park, developing and maintaining links with the local community. In particular they liaise with the Friends group and attend their meetings and are members of Township Community sub groups. These sub group provide regular access to other partners including the police and youth services etc. Their relationship with other park staff, concessionaires and users is informed and they are aware of issues and accessible and responsive to concerns of members of the public.

12.9 The role of one of the Parks Community Liaison Officer had been temporarily refocused to a Mesnes Park Development Officer, to facilitate the development of a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund. This has now been superseded with the appointment of the Parks Regeneration Manager.

12.10 The Parks and Open Spaces Officer is responsible for service procurement and managing the maintenance contract. Their work includes monitoring, organising the purchase and installation of new park furniture, initiating and supervising minor works and managing day to day maintenance issues in addition to liaison with contractors on site.

12.11 Currently the rangers patrol the park as part of a broader role that covers approximately 60 other sites. Their hours are seasonally adjusted and are managed

on a 4-day shift system. There is ranger cover from 08.20am throughout the year with finishing times seasonally adjusted from 4.30pm in winter to 10.00pm in summer.

12.12 Rangers carry out a building check on a daily basis and respond to any defects and minor repairs that are required in the park, as specified by The Parks



Community Liaison Officer. Any issues that arise from the building check are processed through the Maintenance & Repair system.

13.0 Repair arrangements

13.1 Since the establishment of Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust, Wigan Council is considered the Landlord and the Trust as the tenant.

13.2 Wigan Council has developed a Corporate Property Maintenance Fund (CPMF) to service and maintain its properties. Approximately £550,000 is allocated to Leisure Trust properties every year for planned works. Norfolk Property Services (NPS) are an arms length organisation that manages the funds on behalf of Wigan Council.

13.3 The fund is divided into three principle areas:

13.3.1 Fund 1 - Reactive Maintenance fund

- ⌚ This is a reactive fund for minor repairs and emergency call outs. A 24 hour, 7 day a week service is maintained for this fund. Repairs of this nature are instigated via the inspection procedure by rangers to the Building Representatives, in this case, the Parks Community Liaison Officer. Norfolk Property Services organise the necessary repairs.

13.3.2 Fund 2 - Planning Maintenance spend.

- ⌚ This is the principle fund for planned repairs. Annual spending plans are developed through condition survey information. These surveys are carried out every five years and drive the external repairs and maintenance cycle whereby every building is externally painted and repaired. Electrical testing follow the same cycle and any issues found during the condition survey and testing are prioritised and actioned.

13.3.3 Fund 3 - Servicing

- ⌚ This element of the CPMF ensures that all the buildings are serviced annually, this will include statutory inspections, gas installations, ventilation/air handling equipment, boilers, fire fighting equipment, fire alarm and emergency lighting.



13.3.4 Appendix MMP25 show the role of the facilities manager and how both planned and reactive buildings works are processed.

14.0 **Playground Maintenance Team**

14.1 The playground maintenance team is managed under the remit of the Policy & Regeneration Executive Director. The team is responsible for inspecting the play equipment once a week and follow their inspection procedure. An independent inspection is carried out twice per year.



15.0 Why does the park need restoring?

- 15.1 The park has suffered long term deterioration of its infrastructure, through lack of financial and staffing resources.
- 15.2 Prior to April 2003 the role carried out by the Parks and Open Spaces Officer (POSO) covered land managed by Wigan Council departments, e.g. Housing, Planning, etc. as well as land managed by Leisure. This limited the capacity that POSO's had for concentrating on park maintenance issues and ensuring that the specification was being carried out.
- 15.3 Since that time the remit has been re-focused on park and green spaces managed by Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust on behalf of Wigan Council. This means that the role of the POSO has been dedicated to monitoring the routine maintenance contract, processing additional works, and working closely with the Park Community Liaison Officers to improve and develop sites, including Mesnes Park.
- 15.4 Significant funding is now required to update the existing buildings and infrastructure of the park, which is currently outside the realms of the parks revenue budget. A restoration plan has been prepared for Mesnes Park which sets out a realistic way of rejuvenating the park and upgrading the facilities so that the park becomes once again a key focus for the local community.



16.0 The Current Restoration Proposals

- 16.1 The proposed restoration of Mesnes Park is detailed in the Conservation Management Plan. The first phase of the restoration focuses on the heritage and community benefits that would be seen from the restoration of the pavilion, which is used as a café and forms the hub of the park; the bandstand, which will be upgraded so it becomes a venue for the proposed diverse performance programme; and Dalton's steps, which leads visitors to the pavilion and from the top, offers views across the park and into the town centre. The Heritage Lottery Fund will be the principle-funding package that will be approached to progress the restoration.
- 16.2 The Mesnes Park development proposals Appendix MMP28 shows a Schedule of proposals for the whole park vision Phase I, Phase II and Phase III of the restoration of Mesnes Park. It is intended to complete Phase I of the restoration within three years of an award of external funding, Phase II within a ten-year period and phase III will follow to complete the whole park vision.
- 16.3 Funding will be generated from different sources. Wigan Council in its role as Landlord are responsible for upgrading the infrastructure of the park, e.g. the electrical supply, reconstruction the footpaths (in a phased programme due to the financial implications).
- 16.4 The Friends of Mesnes Park have been fundamental in planning the restoration process and feel that they have a continuing role to play. The group has taken on board the aspirations of the community and support the overall phases of the restoration of the park by leading on securing funding for implementation of the Joined Up Mesnes Park (JUMP) proposal, refurbishment of the play zone, restoration of the Powell monument and restoration of the James Pulham & Sons rock feature and waterfall.

17.0 Issues and Their Resolution

- 17.1 Through consultation and discussions with stakeholders, parks staff and the Parks

Community Liaison Officer, the following issues and conflicts have been raised. Listed below are possible solutions to the issues identified, which are incorporated into the overall development of the park.



17.2 Other issues that present barriers to people using the park and their solutions are developed further in the Access & Audience Development Plans.

17.3

| Issue identified | Possible Solution |
|---|---|
| Significant funding is required to restore the heritage features and buildings in the park. | Enlist the help of Project Management and Facilities Team, FOMP and WLCT's Regeneration Team. |
| Applying for funding has resource implications within the Environmental Management team. | Realign Environmental Management structure to facilitate. |
| Ensure high standards of horticultural maintenance under the existing specification. | Realign Environmental Management structure to facilitate. |
| Horticultural expertise is lost as traditional 'gardeners' retire and replaced with untrained staff | Develop apprenticeship schemes and encourage training through links with Wigan & Leigh college. Implement the training plan. |
| Capacity building of the local community. | Keep the group interested by their involvement in projects. Continued support of the Friends of Mesnes Park group and recruiting new volunteers. |



| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Incidents and anti-social behaviour issues. Significant numbers of young people congregating leading to intimidation and perceptions that the park is unsafe.</p> | <p>Implement the JUMP proposal (see point 18).</p> <p>Reduce opportunities for anti-social behaviour by vegetation removal and increasing appropriate use of the park (natural surveillance).</p> <p>Develop on good links established with Greater Manchester Police and Wigan Council's Community Safety team.</p> <p>Develop a diverse events programme to increase the appropriate use of the park by visitors.</p> |
| <p>Conflict between ethnic minority groups and the local community.</p> | <p>Develop an events programme using the park as a venue to enable cultural experiences, e.g. WOW multicultural event.</p> <p>Continue to educate/train staff to foster a diverse cultural environment.</p> |
| <p>The impact of the proposed restoration of the pavilion will have on the established café (Fredericks of Chorley) business.</p> | <p>Imperative that timescales for works are kept to a minimum.</p> <p>Develop a marketing plan and high profile re-opening when the pavilion is restored.</p> <p>Re assess the legal occupation and terms of the lease.</p> |
| <p>Conflicts of users along the path network.</p> | <p>Develop a cycling lane on the primary paths and review traffic flow through the park.</p> |
| <p>Lack of parking facilities for the park.</p> | <p>Develop partnerships to encourage town centre parking for the park.</p> <p>Create parking opportunity for disabled visitors and those using and visiting the lodge.</p> |

18.0 The JUMP Project – Joined Up Mesnes Park



18.1 The project is multi-agency approach to tackling anti-social behaviour issues, in relation to young people, within the Wigan Township.

18.2 The aims of the JUMP project are to:

- ⌚ provide a safe environment within Mesnes Park
- ⌚ promote the safe use of the park for all the community
- ⌚ engage with young people using the park and offer a programme of diversionary activities
- ⌚ reduce anti-social behaviour
- ⌚ improve facilities for young people within the park
- ⌚ develop ownership of the park within the younger generation ⌚ reduce the perceptions that the park is a no-go area

18.3 It is intended to do this by:

- ⌚ Creating a number of lit routes through the park
- ⌚ Lighting the key buildings and structures
- ⌚ Installing monitored CCTV at strategic points in the park
- ⌚ Using dedicated staff to challenge unlawful behaviour
- ⌚ Improving facilities for young people by
 - developing a number of areas for them to meet within the park
 - providing a co-ordinated programme of activities, e.g. sports, etc
 - developing youth mediation accommodation at the 'play shack'

18.4 Paths through the park are used as a thoroughfare between the town centre and local housing areas. The pedestrian gates remain open at night although the paths through the park are unlit. Incidents in the park in the evenings have heightened fears for personal security, and surveys identified security as the issue of greatest concern.

18.5 To improve security for evening use of park facilities and paths it is proposed that gates from the Park Rd entrance nearest to the sports zones and the entrance on Bridgeman Terrace, along with the main driveway will remain



open for pedestrians as usual, but the path routes will be lit to the Walkden Ave north entrance. This will enable access to the sports areas, the area around the play shack and enable people to have an illuminated short cut to housing.

- 18.6 It is proposed to extend the monitored town centre CCTV system to provide coverage for the major buildings in the park. Cameras sited at strategic points within the park will cover the main routes, while cameras sited on the pavilion itself will cover all four approaches. It is felt that that this will produce the most effective means of covering key points in the park and support other measures by providing cover during times of limited occupancy.
- 18.7 It is envisaged that the implementation of the JUMP project will be an important element to the restoration of Mesnes Park.

19.0 **Pulham & Sons Water Feature**

- 19.1 The FOMP and Parks Officers developed a Lake Management Plan as a result of consultations, which indicated that the lake area was a key attraction within the park.
- 19.2 The Pulham and Sons water feature and rockwork was initially uncovered by The Friends of Mesnes Park and has been gradually cleared over time. The Green Space Conservation Volunteers (volunteers managed on behalf of the Trust by BTCV) have rediscovered the plunge pool and excavated the planting pockets. The FOMP have been in contact with a descendant of James Pulham who has provided information on historical planting schemes, which will be used in the restoration. A local architect, Anthony Grimshaws, recommended by English Heritage, have produced a feasibility study to progress the restoration of this historic feature. The FOMP have already secured some funding from the New Opportunities Fund. This money will be used to restore the rock work and re establish the planting pockets within the structure.

20.0 **The Play Zone**



20.1 It has been an aspiration of the FOMP to refurbish the play zone. Consultation has taken place and designs have been drawn up for the play area, which includes combining the existing 0-5's and 5-11's play areas to the one location, currently the site of the 5-11's.

20.2 The proposed scheme will involve:

- ⌚ resurfacing to reduce the amount of sand
- ⌚ provide inclusive facilities
- ⌚ completing the bow top fencing to define the zone
- ⌚ provide stimulating play equipment
- ⌚ provide seating and picnic areas

21.0 Vision and Objectives

21.1 The vision for Mesnes Park is:

21.2 **“a town centre park with safe access for all. A green space venue that presents opportunity for quality events and activities, education and training where the integrity of the historic landscape is complemented alongside the provision of good contemporary facilities”.**

21.3 The following aims and objectives have been determined through extensive consultation :

21.4 Continue to involve stakeholders and the local community in the restoration of Mesnes Park

- ⌚ Continue to support the Friends of Mesnes Park (FOMP)
- ⌚ Assist the FOMP to recruit new Friends
- ⌚ Continue to determine aspirations and views of the community by means of visitor surveys and regular consultation
- ⌚ Develop a Mesnes Park Steering Group

21.5 Improve the standards of care, horticultural quality and diversity

- ⌚ Implement the management and maintenance plan



- 🕒 Establish links with Wigan & Leigh College through horticultural apprenticeship schemes, using the park as an educational resource.
- 🕒 Reduce the issues that have a negative effect on the appearance of the park, e.g. antisocial behaviour and vandalism
- 🕒 Develop horticultural skills within park staff by training
- 🕒 Prepare and implement a habitat management plan.

21.6 Improve the health and safety for the benefit of visitors

- 🕒 Improve the footpath surfaces
- 🕒 Decrease the amount of dog fouling
- 🕒 Undertake a regular risk assessment for the site
- 🕒 Continue to regularly inspect the park
- 🕒 Ensure all employees, suppliers, contractors and tenants meet national, Wigan Council and WLCT agreed standards

21.7 Improve security for park visitors

- 🕒 Selective vegetation removal to reduce opportunities for anti-social behaviour
- 🕒 Build on good relationships with Police and Anti social behaviour team
- 🕒 Implement the JUMP proposal and develop mitigation strategies to combat anti-social behaviour
- 🕒 Develop a programme of activities to encourage evening use of the park

21.8 Recreate the gardens and landscape character of the park

- 🕒 WLCT will work in partnership with Wigan Council and FOMP to seek funding to restore the heritage landscape
- 🕒 Reshape the beds in the historical area to create a colourful planting scheme
- 🕒 Redefine rhododendron beds to a complementary design in historical area
- 🕒 Develop a tree trail through the park
- 🕒 Re establish the herbaceous border
- 🕒 Retain historic landscape whilst diversifying and enhancing ecological value

21.9 Conserve the heritage merit of the park

- 🕒 Restore the heritage landscape, buildings and structures of the park with minimal alteration to their original fabric



- 🕒 Involve appropriate professionals and crafts people with all aspects of the restoration of the park
- 🕒 Sensitively integrate contemporary facilities within the historical framework
- 🕒 Use high quality materials where new facilities are proposed
- 🕒 Deploy contemporary solutions using materials compatible with the character and fabric of the traditional materials used in the park

21.10 Improve the accessibility of the park

- 🕒 Develop and enhance physical, sensory and intellectual access opportunities as detailed in the audience and access plans and in line with local and national policies
- 🕒 Consider inclusive options in refurbishment of the play area
- 🕒 Review opening hours of parks facilities
- 🕒 Establish a long-term lease to manage and improve the crazy golf facility and casual crown green and tennis facilities
- 🕒 Physical barriers will be guided by principles of conservation and inclusive visitor management
- 🕒 Support and facilitate sustainable forms of transport

21.11 Maintain relationships to other parks

- 🕒 Review Environmental Management's Parks & Open Spaces Strategy
- 🕒 Performance Management benchmarking as determined by AGMA (Association of Greater Manchester Authorities).

21.12 Maintain relationships to the surrounding neighbourhood

- 🕒 Continue to engage and develop further links with strategic partners, e.g. Wigan & Leigh College, Drumcroon Arts Centre, Wigan Town Centre & Thomas Linacre Outpatients as per the Audience Plan.
- 🕒 Continue to be involved with Township planning.

21.13 Education and Interpretation

- 🕒 Refurbish the play shack as a base for organised groups and activities
- 🕒 Develop a programme of informal educational sessions and lifelong learning for the community



- ⌚ Establish the park as resource for higher educational coursework
- ⌚ Develop and implement an Interpretation Strategy

21.14 Volunteers and Training

- ⌚ Develop a programme of training for staff and local volunteers to learn and develop appropriate skills to enable contribution to the management, maintenance and interpretation of the park
- ⌚ Continue to develop staff in line with the Trust's employee policies

21.15 Generate revenue for the park

- ⌚ Money generated from leases and events will be put back into the parks revenue budget

21.16 Offer a diverse programme of events for visitors

- ⌚ Restore and upgrade the bandstand as a venue for performances
- ⌚ Sustain a Premises Licence to allow events and activities
- ⌚ Encourage Community groups, schools and amateur performances
- ⌚ Further encourage the use of the pavilion as a venue for indoor events/activities
- ⌚ Link with town centre performances
- ⌚ Create further links with the Festivals team to organise large-scale events

21.17 Achieve 'Green Flag' award scheme.

- ⌚ Appoint experienced and qualified senior ranger to manage the site including all aspects of use, conservation, interpretation, development, consultation and community involvement to achieve the strategic vision for the park
- ⌚ Promote and secure political support for the benefits of the Green Flag scheme

22.0 Proposed Management

22.1 Dedicated staff

22.2 The bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund will include an element to appoint a Senior Ranger, who will be dedicated to Mesnes Park. They will be



responsible to the Parks & Countryside Activities Manager and take responsibility for the overall management and maintenance.

22.3 Their responsibilities would include:

- ⌚ Co-ordination of the work of staff in Mesnes Park
- ⌚ Co-ordinate the restoration of Mesnes Park with others
- ⌚ Planning of maintenance under the overall guidance and in accordance with the management and maintenance plan
- ⌚ Management of tenants and concessions, including the café and sport facilities
- ⌚ Communication with user groups such as the bowlers, Friends groups and Parks Forum
- ⌚ Supporting sub groups of the Friends that deal with specific issues e.g. events, Lake Management group, etc.
- ⌚ Assist Friends with funding opportunity initiatives inclusive of support training
- ⌚ Co-ordination of volunteer activities
- ⌚ Working with the Parks Community Liaison officers to co ordinate events and to encourage use of the park by existing and new sectors of the community, as determined by the Audience Development Plan
- ⌚ Management of Mesnes Park revenue budget
- ⌚ Responsibility for standards of care and the maintenance and improvement in quality; cleansing, routine maintenance of park fabric, cleaning of toilets
- ⌚ Responsibility for health and safety including vehicle movement
- ⌚ Responsibility for overall security
- ⌚ Ensuring the implementation of the interpretation strategy
- ⌚ Ensuring the implementation of the Access Plan
- ⌚ Representation on the Township groups relevant to the park
- ⌚ Developing any funding/marketing opportunities for Mesnes Park to maximise income
- ⌚ Liaison with Council Departments, other sections within Leisure & Culture Trust, strategic partners, e.g. Wigan and Leigh College, Drumcroon Arts Centre and the Town Centre Manager to co-ordinate activities.
- ⌚ Lead on Green Flag application and implementation process.

22.4 The Environmental Management & Sustainability structure is currently being reviewed as already mentioned. The Senior Ranger role dedicated to Mesnes Park and funded by HLF, in the new structure, will be mainstreamed through the Parks revenue budget.



22.5 The Organogram Appendix MMP29 shows the proposed Management structure for the park.

23.0 Proposed Annual Management Programme

23.1 Appendix MMP30 shows what actions are proposed and who has the responsibility for carrying them out to achieve the management objectives.

24.0 Job Descriptions

24.1 The following posts are involved with the operations of the park to varying degrees.

24.2 Management.

24.2.1 Parks Community Liaison Officer

- ⌚ To carry out the day-to-day supervision of the usage of parks, playing fields and open spaces by the development, support and co-ordination of user groups, events and activities.

24.2.2 Parks and Open Spaces Officer

- ⌚ To carry out the day-to-day supervision of parks and open space maintenance and to monitor the performance of the ground maintenance contractor on behalf of other Client agencies against agreed targets and budgets.

24.2.3 Parks & Countryside Activities Manager

- ⌚ To carry out day to day management of the Parks Services sector, including line management responsibility for staff and budgetary control, and to assist the Parks and Countryside Manager in developing and implementing policies which will ensure a cost-effective and dynamic service in parks.

24.2.4 Parks Regeneration Manager

- ⌚ Responsible for the overall strategy for Parks and playing fields.



- 🕒 Development of parks related improvement schemes
- 🕒 Grant Applications
- 🕒 Negotiation with the Council and external partners
- 🕒 Advocacy Role

24.2.5 Performance Manager

- 🕒 To carry out the day-to-day management of the Performance team, including line management responsibility for staff and budgetary control.
- 🕒 To plan and monitor the Performance teams work plan and contribute to the Environmental Management & Sustainability project programme.
- 🕒 To assist the Executive Director in developing and implementing policies which will ensure a cost-effective, efficient and dynamic service.
- 🕒 To contribute to a continuous improvement process for Environmental Management & Sustainability.
- 🕒 To be a member of the Environmental Management & Sustainability Management Group.

24.2.6 Technical Officer (Landscape)

- 🕒 To provide support to other sections and departments through a landscape design and advisory service and to assist the Senior Technical Officer in the production of floral bedding display plans.

24.2.7 Support Services Technician

- 🕒 To assist in the surveying for, monitoring, maintaining, securing and provision of information from grounds maintenance information systems, maintaining clear and accurate records and reporting of any system performance issues.

25.0 Soft Landscape Maintenance

25.1 Grounds Maintenance Services Leading Hand

- 🕒 The overall grounds care and maintenance of grounds in accordance with agreed specification. Providing a flexible and responsible service. Supervising individuals or teams and ensuring compliance with agreed quality standards.



25.2 Gardener/Duty Gardener

- ⌚ General maintenance of grounds including sweeping, hoeing, raking, mowing, strimming, edging, forking, digging, hedge cutting, minor pruning and clearing leaves and litter.
- ⌚ Basic horticultural duties including laying turf under supervision and planting e.g. bulbs.
- ⌚ Constructional and manual work e.g. barrowing, ditch clearance etc.
- ⌚ Assisting with erecting and dismantling of sports posts and other equipment.
- ⌚ General cleaning duties e.g. toilets, canteens, store rooms etc.
- ⌚ Patrol and attendance duties e.g. opening and locking gates and patrolling.
- ⌚ Assisting more highly skilled and experienced gardeners in their work.
- ⌚ Instruct the public to comply with regulations and byelaws.
- ⌚ To undertake any other duties in accordance with the grade and job title of the post as required by the Grounds Maintenance Management Team.

25.3 Grounds Maintenance Services Maintenance Manager

- ⌚ To undertake overall responsibility for the management of the Grounds Maintenance service including the Landscape Construction Service; accountability for the financial performance and quality of work throughout the service; the effective management and development of human resources, together with the efficient and safe utilisation of plant, equipment and materials.
- ⌚ To be responsible for the corporate management and planned development of the Grounds Maintenance service, including the preparation and successful implementation of contract bids, business plans, marketing plans and operational strategies.

26.0 Training and Continuing Professional Development

- ⌚ The Trust is committed to Investors in People and recognises that it is only through a competent and motivated work force that it can meet its strategic objective of delivering quality services to its customers and clients. The policy of the Trust is, therefore, to provide planned training and development opportunities for its employees in order to enable them to realise their own



potential and so make the best possible contribution towards meeting the Trust's service objectives.

- ⌚ The Trust regards training and development as an investment in its work force, which will ensure that their performance is maximised through the development of appropriate knowledge, skills and attitude. For this reason, the Trust undertakes Employee Development Needs Assessments with its employees on a regular basis. The Trust will strive to provide the training and development opportunities to enable those needs to be met.
- ⌚ The Training Plan Appendix MMP31 identifies specific and ongoing training that is required as a result of the new management structure.

27.0 Proposed Maintenance

27.1 Character Zones

27.1.1 Mesnes Park has been split into six Character Zones listed below, these are represented on the plan Appendix MMP32.

- ⌚ Historical area
- ⌚ Sports zone
- ⌚ Informal Recreation area
- ⌚ Play zone
- ⌚ Lake area
- ⌚ Rose Garden

27.1.2 A brief description of each zone follows;

27.1.2.1 Historical Area – Illustration 1a,1b,1c,1d

- ⌚ The wide main driveway that leads to Dalton's steps and elevated pavilion building dissects this area. The lodge building is located at the main entrance of the park, at the junction of Bridgeman Terrace and Mesnes Park Terrace. The building has been unoccupied for approximately twenty years and is in poor



condition. Temporary roofing and window boards keep the building secure. The formal lawns and beds provide seasonal colour and the rhododendrons still exhibit the remains of the scroll design of the original planting. The design is reminiscent of a parterre, which perhaps was intended to be viewed from the pavilion. The bronze statue of Sir Francis Powell punctuates the landscape, and you often find visitors rubbing his now shiny shoe for good luck. The shelter has seen some restoration and its ornate grills complements the ironwork on the pavilion and main entrance gates.

- ⌚ Beyond the pavilion, the bandstand is set within a circular promenade and surrounded by vegetation.



27.1.2.2 Sports zone – Illustration 2

- ⌚ This linear zone runs parallel to the railway embankment and comprises of 3 crown green bowling greens, an 18 hole crazy golf course, 7 Tarmacadam tennis courts, 1 basketball court and a skate-park facility. The facilities offer good views for spectators due to their low position in the park. The greens are in good condition and are well used, the crazy golf and ball game facilities are popular during school holidays and weekends.

27.1.2.3 Informal Recreation Area – Illustration 2

- ⌚ This is a grassed area, edged with mature trees and shrubs between the central path and Wigan & Leigh College Pagefield Campus. A drainage scheme implemented in 2000 has enabled the area to be used for sports and events. There are the remains of a tarmac surface of a former play area by the north entrance of the park.



27.1.2.4 Play Zone – Illustration 3

- ⌚ This area includes the 0-5's and 5-11's play area, play shack, remnants of a sensory garden and disabled parking.
- ⌚ The play equipment is limited and set in a sand surface. Despite this, the area is well used during the summer months. Recently, the area has been 'opened up' by selective shrub removal and grassing areas, making them more attractive for play and informal seating. Views are still limited between the two play zones. Bow top fencing surrounds some of the area, in an attempt to reduce the numerous access points. The play shack is made of two linked octagonal rooms which is protected by metal shuttering. The Rangers use the building occasionally for events and school groups, but for most of the time, the building remains closed.
- ⌚ The sensory garden is a series of raised beds that are in poor condition with limited planting. The area isn't in keeping with the rest of the park and due to its deterioration has currently no real function.



27.1.2.5 Lake area – Illustration 5a, 5b

- 🕒 The lake is very popular with visitors who are encouraged to feed the wildfowl from a railed feeding area. As per the lake management plan, two islands have been recently replanted to provide both shelter and evergreen colour. An incomplete low privet hedge separates the grass verges surrounding the lake. The lake has three islands and a Pulham & Sons rock feature, which has been cleared of vegetation but is still in need of restoration. Trees and vegetation overhang the lake in some areas and obscure views. A grass verge and footpath separates the lake with Park Road/Parsons Walk. This was planted with crocus bulbs to celebrate the Millennium. Inclined beds have been constructed at the entrance of Parsons Walk entrance which provide improved but limited visual impact to visitors as they enter the park.



27.1.2.6 Rose garden - Illustration 6

- 🕒 The garden was restored in 2003 and now offers a quiet area for lunch or relaxation within the park. Trees and rhododendrons surround the garden but have been reduced in height to improve the security and to improve natural surveillance from the Health Trust's Thomas Linacre Out-patients building. The roses in the beds have been replaced and new rose frames erected. A replica of the missing central feature, a stone sundial plinth and dial has been reconstructed.



27.1.2.7 Aerial view of the park taken around 1930 – Illustration 7



28.0 Soft Landscape Maintenance Operations

28.1 Each Character Zone is made up of inventory codes, which relate to the maintenance operations listed within the specification Appendix MMP23. The Inventory Zone Plan shows the inventory codes within each Character Zone.

28.2 The table offers the following information:

| | | | |
|---|--------------------|---|--|
| 🕒 | Description | – | Description of the maintenance operation carried out |
| 🕒 | Quantity/unit | – | The area covered by the operation in square metres |
| 🕒 | Rate | – | Cost in pounds/pence for one unit |
| 🕒 | Price per occasion | – | The cost for the operation |
| 🕒 | Frequency | – | The number of times the operation is carried out 🕒 |
| | Annual price | – | The total annual cost for the operation. |

28.3 At the end of each zone a grand summary indicates the total costs for maintenance.

28.4 The total cost for maintenance operations in Mesnes Park is for 2004 is

28.5 For each character zone the maintenance costs are as follows:

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|------------|---|---|---------------|---|---|---------------|---|-----------|---|---|-----------|---|---|-------------|
| 🕒 | Depot | £ | 🕒 | Historic Zone | £ | 🕒 | Informal Zone | 🕒 | Lake Zone | £ | 🕒 | Play Zone | £ | 🕒 | Rose Garden |
| 🕒 | Sport Zone | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 🕒 | TOTAL | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

28.6 To accommodate the horticultural improvements over and above the standard specification, a 10-year plan of action is attached Appendix MMP33 that details:

- 🕒 the methodology of the proposal
- 🕒 the rationale for the works
- 🕒 overall cost implications
- 🕒 a proposal of works within the 10 year projection

29.0 Financial Plan

29.1 A 10 year draft budget has been prepared for Mesnes Park Appendix MMP34.

29.2 The costs assume a 3% increase in inflation each year.

29.3 The management salary costs do not include on-costs. These are approximately 10% on top of the figures shown.

30.0 **Monitoring & Plan Review**

30.1 The spider chart Appendix MMP35 shows how the Senior Ranger through the Parks Steering Group can enlist the assistance of stakeholders, agencies and community groups to review and monitor the management and maintenance plan on an annual basis.

30.2 The Parks and Open Space Officer monitor ensures that the maintenance operations are carried out in accordance with the specification, through site visits and liaison with the Leading Hand and Grounds Services Maintenance Manager.





MESNES PARK

Management & Maintenance Plan - January 2014 to January 2019



2014



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Uploaded

Mesnes Park Green Flag Management Plan**January****2014**

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| P | Bill of Quantities | Uploaded |
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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. WLCT, supported by the Friends of Mesnes Park, and a wide range of volunteer organisations, are delighted to submit this Green Flag application for Mesnes Park, Wigan's newly restored Victorian Park.

1.2. The submission of this application also fulfils a commitment made with the Heritage Lottery Fund, and the Big Lottery, to ensure that Mesnes Park achieves the Green Flag award in 2014, following the £6.1 million restoration project, which concluded in 2013.

1.3. The Mesnes Park Management Plan is the formal plan that brings together a 5 year improvement strategy for Mesnes Park following restoration. The Plan takes stock of the externally funded works that have recently been concluded, reviews the current position, including national and local contexts, addresses key issues around the 8 standards that make up the Green Flag assessment and sets out actions and priorities over the next 5 years,

1.4. Since embarking on the restoration project back in 2007, much has changed in the political, economic and organisational landscapes. These changes are pertinent to future plans for all parks and are discussed in the context of Mesnes Park, in the next section.

Mesnes Park Management Plan - Context

1.5. There are three significant contextual issues relating to Mesnes Park. These concern the climate of austerity and funding cuts that are affecting all service areas, organisational changes that impact on WLCT and the re-launch of the park following the HLF funded restoration.

1.6. Each of these issues presents its own challenge. Responding to all three requires a new strategic approach in ensuring that Mesnes Park reaches, and is then maintained and operated to Green Flag standards, and showcases the park following the massive investments made over the past 5 years.

1.7. September 29, 2013, marked the formal “re-opening” of Mesnes Park following the five year £6.1m restoration programme. The redevelopment benefitted from Heritage Lottery and Big Lottery funding, as well as private donations. The Management Plan and the supporting action schedule, make reference to corresponding HLF plans and commitments.

1.8. Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust (WLCT) was formed in April 2003 and was awarded a 10 year contract to manage all indoor and outdoor leisure, parks and cultural facilities on behalf of Wigan Council. Its 10 year contract was extended for 2 years, until March 2015, and at the time of writing, Wigan Council is reviewing service provision. Parks management and maintenance provision falls within the scope of the process. It is essential therefore that this plan enables long term clarity and continuity to meet possible changes to future provision with the park.

Responding to Austerity

1.9. WLCT, whose portfolio of services includes the management and maintenance of parks and greenspaces, has managed its services (and the restoration of Mesnes Park) within a climate of increasing austerity, particularly over the past 3 years. From 2011/12, WLCT’s annual core budget has reduced from £16.5 million to its current level of £10 million - the “parks” proportion of budget reductions stands in the region of £2 million. A further 3% reduction will apply in 2014/15. Achieving these savings has necessitated completely new staffing structures, and in some instances, reduced levels of service.

1.10. It is anticipated that these austerity pressures will continue for at least a further 2 to 3 years, which will result in further reductions in resource availability and changes to how services are delivered. The scale of the budget reductions has also significantly impacted opportunities for further investment into various parks improvement projects.

1.11. WLCT and its Greenspace Services Section have started to address the changes. In Wigan our focus for parks from 2014/15 onwards will be to:

- redesign our horticultural strategy
 - recruit more volunteers and make greater use of their input; and
 - develop a stronger commercial presence
- 1.12. This Management Plan for Mesnes Park has therefore been developed, and will need to be delivered, in the context of a challenging and changing landscape.
- 1.13. The Plan will be a core document in setting out the future direction of Mesnes Park.

The WLCT Parks and Open Space Strategy

- 1.14. A parks strategy, “A Vision for 2020” was approved by Wigan Council in 2008 and was developed following extensive consultation within the then Township Forums. The Parks Strategy is shown at **Appendix B** of our submission. The aim of the strategy was to reverse the direction of travel of the overall parks service, halting a decade of low investment and a decline in the level of resident’s satisfaction with parks.
- 1.15. The strategy achieved a number of key objectives, ie, establishing a priority and ranking of sites, in accordance with the prevailing PPG 17 guidelines. The strategy identified 3 Principal Park Sites – one of which is Mesnes Park – and 18 Township Parks. All of these sites collectively carried the designation of “Key Site”. The strategy identified indicative timescales, and projected capital and revenue costs, for their improvement.
- 1.16. During the period 2008 to 2013 the aims and aspirations set out in the “Vision for 2020” have been realised when measured against the high level objectives and key performance indicators. There has been a positive uplift in parks and open space service, notwithstanding the more recent austerity cutbacks in funding. During this period the service has shown steady, but strategically significant improvements, such as:
- an increase in resident satisfaction, increasing from 62% in 2007 to 70% in 2010

- visitor numbers growing from 75% on 2004 to 80% in 2010
- the attainment and, ultimate, retention of 3 Green Flag Awards, for Alexandra, Jubilee and Pennington Hall Parks
- the achievement of a number of standards and awards by Greenspace Services, including APSE Best Greenspace Services Performer for 2012, ISO 9001, ISO 14001 and OHSAS 18001
- a positive and supporting internal review by a select committee of Wigan Borough councillors, reviewing the management and delivery of parks and open space provision and including a value for money assessment (their final report is attached at [Appendix F](#))

1.17. The original concepts of the “Vision for 2020” still, by and large, hold good today, however it is recognised that the new austerity measures call for new thinking on delivery. A new parks strategy reflecting the changes is planned for production in 2014/15. In particular the source of longer term funding and resourcing will need to be reconsidered.

1.18. Mesnes Park is identified by the Parks Strategy as one of 18 key sites within the Wigan Borough and the principal park of Wigan town centre.

HLF, Big Lottery and benefactor funded improvements

1.19. The management and maintenance plan of Mesnes Park takes into account the major renovations following Heritage Lottery Fund works. A summary of the main infrastructure changes and renovations are as follows:

- The restoration of the Pavilion, the Shelter, the Bandstand, Dalton Steps, the Pulham Feature, Powell Statue and Bowls Pavilion
- The restoration of the Entrance Lodge and the provision of training facilities, which will be made available to community groups
- The installation of the replica Coalbrookdale Fountain

- Renovated footpaths (80%), street furniture and interpretation boards
 - Play facilities and renovation of Playshack
 - A wide range of soft landscape improvements
- 1.20. This management plan is a working document that aims to set a framework for the development of the park. It outlines the existing features and facilities, describes how these are maintained and by whom, and how they are used.
- 1.21. It also sets out an improved management and maintenance regime for the park that will ensure a better standard in the future, by clearer use of resources. It provides a framework for, and informs decision making about, the park's future, and sets out aims and objectives for the site in line with existing policies and consultation with its users.
- 1.22. The Management Plan includes an Action Plan (attached at [Appendix A](#)), which is a dynamic document. In that items will be added / amended and shown as completed. Tasks within the Action Plan will predominantly be allocated to the permanent workforce, although a sub-set of Action Items is allocated to the Friends and Volunteers.
- 1.23. Importantly the Management Plan sets out a new strategic direction for the management and funding of parks.

Content, Structure & Preparation of the Plan

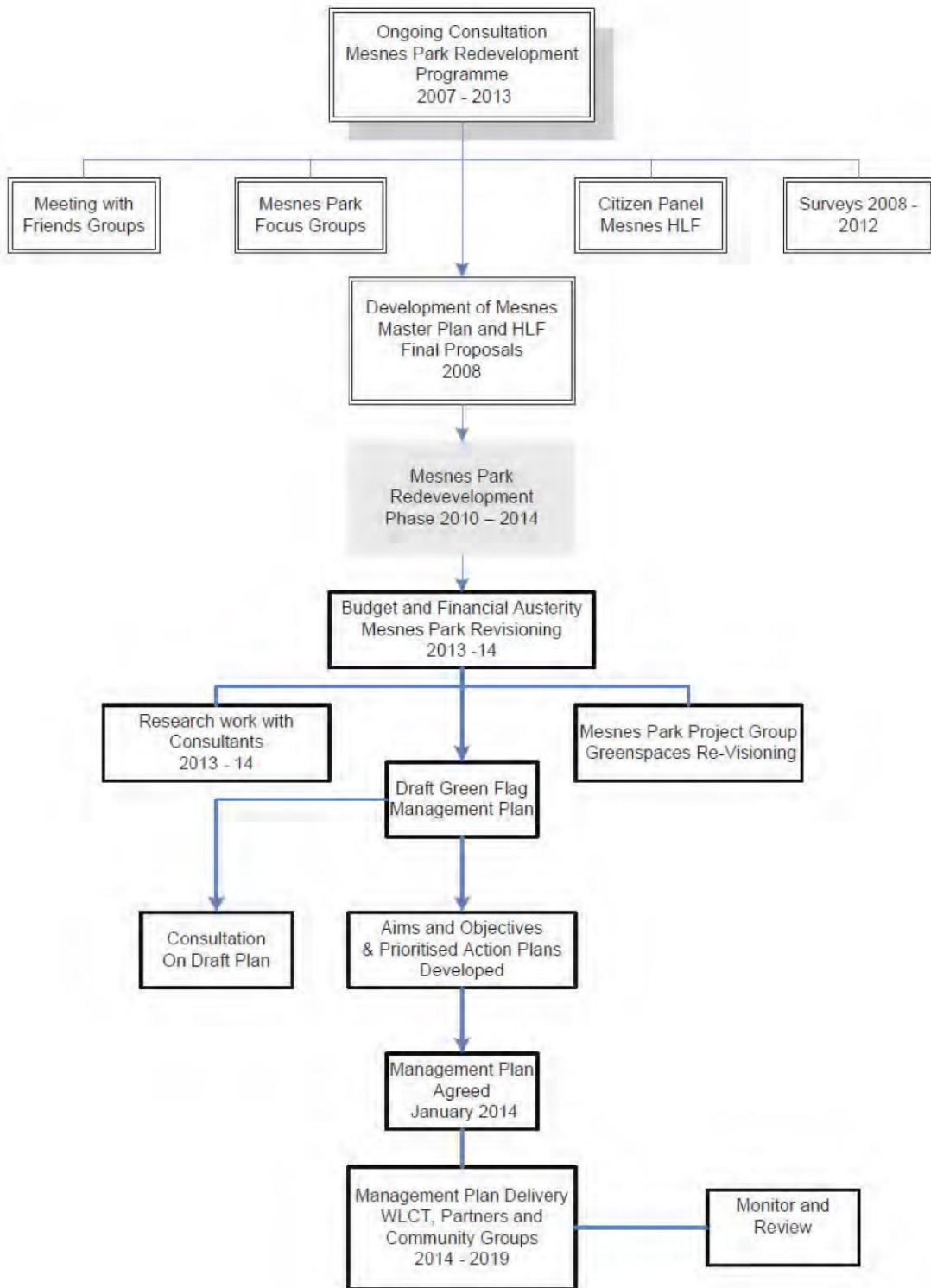
- 1.24. This Management Plan has been prepared in consultation with stakeholders, Friends of Mesnes Park and those who have an interest in the park. It is informed by the ongoing work of the Park Revisioning Project Group, which is re-visioning provision with a focus on increased voluntarisation and an ultimate aim of zero subsidy.
- 1.25. The Management Plan development process has involved staff from the former Parks Activities Team (now merged within a broader based WLCT Activities

Team); Greenspace Services staff, including the Parks Development Officer and Greenspace Services Operational Teams; Facilities Management, Elected Members, strategic partners, members of the public and the Friends of Mesnes Park.

1.26. The Management Plan will be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis, led by the Parks Development Officer. The Plan will be updated following the annual review. Any comments and feedback from any formal 'walk arounds' will also form part of this review process.

1.27. The following page identifies a schematic diagram showing a timeline from the development of the original Mesnes Park HLF Master Plan, through to this current plan.

Process of compiling the Management Plan, see diagram



General information



2 GENERAL INFORMATION

2.1 This section provides a general overview of the management structure of the park, in context with the vision and objectives of WLCT and any policies that it aims towards.

Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust (WLCT)

2.2 WLCT was formed on the 1st April 2003 from the former Wigan Council Leisure and Cultural Services Department. WLCT works in partnership with Wigan Council in providing a wide range of leisure and cultural opportunities, with a remit to improve, develop and expand the range of opportunities provided for both residents and visitors to the borough. WLCT is maintained by external funding and income generation that includes an annual 'Community Service Fee (CSF)' from Wigan Council. In addition, buildings and facilities are leased from the Council. A board of Trustees has the responsibility for ensuring WLCT is managed appropriately and adheres to its objects, set out with the Charity Commission.

2.3 WLCT's priorities also reflect Wigan Council's Corporate Strategy. This has three themes of: Confident Places, Confident People and a Confident Council. WLCT directly supports a number of the long term outcomes that are identified in the strategy. In particular WLCT helps deliver on programmes that support employment, business development, environmental sustainability, maximising green spaces, health promotion, volunteering, capacity building, reducing antisocial behaviour and delivering on the Activity and Leisure Strategy.

WLCT Vision & Objectives

2.4 The overarching vision strapline of WLCT is:

“Getting Everyone to be Active, Creative and Healthy”

2.5 In the pursuit and achievement of this vision, it is necessary to state the organisation's strategic aims. These have been defined as follows:

- To have successfully sustained, developed and expanded the business
- To have shaped and prioritised service provision to meet the strategic aims of our partners
- Be a leading edge performer, delivering quality services to impact positively on peoples lives
- To be an organisation that lives and breathes it values and delivers on it's promises
- Through investment in our people and stakeholders be consistently improving performance

National and Regional Context

2.6 The national debate about the future of parks has its origins in the late 1980's / early 1990's. "*Parks in Crisis*" was a frequent headline, first in the horticultural and technical press, but eventually picked up by a wider audience. A combination of long-term revenue cuts, lack of investment, and competition from other leisure offers had brought about this "crisis".

2.7 This situation still continues, decades later. A report by Nesta "Rethinking Parks" published in November 2013, has identified that a 60% fall in public sector funding for non statutory services, like parks, will take place over the next decade. Reductions in parks staff, rangers, gardeners and other green space professionals has been taking place nationally. Regionally, in the North West, many local authorities have now disbanded the formerly traditional park ranger service.

2.8 Despite the risk to future public funding, parks and open spaces remain the most heavily used part of the leisure offer – national surveys show 46% use / visit them more than once a week. Municipal parks are free to visit and this promotes their accessibility to all. They provide a huge opportunity for local authorities,

and their associated organisations, to lay on events and activities that considerably enhance the quality of life and health in communities. Within the Wigan Borough 80% of residents say they have visited a park or open space within the past 12 months, and satisfaction is also high - we plan to tap into this enthusiasm to develop and promote our services.

2.9 The Nesta report adds that *“we need new visions of how parks can be managed and maintained, how they can generate income and use resources differently, how they can empower communities and drive social action”*

2.10 Any Parks Management plan would be incomplete without consideration of effective resource management, climate change and sustainability. WLCT and its partners within the wider Wigan Borough are committed to the Wigan Borough Climate Change Strategy and implementing the Local Authority Carbon Management Programme.

Local Context

2.11 The Metropolitan Borough of Wigan stretches over 77 square miles and its current boundaries date back to the reorganisation of local government in 1974. Across the borough a dispersed settlement pattern of small market towns and villages situated in rural settings subsequently developed. Industrialisation built on and blurred these settlement patterns but did not obliterate them. These historical developments have left a legacy of urban townships and villages that have retained their unique character and local pride.

2.12 Within Wigan Borough the shape of the built-up areas has been very much influenced by the history of coal mining and related heavy industries, overlaying the earlier agricultural settlements. Each local community has its own park/recreation site that is typically small in scale. Local communities in Wigan feel proud of their parks and this can be evidenced by the increasing number of ‘Friends of Groups’.

2.13 The existing Parks Strategy set out to prioritise investment of resources in parks and open spaces in Wigan. The Parks Strategy identified key sites

across the borough and proposed a rationale for sustainable development, by concentrating resources and creating a management plan for each of the sites.

2.14 In October 2013 a new Open Spaces Sport and Recreation Survey was commissioned by Wigan Council. This is a comprehensive audit of the Borough's open space which looks at condition, quality and provision. Details of this survey will be made public during 2014. It is anticipated that the results of the survey will influence the delivery of a new Parks Strategy.

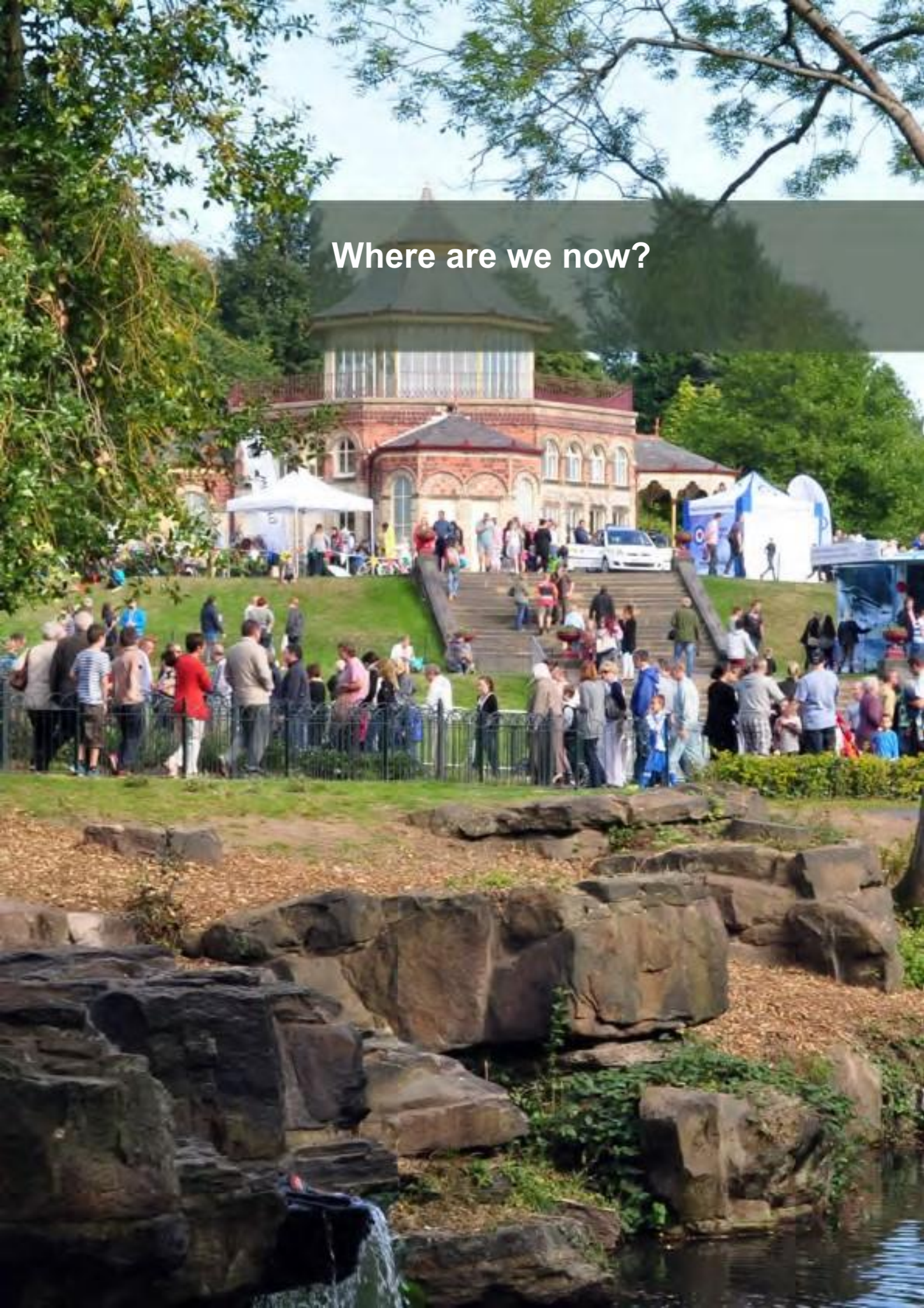
2.15 A further main driver in the local context is the gap in health disparities that exist between the most affluent and deprived communities in the Wigan Borough. Parks and open spaces remain a valuable resource in encouraging access to exercise and activities for all age groups. The Action Plan reflects this critical requirement.

Other Policies and reports Considered in this Master Plan

2.16 The following policies have been taken into consideration when preparing this management plan: (see appendix or website for more information)

| Strategy / Policy Document | Where this can be accessed |
|--|--|
| WLCT Parks Strategy | Appendix B |
| Mesnes Park Revisioning | Appendix C |
| Mesnes Park HLF Documents | Due to the extensive catalogue of HLF Plans these are available on request |
| WLCT Corporate Strategy | Appendix D |
| Wigan Borough Climate Change Strategy 2011 | http://www.wigan.gov.uk |
| Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for the Borough of Wigan – 2011 | http://www.wigan.gov.uk |
| Wigan Council Corporate Strategy | Appendix R |
| Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA) | http://www.dwp.gov.uk/ |

Where are we now?



3 WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Introduction

3.1 This section of the plan describes the current position at Mesnes Park. It provides an audit of the site from the perspective of the Green Flag criteria.

Site Description

3.2 Mesnes Park occupies a 12 hectare site immediately to the north-west of Wigan town centre. Its boundaries are formed by a railway line to the west, Parsons Walk and Mesnes Park Terrace to the south, to the east Wigan and Leigh College and the former Gidlow cotton works and Bridgeman Terrace with its row of good quality houses of similar date to the Park. It has a good range of recreational facilities, opportunities for children's play and for experiencing excellent vistas and good quality soft landscaping.

3.3 Mesnes Park considerably enhances the urban townscape, and has an important visual impact on the Mesnes Park Conservation Area.

3.4 The park has an active, constituted Friends of Mesnes Park (FOMP) group which has been in existence for 15 years, consisting of members of the local voluntary community and residents. The "Friends" have helped in the future development and management of the park. WLCT now needs to work closely with this group to refocus resources, build local capacity within the group and look at income generating opportunities.

3.5 Park facilities consist of three bowling greens and pavilion, informal grass pitch, basketball area, two tennis courts, children's play area, bandstand/teen meet area. The park provides toilet facilities within the Café Pavilion. There are areas of formal lawn, annual bedding displays and informal wooded areas.

The park also houses a Greenspace Services depot.

3.6 As mentioned previously, Mesnes Park has seven Grade II listed features. It has a lake, formal gardens and areas for play. The main features that have been restored now include interpretation panels to enable visitors to learn

about the heritage of the park. The WLCT Heritage Section and the Marketing section actively promote the facilities. A diverse programme of events will also be able to highlight the attractions of Mesnes and increase visitor numbers.

3.7 The Base Plan below shows the current layout of the park, post renovation works.



Mesnes Park- Base Plan (2014)

Park History (and development)

3.8 Mesnes Park is Wigan's first municipal park, opened on the 6th August 1878. It safeguards open recreational space from development and provided a 'green lung' in an otherwise industrial town. It occupies 12 hectares of former manorial demesnes land known as the 'Mesnes' adjoining the town centre. The design

of the park was the result of a competition won by John McClean of Castle Donnington.

3.9 McClean design utilised the sloping site to create terraces surmounted by a pavilion, overlooking a formal garden. An ornamental lake was created from former marl pits and provision was made for recreational areas. Sport and play facilities were added to the park at a later date within the design framework and the garden areas were renowned for their bedding displays and horticultural excellence.

3.10 To date the park retains the framework and features of the original design by John McClean. These include the entrance gates and lodge, Dalton steps, pavilion, ornamental gardens, walks, lake and rockwork and subsequent features such as the bandstand. Further details can be found in the Conservation Management Plan which was included in the original HLF application ([Appendix G](#)).

Location

Address: Mesnes Park, Mesnes Park Terrace, Wigan, WN1 1TU
Ward: Wigan Central
Township: Wigan North
Ordnance Survey: SJ65299
Size: 12 hectares

3.11 Access to Mesnes Park is as follows:

- By Car: At J6 M61, turn right on Dicconson Rd, follow signs to the Town Centre and Wigan Pier at Wigan Market take a right onto Mesnes Street and take the first left into Mesnes Park Terrace and the main entrance can be seen.
- From the M6, Junction 23, follow A49 Warrington Road. At the roundabout take the right hand lane into Poolstock road. Follow this road until the end and then take a left onto Riverway. At the end of the road take a left hand turn onto Powell Street which continues onto Northway. At Wigan Market take a left onto Mesnes Street and take the first left into Mesnes Park Terrace and the main entrance will be in view.
- By public transport: Most buses stop at Wigan Town Centre and the Park is a 5- 10 minute walk from the bus station.
- Train: Wigan Wallgate and Wigan Western (approx 0.6 mile From Station to Park).
- Parking: The perimeter around Mesnes Park operates pay and display and the main Wigan town centre car park is a 10 minute walk on foot.

Ownership

3.12 On the 28th March 2003, the management of Mesnes Park was transferred to WLCT by virtue of a Transfer agreement between Wigan Borough Council and the Trust.

3.13 The red site boundary indicates the land that is owned by Wigan Council. The park forms part of the Mesnes Park Conservation Area, marked by a bluehashed line on the plan.



By-Laws

3.14 The existing by-laws for Mesnes Park were introduced in 1922. A review of the by-laws is well over due. This will require assistance from Wigan Council's Legal and Property Services and resources from within the park services team. Enforcement of existing or new by-laws will be considered as part of a future review.

3.15 Since 1st October 2000, it has been an offence under the Dogs (fouling of land) Act 1996, for an individual not to clean up if their dog fouls in a public place. Park Keepers undertake an educational role by issuing information to dog

owners. Training in the issuing of fixed penalty notices, and the provision of information about the law and responsible dog ownership, commenced.

The Park Keepers gather information and monitor the site then liaise with the Council's Animal Warden Service who is responsible for enforcing the by-law.

Covenant

3.16 The Entrance Lodge has a covenant set upon the building usage from the Diocese of Liverpool which specifies 'acceptable' uses for the building. The covenant, stipulates that the future use of the lodge should compliment park activities. To comply with the covenant conditions. The building will be used for a mix use of community, office and exhibition space.

Restrictions

3.17 Mesnes Park is situated within a Conservation area. Any development or change in the conservation area requires consent from Wigan Council's Planning Department.

3.18 The Mesnes Park Conservation Area was designated in December 2006. As in all conservation areas, the trees are protected by a blanket tree preservation order.

Character zones

3.19 Mesnes Park has been split into seven Character Zones listed below, these are represented on the plan below. The character zones consist of: the Formal Gardens, Sports Zone, Informal Recreation Area, Play zone, Lake Area, Rose Garden and depot.



Formal Gardens

3.20 The Formal Gardens consist of several intricate patterns of bedding situated at each side of the main drive. The wide main driveway that leads to Dalton's steps and elevated pavilion building dissects this area. The lodge building is located at the main entrance of the park, at the junction of Bridgeman Terrace and Mesnes Park Terrace. The building is now currently occupied after being in a poor condition for 20 years.

3.21 The formal lawns and beds provide seasonal colour and the rhododendrons still exhibit the remains of the scroll design of the original planting. The design is reminiscent of a parterre, which perhaps was intended to be viewed from the pavilion. The bronze statue of Sir Francis Powell punctuates the landscape, and you often find visitors rubbing his now shiny shoe for good luck. The shelter has been restored and acts a shelter for events and an interpretation point.

3.22 Beyond the pavilion which is the focal point of the formal gardens, the bandstand is set within a circular promenade and surrounded by vegetation. The soft landscaping layout presents the vision of the 1878 park designer John McLean. His intention to produce a 'picturesque' landscape with limited internal views, inspired by the poor quality of the surrounding scenery. The design strived to create a rugged and irregular natural landscape of largely native trees and plants. The landscape of Mesnes Park although embodying the picturesque principles as its core-planting made use of a decorative or 'gardenesque' margins by using many exotic imported plants and flowers of the day. The park has a rare example of McLean's formal bedding treatment of the flats and terraces that viewed from the pavilion embrace the picturesque principles of viewing a high main object from a low vantage point with enclosing lateral screens and selected high screens.

Sports zone

3.23 This linear zone runs parallel to the railway embankment and comprises of 3 crown green bowling greens, 8 Tarmac tennis courts and 1 basketball court. The facilities offer good views for spectators due to their low position in the park. The greens are in good condition but are not used to their full potential. A few years ago a skate park was created but this was decommissioned shortly after it was installed, this is where the basketball court is now located. This area is the area which was outside any HLF funding and therefore is now in need of updating. WLCT will seek capital funding and commercial development to enhance this area.

Informal Recreation Area

3.24 This is a grassed area, edged with mature trees and shrubs between the central path and the former Wigan & Leigh College - Pagefield Campus which has relocated to a new building some 200m along the park boundary. A drainage scheme implemented in 2000 has enabled the area to be used for sports and events. There are the remains of a tarmac surface of a former play area by the

north entrance of the park. 5 a side posts are used frequently and park staff direct users to this site when informal football is being played on the formal lawns. A planning application has been approved for the back of this area to redevelop an old mill site into residential properties. At present, this development is on hold.

Play Zone

3.25 This area includes the 0-5's and 6-11's play area and the play shack. It has recently been completely refurbished and re-landscaped to provide brand new play facilities and a flexible facility in terms of the Playshack.

3.26 The total area which can now be used for play has expanded. It includes open green space to be used as informal picnic area. The play area sits within the larger Mesnes Park and includes an existing play shack which has been restored as a flexible activity space.

3.27 The existing play shack is orientated on an axis with the bandstand and pavilion. This axis has been restated with the opening up of the space around the play shack and the orientation of footpaths. New footpaths have been positioned to link three main access points; the main promenade to the pavilion, the bandstand access pathway and the sports arena pathway. To allow for the steep topography the routes of footpaths within the play area have been positioned to follow a shallow gradient. All paths have been laid to gradients within DDA guidelines. Additional access from the sports arena footpath to the play shack will provide further ease of access for disabled visitors.

3.28 Hard landscaping: Tarmac footpaths provide smooth safe accessible routes within the play area. Each piece of equipment has been set in additional tarmac areas, which are linked by tarmac footpaths that will provide a safe and level access to each piece of equipment.

3.29 Soft Landscaping: A programme to re-introduce and restore a planting scheme that reflects the original planting themes is part of the parks restoration plan.

Mature trees that establish the boundary and provide a screen between the bandstand and the play area have been retained. New and renovated shrub planting will enhance these boundaries ([Appendix I](#)).

Lake area

3.30 The lake area is ornamental and is very popular with visitors. The lake has three islands and supports a variety of wildfowl. As per the lake management plan, two islands have been replanted to provide both shelter and evergreen colour. An incomplete low privet hedge separates the grass verges surrounding the lake. The lake has a Pulham & Sons rock feature, which has been cleared of vegetation and is due to be restored later this year. Trees and vegetation overhang the lake in some areas and obscure views. A grass verge and footpath separate the lake with Park Road/Parsons Walk. This was planted with crocus bulbs to celebrate the Millennium. Inclined beds have been constructed at the entrance of Parsons Walk entrance which provides improved but limited visual impact to visitors as they enter the park.

Rose garden

3.31 The garden was restored in 2003 and offers a quiet area for relaxation within the park. Trees and rhododendrons surround the garden but have been reduced in height to improve the security and to improve natural surveillance from the Health Trust's Thomas Linacre Out-patients building. The roses in the beds have been replaced and new rose frames erected. The Friends Group aspire to create a replica of the missing central feature, a stone sundial plinth and dial for the garden.

Depot

3.32 The maintenance depot historically housed the facilities for servicing the park and the surrounding town centre green spaces. Facilities included glasshouses, potting shed, storage, vehicle garaging, parks head gardener office, staff welfare facilities and small nursery area containing cold frames. The depot

supported, at its peak around 22 staff and contributed to the park's sustainability by growing its own annual bedding. The decline of the depot began with the commencement of the Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) era, where staffing levels were reduced and externally grown annual bedding became more cost effective than locally grown provision. The glass houses and cold frames were demolished to remove the maintenance liability as no effective use was available. Currently the depot area is larger than the need of the park and the surplus area has become a storage area which is detracting from the overall park appearance. Access to the depot is an issue as service vehicles need to drive through the park get to the location. This issue was looked at as part of a recent options appraisal into the future location of the depot. The conclusion was that the future of the Depot being deferred until such a point as when capital funding becomes available.

Character Zone Assessment

Formal Gardens

3.33 Within the formal area of the Park a new soft landscaping scheme was implemented which saw the recreation of bigger beds within the main heritage core of the park to recreate the original intention of the designer John McClean ([Appendix I](#))

3.34 The Pavilion was restored, complete with ironwork, in April 2012. This now houses the Frederick's Ice Cream concession which is a café for the local community selling ice cream and pizzas and opening late in the summer months. There is also an outside terrace and lighting.

3.35 The bandstand has been completely restored and officially opened in April 2012.

3.36 Events and activities can now take place under the new shelter late into the evening due to the restoration and the addition of lighting.

3.37 September 2013 has seen the completion of a Phase 2 restoration scheme which has included the restoration of Entrance Lodge (to turn it into a much needed

community hub, exhibition space and training centre), the bowls Pavilion, Sir Francis Sharpe Powell, The Pulham Feature and the Coalbrookdale Fountain. Infrastructure improvements to footpaths and the addition of new benches and bins have complemented the scheme.

Sports Zone

3.38 The crazy golf course has recently been taken out to accommodate a concession within the sports zone. The newly restored Bowling Pavilion is part of the Sports Zone. Six tennis courts have had to be shut due to the surfacing being too poor. WLCT are looking for external funding for this area, which will look to be redesigned based on consultation of the local community and income generation opportunities to sustain the park business plan ([Appendix L](#)).

Informal Recreation Area

3.39 This is large field at present, which suffers from poor drainage. If this could be alleviated it would enable more regular cutting frequency which would improve its overall condition enabling it to be utilised more. The feasibility of this will be looked at for 2014/15.

Playzone

3.40 As the Playzone has been restored the primary objective is to utilise the area as much as possible. There are two new play areas, one being a younger children's play area (5-11 years old) and one for older children (11-16). A community group (the Pensioner's Link) has raised funding to now install 'Adult gym' equipment. This will consist of five pieces of equipment located in the Playzone.

Lake Area

3.41 The Lake Management Plan will be implemented with the help of volunteers. In addition, the Soft Landscaping Plan takes in work to remove trees and

rhododendron and open up vistas to enable the restoration of the Pulham rockwork.

Rose Garden

3.42 This area was self managed by Coops (a community group with complex learning difficulties) once a week. However, due to government cuts, the group are not able to come anymore to manage this area. We are looking at possibilities of trying to get the group working back in the Park but, in the meantime our Greenspace Services team will oversee the maintenance.

Park Assets and Main Features

3.43 The Playshack is a hexagonal building in the middle of the play area. It is a flexible space which is able to accommodate up to 30 children and complements the ethos of the new play area. It was completely refurbished in 2010.

The Pavilion

3.44 The Pavilion is the most iconic feature within the Park and is Italianate in design. The building is used as a café and contains toilet provision for 4 people plus a disabled toilet. Designed by W H Fletcher the pavilion was opened in 1880. Octagonal in plan and approximately 14 metres across, the building has two storeys with a central glazed lantern. Polygonal single storey wings project on northern, eastern and western axes. Its south eastern elevation features a lofty 5 sided open porch supported on twisted cast iron columns with foliated open work brackets forming decorative spandrels. The porch and terrace offer an elevated prospect over the formal gardens.

Bandstand

3.45 The bandstand is listed Grade II listed. It is an open-sided structure, octagonal in plan, with tall in-swept roof. Located at a lower level 70 metres to the northwest of the pavilion. Set on a slightly raised plinth, the bandstand is enclosed by a

low hedge following the octagonal plan, surrounded by a circular paved area of about 55 metres overall diameter.

Shelter

3.46 An open sided 'Tudor style' shelter is located on the loop path approximately 30 metres to the east of the ornamental pond. Originally housing toilets this structure dates from around 1936. Constructed in brick with half timbered twin gables with fascia boards and plain tiled roof. The building was in a state of disrepair and barricaded off. The toilets have been demolished and the building recently restored.

Entrance Lodge

3.47 Adjacent to the main entrance gateway, the Swiss Chalet style lodge, listed grade II, was constructed in 1878. In 1928 the building was extended by the addition of a two storey wing.

Bowling Pavilion

3.48 The original bowls pavilion (Number 1) was situated adjacent to the southernmost bowling green but this fell into disrepair and eventually this timber structure collapsed and was removed. The site is now vacant. Bowling pavilion Number 2 was constructed in the 1920's and is currently used to service all three greens. This was refurbished in 2013.

Dalton Steps

3.49 The Dalton steps were erected in 1880 and constructed of sandstone ashlar and originally had terra cotta ornamental urns placed at the landing pedestals. The Dalton Steps were restored in 2012. The Powell Monument is located mid way along the formal axis. The bronze life size statue is of Sir Francis Sharp Powell, one of the town's long serving MP's, in the late 19th century and early 20th centuries. Generations of Wiganers rub his foot for good luck, a tradition which has gone on for years. The statue was restored in 2013.

Pulham Feature

3.50 At the northern edge of the lake is a substantial rockery originally incorporating a waterfall, which was designed and installed at a cost of £500 by Messrs Pulham and Sons, in association with the construction of the lake. The waterfall is now fully operational with rock formations, channels and basins remain. The waterfall was restored in 2013.

The Coalbrookdale Fountain

3.51 The fountain, which stood at the northernmost point of the formal axis, was an original feature of the park which was removed in 1914. It was a large ornamental cast iron fountain supplied by Coalbrookdale Company and stood 4.26 metres and had a diameter of 7.6 metres. It has since been replaced in 2013.

3.52 Building Assessment: The park buildings are inspected and assessed regularly by the Trust's Park Keeper's. Maintenance requests are forwarded to the landlord, Wigan Council via its arms length management service Norfolk Property Services Northwest Ltd (NPS). Currently the buildings in the depot are in a poor state of repair and in need of a new roof and internal refurbishment. As with all buildings in public places there is some vandalism; that is managed through timely repairs and through choice of appropriate materials. Generally, all buildings (apart from in the Depot) within the Park have been refurbished or restored within the last three years and are in a good condition.

3.53 The Playshack was restored in 2010. This building is a flexible building and we are hoping that multiple groups will be happy to use it. Currently a new Community Interested Company (CIC) has leased the building out. The CIC is a training company who have daily craft events on, in the middle of the play area.

3.54 The Pavilion (Grade II listed) has recently been completely restored (April 2012) both internally and externally. The building continues to have a concession (Fredrick's Ice Cream) downstairs and overspill seating and exhibition space

upstairs behind a glass balustrade. The hard standing area outside the building has new terracing for park users to enjoy the historic vistas while being able to be served quality refreshments.

3.55 The Bandstand has been completely restored to its former glory. It now stands between the Playshack and the Pavilion and new additions to the Grade II listed feature includes lighting and electricity. This will allow performances to take place without the need of a generator and it is hoped that a big event will take place each month with smaller community events interspersed between these times.

3.56 The Shelter structure as you approach the main drive has been completely restored and a new roof installed. It now contains roller shutters which are opened and shut each day and contains an exhibition space where people are able to see the Friends of Mesnes Park, A People's History Exhibition.

3.57 The Entrance Lodge is at the main entrance of the Park and now will be the community hub of the Park and will contain Park staff, information staff, exhibition space and a new build training centre. The Entrance Lodge has been restored as part of Phase 2 with the addition of a new build training centre which will be used for community and staff training.

3.58 The Bowling Pavilion was restored in 2012 to create a more flexible space for a variety of groups along with a separate room which is able to be used by someone to run a children's concession from. We are currently looking into this possibility.

3.59 The main entrance, plus all four remaining entrances, have been restored as part of the Phase 2 scheme.



Above – The renovated Bowling Pavilion

Below – the renovated Entrance Lodge



Play Provision

3.60 The new play area was installed in 2010 and the equipment covers age ranges from 18 months to teenagers, and where possible is inclusive.

3.61 The under 5's area contains an inclusive rocking donkey, a six seat inclusive roundabout, a sand play unit with a wheelchair accessible sand table, an inclusive free-standing wide slide, a seesaw, a four seat swing frame fitted with an inclusive boat seat and a large multi-climber with attachment slides and play panels.

3.62 The area for age six and upwards contains an inclusive nest swing, a large inclusive spinning bowl, a large climbing frame, a large seesaw, an overhead rotator and a four flat seat swings.

3.63 In addition, there is a large open space which has been created to provide informal play opportunities within the play area. Further development will evaluate the installation of picnic benches here.

Play Provision Assessment

3.64 The play area has had a large amount of investment to bring it up to current standards. Its open location at the back of the park is popular with park users who feel that it is safer. The area is fenced to prevent access by dogs. There is toddler play provision and teenage provision. Mesnes Park is fortunate to have benefitted from such a development opportunity.

Sports provision

3.65 Mesnes Park provides the following sports facilities:

- Three crown bowling greens
- One large field for informal kick about area
- Two hard surfaced tennis courts (six currently out of use (2012))
- Basketball on hard surface

- Outdoor gym equipment (five pieces)

Sports Assessment

3.66 Mesnes Park has a range of sports facilities. The standard of the playing facilities is mixed. The bowling greens are in good condition but, several of the tennis courts are out of use due to poor safety surfacing and the perimeter fence to the hard surface sports area is in very poor condition. The poor condition of the 'top field' results in football played on the bowling greens as these are seen as a superior playing surface.

Infrastructure

3.67 The main infrastructure features of the park are;

- Footpaths and roadways (Pathway Assessment)
- Boundary treatment
- Gates and physical access
- Drainage

Infrastructure Assessment

3.68 The infrastructure of the Park has been recently updated due to 2 phases of restoration. The scheme has led to 80% of footpaths (primary and secondary) throughout the Park being completely rebuilt and resurfaced. Boundary railings near all major entrances have been recast and replaced. The main entrance gates have been refurbished and the other entrances have had work done to install new gates at the four other entrances. The boundary of the park is of varying materials in a variety of conditions. Generally the boundary is secure, but there are areas to the rear of the Park that is in poor condition. Gates are again of varying styles and condition. Physical access is generally level and in good condition. The Park suffers from a lack of drainage in some areas, however, some of this has been addressed in the restoration scheme.

Landscape

3.69 Generally there is good spatial definition as set out by John McClean of the various zones and enclosure of the park. Limited management, plant growth and natural regeneration have led to the loss of plant layers and in some instances compromised intended views. Recent tree planting has not always been sympathetic in location or species selection.

Landscape Assessment

3.70 WLCT has produced a 10 year Soft Landscaping Plan ([Appendix I](#)) which looks at restoring some of the main historical vistas which is in accordance with the original design of the park by John McClean.

Visitor information

3.71 Previously we had included an annual Citizen Panel survey and performance data on visitor perceptions and data on sites/frequency of visits, undertaken twice per year. These were undertaken from 2007 through to 2011, after which they were curtailed due to austerity measures and a survey summary is shown at [Appendix E](#). During 2013 a one off visitor satisfaction survey was undertaken.

3.72 We recognise the importance of customer feedback and consultation data. During 2014/15 we will explore alternative ways of gathering this data, for example, through the Friends Group, volunteers, public service students as part of their coursework and student placements.

3.73 Satisfaction surveys indicate that parks are still well thought of, but there is a wide spread of the ratings both between parks in different locations and between some of the features and facilities within them.

3.74 Most public consultation exercises place parks and green spaces at or near the top of the community agenda.

Stakeholders

- 3.75 Many stakeholder groups and individuals are involved with the park: WLCT's Greenspaces Team, Active Living team, Play Team, Heritage Section, Wigan Youth Service, Planning Department and neighbouring residents of the park and the Friends Group etc
- 3.76 All stakeholders will be represented either in the Friends of Mesnes Park or the Mesnes Park Stakeholders Group (now ceased). There have been many opportunities for all stakeholders to have input into the future development of the park. Now the development has ended, we will look to work with the Stakeholders Group in a different way.
- 3.77 Consultation has been carried out over a 5 year period with a variety of Stakeholders. The stakeholder meetings were every three months or when any significant information regarding the project needs to be imparted.
- 3.78 Currently, the Community Information Officers who are based in the lodge at Mesnes Park provide an information function to drop-in visitors. They are able to provide information about Mesnes Park and the restoration project.
- 3.79 Additional to this will be consultation that is carried out for new developments through the planning process or more specifically with users; for example off site consultation on the development of the sports facilities.

4 ASSESSMENT OF MESNES PARK FOLLOWING THE GREEN FLAG CRITERIA

- 4.1 At present Mesnes Park has five entrances: Walkden Avenue, Bridgeman Terrace, Mesnes Park Terrace, Parson's Walk and Park Avenue (See location map) Mesnes Park Terrace is used as the main entrance for visitors. Phase 2 of the restoration project has seen enhancements to all entrances to the park which has improved them aesthetically and be consistent in design throughout. The main entrance has been fully restored with new iron and stone work.

A Welcoming Place

4.2 Whilst looking at improving entrances to the park, design and future maintenance has been considered. As the gates of the park are not locked, one gate from each entranceway is left open, which provides easy access for disabled users and park users with prams but halts vehicles from entering the park.

4.3 The visibility to the park has been improved. Selected trees on the boundary of the park were removed (this was informed through a recent tree survey) and other vegetation in the park was also removed to open up historic vistas into the park. This has provided additional security in the park.

4.4 The presence of on-site Greenspace Services staff at Mesnes Park, makes for a welcoming environment for park users. The presence of on-site staff ensures that inspections and defects are picked up more easily. In addition, the maintenance in the park is generally clean and with the presence of a Duty Gardener on-site, it ensures that any unprecedented untidiness can be easily cleaned up.

Signage

4.5 The Parks signage and interpretation was reviewed as part of the Phase 2. All signage has now been installed.

4.6 The design and quality of information provided at present has been greatly improved. The type of information which has been presented has also been controlled, the park may benefit from a limited amount of information but displayed all over the park to ensure the message gets across to park users.

4.7 Phase 2 of the restoration scheme will look at the design and location of street furniture and will look at an appropriate management regime. An internal audit was carried out to ensure that there was a requirement for seating where new benches were installed.

Good and Safe Access

4.8 The Master Plan has been developed to consider not just physical but, all other access barriers. The Access Plan looks at sensory, intellectual, social, cultural and financial barriers. To create a welcoming environment, each entrance now includes information about the Park's history and the park event programme.

4.9 Due to it's location in relation to the train and bus station Mesnes Park can be easily accessed on foot, by train and bus. Pay and display car parking is available on three of the four boundaries of the park. Two large town centre car parks are found within a ten minute walk of the park.

4.10 A new cycle route has been proposed which goes from the town centre to a new link path through the park. The route could be used to encourage use in the new sports zone from the mill building development and from local residents who live in Beech Hill, who could access the site via Walkden Avenue, past the sports zone and directly through the park.

4.11 The parks current vehicle policy is being implemented to reduce vehicle movement within the park. In addition there was debate around whether the depot should move to the periphery of the park to reduce vehicles having to move through the park to service it. It has been decided following extensive consultation and due to lack of funds, it will be best to keep the depot in its current location. This issue will affect the vehicle policy and risk assessment for the park.

Equal Access for All

4.12 Access to the park for people with mobility problems is good due to large majority of footpaths within the Park being resurfaced. Most of the entrances are level, making it easy to enter and exit the park environment. WLCT has worked closely with the Access Group to ensure that disabled access has been fully considered throughout the design process. Many developments regarding equal access within the project have been considered. A gold standard hygiene suite and an adult hoist in the lodge has full DDA accessible changing facilities. Also, a new footpath path provides an easier circular route through the park for people with

mobility problems. All these measures contribute to a park that provides a welcoming place for users to relax.

Healthy, Safe and Secure

4.13 The gates at Mesnes Park are not locked (closed halfway to prevent vehicles entering the park) . Facilities which are open for the general public include the Pavilion (on a daily basis) which includes a café and toilets and the Play shack (which is open for educational sessions and for community use when required).

4.14 The park is visually checked daily for litter, detritus and visual defects by the Greenspace Services on site staff or duty gardener. Any necessary remedial work is carried out immediately or referred to the relevant department for prompt attention.

4.15 The Playground Maintenance Team carries out weekly checks of the play equipment. Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA) conducts a full independent annual check of all play equipment.

4.16 The maintenance request system has two levels of priority for repairs P1 and P2. P1 repairs are carried out within one working day, P2 repairs with 5 working days. However larger repairs are costed and included in the planned maintenance programme.

4.17 Information boards have been installed giving details of nearest toilets and other contacts for park visitors.

4.18 A full Arboricultural Survey was carried out in 2011. Emergency and routine tree works are carried out as they are identified.

4.19 In addition, regular inspections are carried out by the Trust's Greenspace Services Officers in conjunction with the Area Manager to identify improvement work. Examples of this work include small alterations to the soft landscape; removal of low branches to allow safe passage by pedestrians.

4.20 Programmed soft landscape maintenance is regularly reviewed in terms of ensuring a safe and secure environment for park users.

4.21 Personal security / site security - Mesnes Park has a duty gardener on site to provide a visible presence and point of contact for park users creating a safe feel to the area. The Greenspace Services Depot also adds to the security of the park during working hours.

4.22 Health and Safety Policy All work and operations within the park are carried out in accordance with WLCT's and Wigan Council's Health and Safety Policy. Greenspace Services Teams must, throughout the practice of all services, have full regard for the safety of all persons, services and members of the public. Working at all times in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and all regulations and codes of practice, which supplement the Act, e.g. COSHH, RIDDOR, PPC, and EC Directives. The Health and Safety manual is held in the Greenspace Services depot.

4.23 Risk assessments for operations within parks have been carried out. All staff are aware of the risk assessments.

4.24 WLCT regularly reviews health and safety procedures and takes account of new corporate directives, government guidelines and manufacturers (and suppliers) recommendations.

4.25 Dog Fouling - WLCT welcomes responsible dog owners in parks, with the exception of children's play areas. Dog owners are actively encouraged to take dog mess taken home and disposed of. Biodegradable bags are available from the lodge (at a small cost) to members of the public along with information about the Dog Fouling law. If there is a persistent problem, the Council's Dog Wardens are asked to attend, with a view to informing the public and issuing fixed penalty notices where appropriate. Dog Fouling signs are displayed around the park.

Well maintained and clean

4.26 Mesnes Park is litter picked daily and inspected weekly by the Trust's Greenspace Services Service. Ample litter bins are provided and emptied daily as part of the duty gardener's role.

- 4.27 Graffiti with offensive or abusive content is removed as a matter of priority; other graffiti is removed when possible to do so. Incidents of vandalism are also dealt promptly, both by rectifying the damage and also reporting to the police. Standards of cleanliness and incidents of vandalism are continually monitored to identify emerging patterns of misuse.
- 4.28 Grounds maintenance within the park is carried out by Greenspace Services. The commitment to its role allows for an efficient and coherent approach to service provision improving responsiveness, prioritisation and better use of staff and resources. The service is committed to the training and development of the skills of its staff required to carry out the grounds maintenance tasks. As part of the on-going objective to provide a clean and well-maintained park, the maintenance requirements of the park are regularly reviewed and challenged.
- 4.29 [Appendix P](#) details the frequency based specification that exists for all maintenance operations carried out in the park. The specification also includes the details of the timing of operations by the use of a frequency profile.
- 4.30 Gardeners carry out the routine maintenance work (as per the schedules contained in the specification) and additional works are specified and monitored by the Area Manager responsible for the site.
- 4.31 There is currently one duty gardener accommodated within the specification. The duty gardener's role is usually carried out by a temporary gardener over the summer months and permanent staff over the remainder of the year. Raising the maintenance standard in the park to try to achieve Green Flag has highlighted the need for an additional duty gardener over the summer months.
- 4.32 Other Greenspace Services operatives are used to support the workloads in the park and although the same staff are generally allocated to the park, under the current framework this cannot be guaranteed. The number of operatives fluctuates to match the peaks and troughs of changing workloads.

- 4.33 Specialist operations such as herbicide application and arboriculture works are undertaken via the Greenspace Services specialist teams that work Borough wide.
- 4.34 Greenspace Services have a small scale apprenticeship scheme in operation. There is one apprentice gardener in Mesnes Park, learning traditional horticultural techniques that have been specified for the completion of the work.
- 4.35 In addition to regular grounds maintenance activities, the Area Manager produces an additional work programme for the park that identifies both improvements and other work outside of the Bill of Quantities. These tasks are then programmed to be carried out across the year.
- 4.36 At Mesnes Park there is an excellent response to the challenge of improving horticultural standards. The challenge is to inform frontline staff of the quality standard they are expected to deliver. The 'Duty Gardener' approach will develop flexible response within the park. This can be built upon as the frequency based specification weakens further. This will help the move away from the rigid, frequency based system to a more responsive system that gives a year round standard of horticultural quality.
- 4.37 Since the establishment of WLCT in 2003 a landlord and tenant relationship has been in place to define the repairing liabilities for the buildings and hard landscape. All liabilities for building and hard landscape rest with Wigan Council to action through its Corporate Property Maintenance Fund.
- 4.38 The Corporate Property Maintenance Fund (CPMF) is a £5.6 million budget charged with maintaining the Council's operational property portfolio across the Leisure, Adult Services, Children and Young People's Services, Engineering and Chief Executives committees. The CPMF is split into 3 main funds:
- 4.39 Fund 1: Reactive Maintenance – for small scale "running" repairs including emergency repairs and health and safety requirements. The fund is oversubscribed.

4.40 Fund 2: Planned Maintenance Fund – for larger scale repairs that can be planned in advance. Bids can be made to this fund for work to be carried out in the following financial year. The fund is oversubscribed.

4.41 Fund 3: Pre Planned Maintenance/Serviceing - covers electrical, plant and heating servicing and maintenance

4.42 The CPMF is managed by Wigan Council Business Support Services who in turn have contracted N P S Northwest Ltd (NPS) to act in a consultancy service to implement the spending plans.

Reactive Maintenance

4.43 The Reactive Maintenance Fund is for minor repairs and emergency repairs, primarily costing under a £1000. This budget is effective in addressing minor repairs, vandalism damage and minor building defects effecting the buildings safety and water tightness. Repairs are indentified via the inspection procedure and reported to the Building Representatives. A 24 hour, 7 days a week service is maintained for this fund by NPSNW Ltd and Wigan Council Security Services team.

Planned Maintenance Fund

4.44 This is for larger repair schemes of a planned nature. Within this fund, a 5 year external repairs and maintenance programme, 5 year remedial electrical test programme, intruder alarm programme, bridge repairs programme and fire risk remedial programme exists. Annual spending plans are produced in cooperation with WLCT Projects and Facilities Team and Wigan Council Legal and Property Section. Spending plans are produced using information from the Condition Survey programme, identified repair programmes/cycles and repair priorities identified in previous years. The planned maintenance budget covering WLCT properties in 2012/13 totals £635,000.00, with a further £192,000 earmarked for reactive works. Active prioritisation takes place to target key buildings and facilities where long term occupation is strategically important to WLCT.

Pre Planned Maintenance/Servicing

4.45 This element of the CPMF ensures that all consistent parts of WLCT and Wigan Council buildings are regularly serviced in line with statutory and best practice guidelines. Pre-planned maintenance and inspections currently cover the following building elements:

- Lifts
- Lifting equipment
- Legionella testing
- Gas installations
- Ventilation systems
- Kitchen equipment
- Automatic doors
- Roller shutters
- Fire fighting equipment
- Fire alarm systems
- Emergency lighting
- Intruder alarm systems
- Boilers
- Pool plant

4.46 The CPMF is managed by Wigan Council Legal and Property Department who in turn have contracted NPSNW Ltd to act in a consultancy service to implement the spending plans. NPSNW Ltd, are an architectural and property surveying practice comprising of Architects, QS, Project Managers, Building Surveyors, Access Auditors, Legionella Surveyors, Mechanical Engineers, Electrical Engineers, Structural Engineers, Health and Safety Co-ordinators and Technical Clerks. This resource is responsible for the management of individual planned, reactive and pre-planned repairs on behalf of Wigan Council. NPSNW Ltd are the primary point of call for building representatives during office hours.

4.47 Outside of office hours, emergency repairs and maintenance are managed by Wigan Council Security Services, who as part of their 24 hours, 7 days a week, 365 days per year monitoring role act as intermediate between the reporting building representative and the Council approved contractor. NPSNW Ltd and Wigan Council Security

Services utilise the Council Approved list of contractors to action

building, mechanical and electrical repairs. The approved list ensures all contractors working on Wigan Council buildings have been vetted for financial, health and safety and technical competency. The Council approved list includes general building, electrical and mechanical contractors with specialist surveying, asbestos, dry rot and restoration contractors.

- 4.48 Park Keepers carry out weekly visual inspections, arranging for minor repairs to be carried out. Toilets are cleaned and inspected on a daily basis by the on-site staff or contract cleaner, depending on the building.
- 4.49 All grounds maintenance equipment is subject to daily safety checks by a competent operator when in use. Greenspace Services ensure that machinery that is faulty or has defects will not be used. Machinery is tested in accordance with all Health & Safety polices.

Well Maintained & Clean Assessment - Building, hard and soft landscape

4.50 The existing arrangements for the repair and maintenance of the buildings and hard landscape within Mesnes Park is affected by the limited resources within the Corporate Property Maintenance Fund; the relationship between planned and reactive maintenance; the competency of the contractors; and the lack of a planned maintenance schedule. Historically, maintenance has been reactive in nature as the local authority have been unable to implement an extensive planned maintenance programme. The Greenspace Development Officer will work closely with WLCT's Facility Officer to identify and programme significant building and landscaping projects.

4.51 Maintenance operations are triggered by a frequency profile which tells Greenspace Services when to carry out operations; this is supplemented by weekly discussion to vary operations for the best horticultural impact. Front line staff are trained in the quality standard they are being asked to deliver (through Toolbox Talks, etc)- they had, in previous years relied on 'inspectors' to identify failings in quality. Having a site based presence, with the 'Duty Gardener'

approach, develops a flexible response within the park to enable a prompt rectification of problems, eg litter, as they arise.

4.52 Tree Maintenance - The condition of the tree stock is good on the whole. This is as a result of yearly inspections by the Tree Officer, identifying a programme of winter work. Additionally, emergency tree works are carried out as work is identified. A survey of the trees in the park was carried out in 2009.

A tree management and replacement plan will then be written following this review.

4.53 Playground maintenance. The Play and Early Years Team has recently transferred to the Environmental & Sustainability Service Division (EM&S), this includes the play area maintenance team. Play maintenance inspection covers the structural integrity of equipment, cleanliness, vandalism and minor wear and tear. The play area inspectors aim to visit the site on a weekly basis as per Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) recommendations. This is supported by a visual check of the area surrounding the equipment by the duty gardener. Additionally an independent inspection is carried out once a year by RoSPA.

4.54 Play Area inspectors complete paper based inspections. The Play Area Maintenance Supervisor is informed of any defects, who implements further action if necessary. On discovering a hazard that cannot be rectified immediately, action is taken to immobilise or remove the equipment. If that is not possible then the equipment is fenced off with appropriate signage displayed. Play Inspectors have permanent access to fencing and signage to prevent access by the public in such circumstances. All records are archived and filed in individual site files and retained indefinitely. Electronic data capture is in development for this operation.

4.55 Assessment - The Play maintenance team used to carry out their function in a detached way that took no account of park issues, policies or processes. The recent incorporation of the Play Section into Greenspaces will provide an opportunity for much closer working arrangements. The result of

this can only be beneficial for the development and maintenance of play areas in parks across the Borough.

Sustainability

4.56 Greenspace Services recognises the importance of environmental protection and is committed to operating its business responsibly and in compliance with all relevant environmental regulations, legislation and approved codes of practice relating to its activities, operations and service follow their own Environmental Policy; and have been accredited with the following ISO9001 ISO1801 (health and safety) and ISO1401.

4.57 Vehicle Sustainability. To demonstrate its commitment to sound environmental practices new parks vehicles will run on LPG where this option is practicably achievable, Vehicle use is regularly monitored to ensure that journeys are not duplicated and vehicles are being used efficiently.

4.58 Energy Conservation - Energy consumption in buildings is regularly monitored to prevent wastage and to identify costs. Inefficient energy systems will be replaced as and when is possible. WLCT has invested in a new software system to improve monitoring of energy usage and assessing patterns of usage.

4.59 Park buildings which have been newly restored have been fitted with Smart Meters. Smart Metering Technology. This is able to provide suppliers with readings directly and eliminate the need for estimated billing.

4.60 As part of the new build considerations and improving facilities, energy efficiencies are being considered. Some of the buildings which have been recently restored have LED lights installed at the footings of buildings which will reduce energy consumption by 95%.

4.61 Use of pesticides - Pesticide use will only be considered if all other mechanical methods have been explored. In addition, where a pesticide has to be used the most effective, and if possible specific, treatment will be used for maximum efficiency. Persistent use of chemicals will be avoided.

4.62 Use of peat. - plants are only ever sourced from peat free suppliers

4.63 Waste minimisation - WLCT is an organisation who works to minimise waste. At present, one large bay in the depot stores green waste and chipped arising from tree and shrub pruning, Greenspace Services are able to reuse these materials on site in addition to leaf mulch. In addition, woodchip, is used as mulch and surface dressings for informal paths and ground cover.

4.64 Working with the Facilities Officer, areas of the park have been assessed to see if there are any suitable locations to put recycling bins. Dry recycling bins are located in the lodge. This could provide an educational feature for school children to provide environmental education. There is also scope to install a recycling point near to the Sports Zone which is currently being highlighted for re-development. This would be used to target the large volumes of cans and glass which accumulate in this area.

4.65 Monitoring & Reviewing - At Mesnes, the Greenspaces team is continually looking at monitoring and reviewing and reducing the amount of waste which the park generates. Some recycled materials are stored at Mesnes, but there is the possibility of extending this by extending the current bays. WLCT are looking at the possibility of recycling all green waste on site.

4.66 There is a piece of work to be carried out to assess if mulch or chippings are able to be left in – situ in some areas within the park. However, as the park is a typically Victorian in design and various key documents will have to be considered in conjunction with this proposal.

4.67 As part of the street furniture justification we have tried to reduce the number of bins to try and make better use of the bins to be installed. As part of this process we will continually monitor and review the situation of waste minimisation.

Conservation and heritage

4.68 Since the park opened in 1878, the loss of some entrance gates, boundary railings and some minor features, there has been relatively little alteration to the park.

The restoration scheme proposals have in the main, focused upon

the restoration of the original features. In terms of access and safety, only modest changes have been implemented.

4.69 At present there is no indication that the original design drawings and plans survived. However, a comprehensive collection of photographic illustrations, remnant features and artefacts, and the published editions of the Ordnance Survey, provide clear indication of the layout, distribution of features, spatial arrangements and design themes of the original layout. This has provided sufficient information to enable a comprehensive programme of restoration proposals to be identified and implemented.

4.70 The Conservation Management Plan ([Appendix G](#)) addresses the need to safeguard and interpret the heritage and make the park fully accessible by:

- i. Conserving the fabric of the park
- ii. The repair and restoration of original structures and features
- iii. The re-structuring of the park vegetation to recreate intended views, to improve the appearance and setting of specimen trees and to reintroduce areas of formal ornamental bedding and herbaceous planting.
- iv. Improving the use and appearance of the park by the reinstatement of footpaths, the repair and replacement of boundary railings and entrance gates, the re-use of buildings and structures and the upgrading and where necessary relocation of amenities for play, recreation and sport.
- v. The re-use of buildings focuses on the refurbishment and enhancement of the pavilion and its cafe to provide improved facilities for all year round use and the restoration of the disused Entrance Lodge to benefit the more tranquil areas of the park.

4.71 Through the Access Plan Mesnes Park is trying to reduce barriers to physical access for all. As a destination it is well served by public transport and is easily accessible from its catchment through each of its five entrances. Within the park, the principal barriers to physical access

are the routes to the pavilion and internal access to the café. Solutions have been sought for problems.

4.72 Current maintenance and inspection regimes. - The current maintenance and management regimes are mentioned above. However, materials which have been used in the restoration process for particular buildings will have different maintenance requirements now particular features are restored. O & M manuals are stored at Mesnes to help the Supervisor ensure that the right materials are used to repair a defect.

4.73 In terms of soft landscaping, the 10 year enhanced soft landscaping proposals ([Appendix I](#)) have required WLCT to re-measure areas which will have changed in size, ensuring the specification is up to standard with up to date measurements of the area. The total area of annual bedding will not significantly change – the additional cost will come from re-creating the beds.

4.74 Natural Habitat management and enhancement - A biodiversity audit has been carried out to protect and enhance the biodiversity in Mesnes Park and to increase awareness, understanding and appreciation of local wildlife through an education programme that explains the importance of urban biodiversity.

4.75 The Mesnes Park Biodiversity Enhancement Plan is attached. The main habitats the plan relate to include: woodland, hedgerows and shrubs, aquatic habitats, lawns and grasslands, annual beds, buildings and other structures ([Appendix O](#)).

4.76 Conservation of landscape and horticultural features - Permanent landscape features are managed so as to preserve their overall aesthetics and balance to the park. Planting is regularly assessed for its overall quality and impact and added to, or replaced, to improve the overall appearance of the park. New horticultural features are developed using traditional practices e.g. use of farmyard manure. Those skills are

shared with the apprentice gardeners, who are involved in the

maintenance and development of the park. This will ensure future sustainability.

4.77 Arboricultural management - Tree stocks will be managed in accordance with the last arboricultural survey which was carried out. Greenspaces tree officers are working with Wigan Council's tree officer to develop the plan and ensure that the conservation area criteria are observed. Regular inspection of tree stocks will be carried out to ensure the plan remains up-dated and relevant.

4.78 Tree planting will be carefully considered so as to preserve the parkland landscape. The aim is to broaden the range of species in the park as part of the developing a Borough wide tree trail. Mesnes Park has it's own tree trail with an interpretive leaflet which is due to be completed this summer.

4.79 Conservation of buildings and structures- The following buildings and structures within the park have been restored as part of Phase 1 include: The Pavilion, Bandstand, Shelter an Dalton Steps. The buildings which have been restored as part of Phase 2 include Entrance Lodge and the Bowls Pavilion. Buildings and structures within the park that are worthy of conservation because of their contribution to the landscape, they will be maintained and repaired in a sympathetic manner.

Community Involvement

4.80 Mesnes Park is situated close to the town centre, and is able to appeal to a variety of audiences. The Audience Development Plan ([Appendix J](#)) has looked to increase and diversify audiences as the restoration project has progressed. It is hoped that works on site will raise the profile of the park and help in developing new audiences into the park.

4.81 The park is significant to the local community. This can be demonstrated through the Friends of Mesnes Park who are excellent advocates for the Park and keen to develop its usage among a wider community. They are actively involved with

the development and interpretation of the Park. An example of



this can be evidenced by the restoration of the rose garden. Through the life of the restoration project WLCT has actively worked with the Friends of Mesnes Park to increase its membership. The Friends involvement in the Heritage Lottery Fund – Parks for People, stage one application and the development period for the Stage Two application has been invaluable. The Friends of Mesnes Park have been fundamental in planning the restoration process and feel that they have a continuing role to play. The group has taken on board the aspirations of the community and support the overall phases of the restoration of the park by leading on securing funding for implementation of the restoration of the Powell monument, restoration of the James Pulham & Sons rock feature and waterfall and the replacement of the Coalbrookdale Fountain.

4.82 Another example is the ‘Mesnes Park – ‘A People’s History’ exhibition’. The group gave the opportunity for local people to contribute their memories and photographs of the park. There was a huge response! The group was supported by WLCT’s Heritage Services and produced the 16-panel exhibition. A new version is on view in the shelter and will generate continued interest from visitors. The interpretation plan should continue to generate interest for regular visitors.

4.83 The Friends of Mesnes Park was formed in 1998 as a lobbying group to clean up the lake which was in a very unclean state at the time. This expanded and a formal group was both formed and constituted. The Friends of Mesnes Park still meet on a regular basis and carry out events within the Park and support the park in a productive way.

4.84 With the current changes in the way Parks are managed, WLCT are currently meeting with all Friends Groups to set out the way in which WLCT and Friends groups need to work together to be able to manage Parks effectively and pool resources. At the time of writing this management plan, consultation with Friends Groups is taking place. WLCT will look to formalise current working arrangements and put formal agreements in place so Friends groups are aware of what WLCT is able to deliver for the group and vice versa.

4.85 At the time of Green Flag submission in January 2014, the group is looking at developing a funding application for the tidy up of the lake islands and the potential for some planting around the lake edges.

4.86 Other groups involved in Mesnes Park include the Mesnes Park Bowlers. This is a separate group which has both an A and a B team and use of two of the three bowling greens for practice and matches.

4.87 NRG Fitness are a Not for Profit company who use the Park to carry out military fitness style classes. In the last couple of years, this has proved to be very popular.

4.88 Discover Training are a Community Interested Company based in the Playshack. They use the space to put on daily events in the summer and deliver community training courses.

4.89 Youth Inc are a local youth group who sometimes attend the Friends meetings and use the meetings to raise any issues young people have in the Park. They also help out at events which the Friends may run and have helped with consultation which WLCT have carried out.

4.90 Wigan Access Group are a long term supporter of the Park and have been in consultation with WLCT for more than six years. They have helped in consulting on all proposals as part of the Phase 1 and Phase 2 restoration schemes and have those with difficulty with access issues in mind.

4.91 Partners of Mesnes Park are as follows: Wigan Council, Fredericks Café, the and Discovery Training. In addition, Wigan and Leigh College are extremely supportive of the project and are working with WLCT to look at potential projects both students can help within the park and students are doing the practical side of their Horticultural GNVQ. They help in maintaining the park and their NVQ by carrying out the following:

- rhododendron removal,
- preparing new flower beds,
- edging off, mowing,



- strimming
- Pruning rhododendrons
- Path construction
- Maintenance tasks
- Litter picking and ground clearance

4.92 Volunteering/Opportunities: At present the Community Information Officers are compiling a list and keeping a record of any potential volunteers who are able to help in the park. This could be practical work on the ground, marketing, working to develop the Friends Group or teachers who have just qualified and would like some teaching experience. There is a grounds maintenance operative who volunteers two days a week. A newly qualified teacher is helping with educational sessions and the Wigan Discovery Group helping the community and trying to educate them about archaeological investigations which are being carried out in the park.

4.93 The original application which was made to the Heritage Lottery match funded volunteer time to the project. Therefore it is essential that we are able to collect and demonstrate the amount of volunteer involvement in the park and foster this to become a successful model for WLCT and the local community. Skills and opportunities for community involvement: As part of the first application to the HLF, A Training Plan was developed for Mesnes ([Appendix K](#)). The training centre has now been completed and will allow elements of the training plan to be implemented. However, some work has already been started to form the relevant links with the community and volunteers to ensure that the training centre will be used to unlock it's potential once opened.

Marketing

4.106 There has been a six year marketing plan which was produced for Mesnes Park during the restoration scheme. This included everything from banner, posters and leaflets to radio adverts ([Appendix N](#)).



4.107 The overall aims of the marketing plan are to assist with the following:

- Promote the Park to surrounding districts (within 30 minutes drive time).
- To increase the overall usage of Mesnes Park through developing its audiences, and encouraging visitors to extend the length of stay and frequency of visits.
- To generate awareness of Mesnes Park and it's facilities both locally and regionally (to within 60 minutes drive time depending upon the event).
- To increase revenue from park activities and café facilities to ring-fence for future investment in Mesnes Park.

4.108 Due to reduced resources a tactical marketing plan is being developed in conjunction with WLCT's marketing section, with the aim of raising the profile of the park, it's history and the activities that people can get involved with. We are looking at the feasibility of putting more information on line (website/Facebook/Twitter) and getting volunteers involved to promote the park through various on site activities .

Management

4.106 Management of Mesnes Park is carried out by WLCT, Business Development division of which the Greenspaces section falls under. This division is responsible for determining the strategic direction and overall management of the service and the parks and green spaces it maintains. Greenspaces (GS) is responsible for the management and maintenance of the site. This includes fully supporting on site staff and maintenance teams in their ability to carry out set objectives and designated work programmes.

4.107 The Play Team are responsible for the development and maintenance of play areas and play provision for 0 – 12 years. They consult with children about play provision and organise play activities during school holidays at various locations across the borough.

- 4.108 The Development Manager - Biodiversity is responsible for advising on increasing biodiversity in the park, advising on ecological licences for issues and implementing biodiversity action plans.
- 4.109 The Technical Section is part of the Greenspaces Business and Service Improvement Team. The team provides a range of operational and management support functions, including leading on divisional performance management, running the Trust's GIS mapping system, green space asset management/financial information and undertaking policy and performance reviews.
- 4.110 Greenspace Services Leading Hand – (GS) -The role covers the overall grounds care and maintenance of grounds in accordance with agreed specification. Providing a flexible and responsible service. Supervising individuals or teams and ensuring compliance with agreed quality standards.
- 4.111 Duty Gardener – (GS) - The duty gardener carries out a visual daily inspection of the park, and fills in a daily tick off list on a weekly sheet that's signed and dated and returned to the Area Manager. The form is completed with a tick if there are no problems, if there is a defect
- 4.112 Gardener – (GS) - General maintenance of grounds including sweeping, hoeing, raking, mowing, strimming, edging, forking, digging, hedge cutting, minor pruning and clearing leaves and litter. Basic horticultural duties including laying turf under supervision and planting e.g. bulbs. Constructional and manual work e.g. barrowing, ditch clearance etc. Assisting with erecting and dismantling of sports posts and other equipment. General cleaning duties e.g. toilets, canteens, store rooms etc. Patrol and attendance duties e.g. opening and locking gates and patrolling. Assisting more highly skilled and experienced gardeners in their work. Instruct the public to comply with regulations and byelaws. To undertake any other duties in accordance with the grade and job title of the post as required by the Greenspace Services Management Team.

4.113 Park Keeper – (GS) To assist the users of Parks and Countryside to enjoy the Boroughs facilities by means of site supervision, cleaning and maintenance and the provision of information. Their hours are seasonably adjusted and are managed on a 7-day shift system. Park Keepers carry out a park and building inspection on a weekly basis and respond to any defects and minor repairs that are required in the park, as specified by The Area Manager. Any issues which arise from inspections are processed through the Maintenance & Repair system.

4.114 Greenspace Services Manager – (GS) The Manager is responsible for the management and maintenance of Greenspaces within the Borough, including site and service development and contract compliance and performance. The aim of the role is to provide services of the highest quality and in a manner which promotes and demonstrates the Trust's core values and organisational beliefs within a partnership framework ensuring that the needs of the customer is the driving factor in all activities.

4.115 Head of Service - To undertake overall responsibility for the management of the Greenspace Services, accountability for the financial performance and quality of work throughout the service; the effective management and development of human resources, together with the efficient and safe utilisation of plant, equipment and materials. To be responsible for the corporate management and planned development of the Greenspace Services service, including the preparation and successful implementation of contract bids, business plans, marketing plans and operational strategies.

4.116 Greenspaces Development Officer (GS) - The Greenspace Development Officer is a new role in the Greenspaces section. It will specifically deal with the development of key sites, develop site management in conjunction with Friends groups, assist in the building of trying to build a complementary resource, support community groups, develop partnerships, secure external funding and support new business opportunities.

4.117 Community Information Officers – (GS) - In addition, WCLT has been successful in a bid to the Big Lottery to fund two community and information officers for five years (currently in year 4). The officers will be based in the park

and act as a point of contact for members of the public and collect information on park users and volunteer groups who use the park.

4.118 Management of Contractors - The Trust's Code of Practice for managing Contractors on site provides a framework for the system which currently operates in Mesnes Park.

4.119 The following is a management diagram which shows the highlighted posts most closely related to the delivery of management, operational and support to Mesnes Park.

Events and Activities

4.120 Mesnes Park has a varied and diverse events programme that runs throughout the year attracting a wide range of people. This is publicised through the three times a year publication "Wigan Now" leaflet, the WLCT website and the "What's On" guide and webpage. Events are organised in the park by various groups and organisations.

4.121 WLCT actively encourages the use of its parks as venues for suitable events. Events are publicised and promoted in various ways (see Marketing section above), normally by those organising the event.

In 2013 the events programme for Mesnes Park consisted of:

| Date | Event |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| 12 th January | Volunteer Day |
| 13 th January | New Year Walk |
| 16 th January | Love your Liver Event |
| 2 nd February | Hunt the Gargoyle |
| 10 th February | Chinese New Year Celebration |
| 12 th February | Pancake Day Celebration |
| 16 th February | Volunteer Day |
| 17 th February | History and Hotpot |

| | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 3 rd March | Ice Cream Sunday |
| 9 th March | History and Hotpot |
| 16 th March | Volunteer Day |
| 30 th March | Strike up the Band |
| 1 st April | Easter at Mesnes Park |
| 5 th May | Unsigned Bands |
| 11 th May | Stone Trail |
| 29 th May | History and Hotpot |
| 30 th May | Teddy Bear's Picnic |
| 8 th June | Grand Opening of Wigan Youth Zone |
| 30 th June | Picnic in the Park |
| 12 th July | Parkivate! |
| 14 th July | Gig in the Park |
| 19 th July | Parkivate! |
| 20 th July | Rugby World Cup |
| 23 rd July | High Days and Holidays |
| 26 th July | Parkivate! |
| 2 nd August | Parkivate! |
| 9 th August | Parkivate! |
| 10 th August | Unsigned Bands |
| 16 th August | Parkivate! |
| 17 th August | Unsigned Bands |
| 23 rd August | Parkivate! |
| 24 th August | Xplorer |
| 30 th August | Parkivate! |
| 31 st August | Proms in the Park |
| 13 th September | Bat Walk |
| 29 th September | The Mesnes Event |
| 15 th December | Christmas at Mesnes |
| 22 nd December | Christmas at Mesnes |

4.122 WLCT recognises that events are an excellent way of getting people into parks and raising awareness of the benefits of visiting parks. The programme of events are well evaluated to determine customer satisfaction, this shows there is demand to build on this programme. 2013 was a fantastic year for the Park and we would like to build on this success in the future.

- 4.123 Activity Leaders offer a programme of events in the key sites across the key sites in the Borough, under the branding of the 'Active Living' programme. These events are aimed at a wide target audience and include bat walks, kite making and health walks. Through partnership working with other sections of the Trust, a more diverse events programme is evolving.
- 4.124 It is WLCT's objective is to get Wigan Active through the Leisure and Cultural services they provide. The parks events programmes guide for all the key sites aims to support the philosophy of getting people of Wigan more active and healthier.
- 4.125 All parks events are all managed with the new Events pack which consists of a booking form, risk matrix, risk assessment, the terms and conditions of the site and must have a designated event organiser.
- 4.126 The Greenspace Development Officer will encourage the Friends of Mesnes Park to develop community led events in the park. Community groups will be supported with the event application pack to ensure that all aspects of the event are well organised.
- 4.127 External organisations and other sections of the Trust are able to use the park as a venue for their events and activities. The Trust has an events pack which gives guidance to organisers in event planning. The Parks Officer offers support and guidance to the group to ensure that health and safety and insurance documentation is appropriate and valid.
- 4.128 The crazy golf concession has been demolished this year and we will look to see what the feasibility of having a children's concession in the space which allows for some income generation in the site. This facility when developed will need to become more sustainable in the future.



Where do we want to get to?

5 WHERE DO WE WANT TO GET TO?

- 5.1 This section of the plan outlines our new vision for Mesnes Park.
- 5.2 Re-visioning of Mesnes Park has been undertaken by a cross section of colleagues from across WLCT, including members of the Executive Group, the Head of Greenspace Services, Operational and Parks staff. The Re-Visioning Programme was externally moderated by an external Consultant, Ron Pierce and Associates, and a comprehensive report is attached at [Appendix C](#).
- 5.3 The aims of the Re-Visioning Project team were to:
- develop a proposed strategy for Mesnes Park and a 2-3 year delivery plan
 - establish a high level financial model and funding options
 - provide the framework from which a ‘blueprint’ for WLCT can be developed
- 5.4 The Vision for Mesnes Park is: **“to provide a town centre “green” venue which is accessible to all and encourages the community to be active, creative & healthy”** The vision aims to deliver the following objectives
- protect and nurture our historical assets and ‘green spaces’
 - provide opportunities for the community to actively participate in protecting, enhancing & enjoying their heritage
 - provide a visitor experience which delivers value for money, encourages repeatable visits and stimulates their knowledge and activity

- deliver a business model which is sustainable and self-funding
 - build local capabilities in both vocational & non-vocational skills
- 5.5 The rapid changes taking place within the budget planning cycles have meant that planning and re-visioning, and in particular financial modelling, needed to be undertaken by an officer lead group, with senior management overseeing and driving the process.
- 5.6 Following re-visioning the above vision and objectives were shared with the Friends of Mesnes Park, who have expressed support for the new vision. The Friends of Group have endorsed the necessity of working towards a new model of delivery which will have a stronger focus on community capacity building and commercialism.
- 5.7 The Mesnes Park Friends Group also recognises the role that they will be called on to support. The group recently celebrated its 15th anniversary of inauguration and have a strong blend of “volunteer” skills and spirit that can be extended to a broader diverse group of like-minded people. The Friends of Mesnes Group will therefore be integral to the delivery of the new vision.
- 5.8 Whilst the park is now benefitting from a massive financial investment, there is still much to do in order to ensure that the above adopted community and management vision is realised.

How are we going to get there?



6 HOW ARE WE GOING TO GET THERE?

6.1 This section identifies how the vision and the aims and objectives outlined in section 5 will be achieved.

6.2 The key strategic developments will be to

- expand the existing Friends of Mesnes Park Group – by harnessing and developing the talents and skills of the local community and volunteer groups and by building local capabilities through defined training programmes and self-development initiatives
- build additional local capabilities in both vocational & non-vocational skills
- expand the range of support activities that volunteers and friends can provide
- deliver a business model which is sustainable and self-funding
- look for external funding opportunities and commercial opportunities

6.3 The above strategic developments will be achieved through the ongoing project management approach adopted as part of the Mesnes Revisioning programme. Funding opportunities to support this programme will be sought and investment will be targeted at our volunteer workforce.

6.4 **The key infrastructure developments will be to:**

- Enhance interpretation and information displays, with particular emphasis on heritage developments and use Mesnes Park lodge as an exhibition space.
- Continue with the existing landscape improvement plan, including developing a vista through the park and improving horticultural features and standards

- Look for development opportunities to maximise the potential of the hard surface Sports Zone.
- Enhance accessibility by carrying out improvements to physical access and provision of information

6.5 The key event developments will be to:

- Develop a small scale programme of events to be lead by WLCT staff
- Develop a community programme of events to be lead by the community utilising the bandstand.
- Develop a varied programme of cultural activities to use the bandstand area.
- Ensure Mesnes Park is part of the WLCT internal events programme.
- Develop the utilisation of the Mesnes Park training centre. This will provide both training venue for needs of visitors to increase visit length. It can provide an indoor base for youth work and family learning activities.

6.6 The following 14 priorities have been determined from assessments of the park facilities and the results of consultation.

1. Improve the standards of care, horticultural quality and diversity □

Implement the 5 year management plan.

- Use the park as an educational resource and to develop horticultural skills for the grounds maintenance horticultural service through the apprenticeship scheme.
- Reduce the issues that have a negative effect on the appearance of the park, e.g. antisocial behaviour and vandalism.

□

2. Improve the health and safety for the benefit of visitors

Improve the welcoming aspect of the park.

- Decrease the amount of dog fouling.
- Undertake regular risk assessments.
- Continue to regularly inspect the park and incorporate the duty gardener role and reporting as part of this process.
- Ensure all employees, suppliers and contractors meet national, Wigan Council and WLCT agreed standards and procedures.

3. Improve security for park visitors

- Selective vegetation removal to reduce opportunities for anti-social behaviour and increase visitor perception of safety.
- Build on good relationships with Police and Safer Neighbourhood Section.
- Develop a programme of activities to encourage evening use of the park.

4. Heritage and conservation merit of the park

- Increase the information available to park visitors to place the park in its historical context in Wigan.
- Involve appropriate professionals in all aspects of the development of the park.
- Use high quality materials where new facilities are proposed.
- Use traditional horticultural techniques to increase the sustainability of new and existing planting.
- Introduce recycling and composting processes in the park.

□

5. Improve the accessibility of the park

- Consider inclusive options in all park refurbishment.
Consider partnership arrangements to manage and improve the casual crown green bowling and tennis facilities
- Physical access will be guided by principles of conservation and inclusive visitor management
- Support and facilitate sustainable forms of transport to and from the park.

6. Development of people

- Increase opportunities for volunteering through the Friends of Mesnes Park.
- Expand the range of functions and areas of involvement of friends and volunteers.
- Continue to train and develop staff in line with the Trust's employee policies

7. Develop the gardens and landscape character of the park.

- Rationalise the landscape design of the park.
- Improve the horticultural quality of annual bedding, shrub and tree planting.
- Develop vistas in the park.
- Develop part of a borough wide tree trail in the park.
- Diversify and enhance ecological value.

8. Maintain relationships to other parks

- Develop the local Parks and Open Spaces Strategy
- Seek national accreditation via the Green Flag process.

-
- Utilise performance management benchmarking data as determined by AGMA (Association of Greater Manchester Authorities).

9. Maintain relationships to the surrounding neighbourhood

Continue to engage and develop further links with strategic partners, e.g. Wigan & Leigh College, Wigan Youth Zone, local schools, local voluntary sector organisations and other sections of WLCT

- Continue to be involved with Conservation Area planning.

10. Education and Interpretation

- Develop the Mesnes Park training centre as a base for organised groups and activities and informal educational sessions and lifelong learning for the community.
- Establish the park as resource for education.
- Develop and implement interpretation through the marketing strategy.

11. Generate revenue for the park □

Develop a park Business Plan.

- Implement the recommendations of the Mesnes Park Revisioning project

12. Offer a diverse programme of events for visitors □

Promote the Bandstand performance area.

- Sustain a Premises Licence to allow events and activities □
Encourage Community groups, schools and amateur performances
- Link with town centre activities.

□

- Create further links with the Festivals team to organise large-scale events.

13. Achieve 'Green Flag'

- Implement the 10 year Management and Maintenance plan ([Appendix H](#)).
- Promote and secure political support for the benefits of the Green Flag scheme.

14. Continue to involve stakeholders and the local community in the development of Mesnes Park

- Continue to support the Friends of Mesnes Park
- Assist the Friends to seek funding opportunities and develop a business plan
- Continue to determine aspirations and views of the community by means of visitor surveys and regular consultation

Development of the 'site' Base Plan.

- 6.7 Through the implementation of the Park aims and objectives, the zones in the park will be developed as below.
- 6.8 Bandstand area – Develop events programme to utilise area for a variety of audiences.
- 6.9 Formal landscape - Develop and maintain vistas through the park as per Soft Landscape Plan.
- 6.10 Sports Zone – Look for opportunities to develop and install new facilities.

7 GREEN FLAG ACTION PLAN

7.1 The Action Plan summarises the issues and action to address them, together with responsibility and timescales for action. Implementing the action plan will achieve the aims and objectives of this management plan in line with the Green Flag assessment criteria. It prioritises actions that need to be taken in terms of their impact on the park – it also indicates if funding has been identified to carry out each action.

7.2 The Action Plan will be reviewed on a monthly basis to ensure development is on target for completion.

7.3 As the Friends of Mesnes Park expands and increases its capacity, it is envisaged that they will contribute further tasks to the action plan as well as assisting with

the implementation of difficult to achieve actions. The Action plan will become a rolling programme of work to sustain the improved standards in the park.

7.4 The Green Flag Action Plan Summary is attached at [Appendix A](#).

8 MASTER PLAN

8.1 This plan shows the location of the principal developments from this management plan.



9 FINANCIAL PLAN Finance and Resources

9.1 The staffing resource on the ground for Mesnes Park consists of 1 leading hand, 1 duty gardener and 2 gardeners who spend 100% of their time on site. Park Keeper attend mainly out of normal working hours. The Greenspace Services Manager has spent approximately 25% of the working week on issues relating to Mesnes Park, during the development of the management plan.

Bill of Quantities

9.2 The core maintenance work is identified in the Bill of Quantities ([Appendix P](#)). This itemises the value of work associated with the park. The Bill of Quantities has been revised to ensure that the work schedules presented represent the reality of work carried out.

Revenue Expenditure & Income

9.3 There is additional revenue expenditure in Mesnes Park, that is spent on project work, events, repairs and maintenance including remedial work when vandalism has occurred. From April 2013 - Jan 2014 additional revenue expenditure for the various elements was:

Capital Expenditure

9.4 From 2008 – 2013, there has been £6.1 million spent on capital expenditure in Mesnes Park. This has been used to restore and redevelop areas on a

Phase 1 and Phase 2 restoration scheme of which elements are mentioned in the Conservation Management Plan ([Appendix G](#)).

9.5 External Funding for project work in the park is limited, but the funds are being sought to redevelop the Sports Zone area.

9.6 Further capital and revenue funding will be sought to achieve the aims of the management plan over it's 5 year span.

Financial Plan

9.7 The details of the costs which were originally projected for the running of the park are shown in the Revenue Cost Plan ([Appendix L & M](#)). The summary of the plan is below:

- This Business Plan aims to establish the strategic background for the Mesnes Park Restoration Project and detail the development work.
- The Business Plan defines the aims of the Project, links the Project into wider town centre developments, links the project into WLCT strategies and details the mechanism to realise the stated aims and objectives for the project.
- The Business Plan confirms the capital and revenue elements of the project, summarises the cost plan and funding strategy and summarises the programme for the delivery of the Master plan elements.
- The Business Plan recognises the park catchment area, the target audiences, the local competition and details a Marketing Plan to engage with the target audiences during the development phase, during construction and post construction.

9.8 The long term (ten year) operation of the Park is summarised in section 7 of the Business Plan where income and expenditure is profiled over the ten year period. Assumptions and estimates for new income and expenditure items are detailed and related back to the predicted usage profile of the Park assets.

9.9 The original cost projections are now under review.

How will we know when we've got there?



10 HOW WILL WE KNOW WHEN WE'VE GOT THERE? Review

10.1 A Park Management Plan Review Group will be formed by a variety of officers that are linked with the park. The aim of the group will be to review all the information that relates to the development of the park. The group will determine a wide variety of issues relating to the park e.g. if Grounds maintenance standards have been achieved and are appropriate; progress on projects. Officers from other areas e.g. planning conservation will be invited to meet with the group and input specific information, along with staff from Greenspaces, Performance and Play and Active Living; marketing section from WLCT and member from the Friends of Mesnes Park.

10.2 A separate Management and Maintenance Action Planning (MMP) Group meets regularly to review the delivery of the HLF project. The MMP Group considers performance and progress on the following key items:

- capital works
- HLF grant conditions/outstanding approvals
- soft landscape enhancement programme 2014-15
- asset management
- Lodge occupancy and income targets
- partner relationship management
- event management arrangement
- paid for leisure developments

10.3 Performance monitoring. There are a variety of performance measures that are already in place or about to be initiated that will map the success of the development of the park. The results of each measure will be fed through to

the parks management plan review group to inform the direction of the park on an annual basis.

10.4 The information will be used to review the improvements that have occurred over the previous 12 months and plan for the following year.

10.5 People Counters – WLCT will continue to monitor its people counter data and make reference to the original baseline figures, following first installation of the counters in 2008/09.

10.6 Visitor numbers – we will continue to track the results of our people counters to follow progress on overall visitor numbers. Unfortunately, the validated external customer surveys, undertaken by Wigan Council are no longer core funded – this service is withdrawn. In the past this enabled WLCT to determine the percentage of residents that visit all of our parks sites.

10.7 Events – over the next 5 years we will be encouraging community groups, to take a greater role in the managing and delivery of events. There will be an increase in commercial events that are held at the park, in line with our new tactical marketing plan.

10.8 Participation – levels of participation will be increased by providing the above devolved events programme plus the opportunity for people to become active as part of the Friends of Mesnes Park.

10.9 Events – over the next 5 years the event programme will evolve into a smaller number of larger, well attended events that are managed by WLCT with support from the friends group and a complementary programme of smaller, friends group led events and activities. Programme based activities will continue to be hosted by WLCT's active living team.

- 10.10 Consultation – this was previously undertaken by WLCT. We are encouraging the Friends Group, and potentially students on work experience, to pick up this important element of work. This process will continue and be refined by the Performance team.
- 10.11 Friends of Group – the group will be supported by officers from the Trust, Wigan Council and Wigan Council Voluntary services to become a self sustaining group that contributes to the future of the park by producing a business plan and seeking funding for projects that are beyond current budget capacity.
- 10.12 Green Flag – Achieving nationally recognised accreditation for Mesnes Park, and retaining the award, will be the most significant marker of having achieved the aims and objectives of the management plan. Feedback from the judging process will be incorporated into the information that the management plan review group uses each year to continue the improvement process and create a rolling plan of improvements.

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PREFACE

Mesnes Park forms part of the portfolio of the Executive Director for Environmental Management and Sustainability, within Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust (WLCT).

Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust is committed to adopting the proposals in the Restoration Plan and 10-year Management and Maintenance Plan (MMP) for Mesnes Park.

The Environmental Management & Sustainability section has adopted MMP as a working document and agrees to uphold and manage the standards of management and maintenance as indicated in the MMP.

Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust recognises the financial implications and resources that are required to implement the MMP on an annual basis and supports any requisite additional funds for a minimum period of ten years after the completion of the restoration scheme.

The Board of Trustees of Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust have approved the MMP and it forms part of the management agreement between WLCT and Wigan Council for the delivery of services.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Mesnes Park has recently been successful in securing £3.4 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF/Big Lottery). Funding has been secured for Phase 1 of the project to restore the main heritage features of the park, core footpaths and interpretation signage. The HLF have approved the Phase 2 scheme in principle and provided a development grant has been allocated. To develop the details of scheme. To secure funding from the HLF, a whole Park Master plan was developed.

Mesnes Park is managed by The Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust (WLCT). Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust (WLCT) was formed in April 2003. It manages all the indoor and outdoor leisure and cultural facilities on behalf of Wigan Council.

1.1 Wigan Leisure Culture Trust

The Trust is a new organisation formed on the 1st April 2003. It was formally Wigan Council's Leisure & Cultural Services Department. WLCT works in partnership with Wigan Council in providing a wide range of leisure and cultural opportunities. With a remit to improve, develop and expand the range of opportunities provided for both residents and visitors.

Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust is a non-profit distributing organisation, which must reinvest its surplus to improve services. The Trust is a registered charity, which brings some financial advantages, and is maintained by external funding and income generation that includes an annual grant from Wigan Council. In addition, buildings

and facilities are leased from the Council. A Board of Trustees have the responsibility for ensuring the Trust is managed appropriately.

Under the umbrella of the Trust there is also a trading company: Wigan Leisure and Culture Enterprise. The Enterprise is part of the organisation and has responsibility for the development and management of those services that are not deemed to be charitable such as Leisure Halls and Grounds Maintenance for external customers other than the Trust.

WLCT by operating as a Trust brings about financial advantages that will help to address some of the issues caused by a lack of investment over a number of years. WLCT's priorities in line with Wigan Councils Community Plan 2005 –2008 are set out within this strategic document.

Within Environmental Sustainability the Parks And Countryside Activities Team (PACA) in conjunction with the Parks Regeneration Team and Green Spaces Team (GMS) in WLCT is responsible for management and future development of Mesnes Park.

A Management and Maintenance for Mesnes Park has been in place since summer 2008 which sets a specific long-term vision for the future. There has been an aspiration by the local community to be involved with the development of Mesnes Park, and it was through public demand that the Friends of Mesnes Park group (to be known as FOMP) was formed in 1998.

Since then, the FOMP have been an important element of the park by advising on day to day issues, applying for funding, raising the profile of the park, representing the community on strategic forums and generally being ambassadors for the local community.

This is an overarching management plan and whilst we realise that HLF would like us to prepare a Maintenance and Management Plan (MMP) with Green Flag criteria in mind, we are also aware that to attain Green Flag Award, a more stream lined document will be required. A separate Green Flag management plan will be prepared which will refer back to this document.

1.1 The Aim of the Plan

The purpose of this management plan (MMP) is required to ensure effective service delivery within Mesnes Park. It will be used as a tool to demonstrate how the park will be developed. In addition it will help to:

- Allocate resources required for the park,
- Identify additional funding which may be required
- To inform stakeholders who are involved in the park of management priorities and be used as a method of communication
- To monitor progress against management priorities
- Preparation in compiling the green flag management plan

The MMP is a working document that sets out a framework for the implementation of the Mesnes Park Master plan. It also documents the existing features and facilities, describes how these are maintained and by whom, and how they are used. The MMP will be used to improve the management and maintenance regime for the park as it evolves.

1.2 Preparation of the Plan

The MMP for Mesnes Park has been prepared following guidance from Cabe Space in relation to writing Green Flag management plans. New guidance produced by HLF 10 Year Management and Maintenance Plan Guidance has also been utilised in the preparation of this document.

The MMP has been prepared with stakeholders and those who have an interest in the park. This includes Park Officers, Elected Members, strategic partners, members of the public and the Friends of Mesnes Park (FOMP). It offers an insight and an analysis of the current processes of the maintenance and management operations that creates the park as we see it today.

The MMP covers a ten year period and is based on the following supporting documents: Restoration Plan for Mesnes Park created in 2000 by Landscape Design Associates, Conservation Management Plan produced by Bertram Hyde Ltd in 2006, Audience and Access Development Plans produced by ABL consulting in 2006. Interpretation Plan developed by in 2007, Training Plan including an Education Policy developed by WLCT in 2007. Extensive consultation has informed these supporting documents.

The MMP will be monitored and following an annual review of its objectives. Green Flag Judges comments and feedback will also form part of the review process. An application for Green Flag will be submitted once all the restoration works are complete.

Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust recognises the financial implications and resources that are required to implement the MMP on an annual basis and supports any requisite additional funds for a minimum period of ten years in order to complete the restoration master plan.

The Board of Trustees of Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust has approved the MMP and it forms part of the management agreement between WLCT and Wigan Council for the delivery of services.

1.3 Content and structure of the management plan

In the pursuit and achievement of the vision of the organisation, it is necessary to state the organisation's objectives. These have been defined as follows:

To get Wigan active by increasing participation rates in our services:

To develop our services so they have an impact on people's lives by supporting:

- i. Improvements to people's health
- ii. The development of the local economy
- iii. Making Wigan Borough environmentally friendly
- iv. The development of high aspirations, education and skills
- v. Improvements in standards of living and reducing poverty
- vi. To improve the performance of service
- vii. To sustain, develop, and expand business activities
- viii. To effectively manage the organisation's reputation.

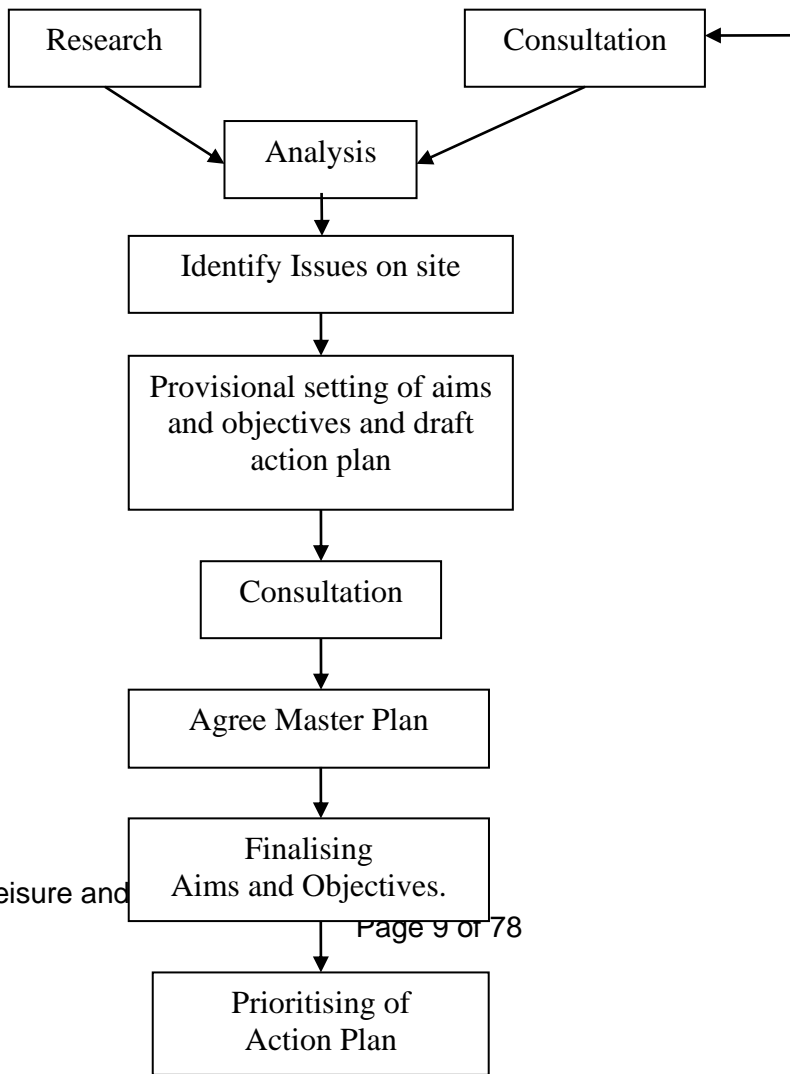
Mesnes Park forms part of the portfolio of the executive director for environmental management and sustainability, within Wigan Leisure Culture Trust (WLCT) management structure.

Since 2004, the Trust has been "re-visioning" all of the services it provides, with a view to addressing a significant backlog of strategic issues associated with these services. Parks and green spaces in the Borough are no exception, and although very well visited, have suffered many years of revenue budget reductions, under investment and lack of positive direction. Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust is committed to adopting the proposals in the Restoration Plan and 10-year Management and Maintenance Plan (MMP) for Mesnes Park.

The Environmental Management & Sustainability section has adopted the MP as a working document and agrees to uphold and manage the standards of management and maintenance as indicated in the MMP.

The diagram below shows the process which has been used to compile this management plan. The content should reflect the site condition and facilities in operation at present, the existing management and maintenance regimes on the site. This plan will also look at the scope of works on site and the maintenance and management regime once the restoration works are complete. It will also take in how park performance will be monitored and what criteria we will use in our quest for success.

Process of compiling the Management Plan



2.0 WHERE ARE WE NOW?

2.1 General Information

2.1.1 Site Description

Mesnes Park occupies a (12) ha site immediately to the north-west of Wigan town centre. Its boundaries are formed by a railway line to the west, Parsons Walk and Mesnes Park Terrace to the south, to the east Wigan College of Technology (the former Gidlow cotton works) and Bridgeman Terrace with its row of good quality houses of similar date to the Park.

2.1.2 Site Location

Address: Mesnes Park, Mesnes Park Terrace, Wigan, WN1 1TU
Ward: Wigan Central
Township: Wigan North
Ordnance Survey: SJ65299
Size: 12 hectares

By Car: At J6 M61, turn right on Diconsson Rd, follow signs to the Town Centre and Wigan Pier at Wigan Market take a right onto Mesnes Street and take the first left into Mesnes Park Terrace and the main entrance will be in view.

From the M6, junction 23 follows A49 Warrington Road. At the roundabout take the right hand lane into Poolstock road. Follow this road until the end and then take a left onto Riverway. At the end of the road take a left hand turn onto Powell Street which continues onto Northway. At Wigan Market take a left onto Mesnes Street and take the first left into Mesnes Park Terrace and the main entrance will be in view.

By public transport; Most buses stop at Wigan Town Centre and the Park is a 5-10 minute

Walk from the bus station.

Train: Wigan Wallgate and Wigan Western (approx 0.6 mile from Station to Park)

Parking: The perimeter around Mesnes Park operates pay and display car parking. In addition, a large Town centre car park is a ten minute walk from the park.

2.1.3 Site Features

Mesnes Park has been split into seven Character Zones listed below, these are represented on the plan Appendix MP32 submitted in the original application and on supporting plans. The character zones consist of: the Formal Gardens, Sports Zone, Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust

Informal Recreation Area, Play zone, Lake Area, Rose Garden and depot. Gazetteers are attached in the Stage 2, Phase 1 application submitted previously.

2.1.3.1 Formal Gardens

The Formal Gardens consist of several intricate patterns of bedding situated at each side of the main drive. The wide main driveway that leads to Dalton's steps and elevated pavilion building dissects this area. The lodge building is located at the main entrance of the park, at the junction of Bridgeman Terrace and Mesnes Park Terrace. The building has been unoccupied for approximately twenty years and is in poor condition. Temporary roofing and window boards keep the building secure. The formal lawns and beds provide seasonal colour and the rhododendrons still exhibit the remains of the scroll design of the original planting. The design is reminiscent of a parterre, which perhaps was intended to be viewed from the pavilion. The bronze statue of Sir Francis Powell punctuates the landscape, and you often find visitors rubbing his now shiny shoe for good luck. The shelter has seen some restoration and ornate grills have been inserted on the entrances.

Beyond the pavilion which is the focal point of the formal gardens, the bandstand is set within a circular promenade and surrounded by vegetation. The soft landscaping layout presents the vision of the 1878 park designer John McLean. His intention to produce a 'picturesque' landscape with limited internal views, inspired by the poor quality of the surrounding scenery. The design strived to create a rugged and irregular natural landscape of largely native trees and plants. The landscape of Mesnes Park although embodying the picturesque principles as its core-planting made use of a decorative or 'gardenesque' margins by using many exotic imported plants and flowers of the day. The park has a rare example of McLean's formal bedding treatment of the flats and terraces that viewed from the pavilion embrace the picturesque principles of viewing a high main object from a low vantage point with enclosing lateral screens and selected high screens.

2.1.3.2 Sports zone

This linear zone runs parallel to the railway embankment and comprises of 3 crown green bowling greens, an 18 hole crazy golf course, 7 Tarmac tennis courts, 1 basketball court and a skate-park facility. The facilities offer good views for spectators due to their low position in the park. The greens are in good condition but are not used to their full potential, the crazy golf and ball game facilities are popular during school holidays and weekends. A few years ago a skate park was created but this was decommissioned shortly after it was installed. Insert picture of sports zone – illustration 3

2.1.3.3 Informal Recreation Area

This is a grassed area, edged with mature trees and shrubs between the central path and the former Wigan & Leigh College Pagefield Campus which has relocated to a new building some 200m along the park boundary. A drainage scheme implemented in 2000 has enabled the area to be used for sports and events. There are the remains of a tarmac surface of a former play area by the north entrance of the park. 5 a side posts are used frequently and park staff direct users to this site when informal football is being played on the formal lawns. A new planning application has been submitted for the back of this area to redevelop an old mill site into residential properties. At present, an entrance from this building to the park is being negotiated.

2.1.3.4 Play Zone

This area includes the 0-5's and 6-11's play area, play shack, remnants of a sensory garden and an area that has historically been used as disabled parking until a few years ago where issues with managing vehicle movement caused the offer of parking to be removed.

The play equipment is limited and set in a sand surface. Despite this, the area is well used during the summer months. Recently, the area has been 'opened up' by selective shrub removal and grassing areas, improving casual surveillance, making it more attractive for play and informal seating. Views are still limited between the two play zones. Bow top fencing surrounds some of the area, in an attempt to reduce the numerous access points. The play shack is made of two linked octagonal rooms which are protected by metal shuttering. The building is used occasionally for events and school groups.

The remnants of a sensory garden are a series of raised beds that are in poor condition with limited planting. The area isn't in keeping with the rest of the park and due to its deterioration has currently no real function. The renovation of the playzone will address and improve this area.

2.1.3.5 Lake area

The lake area is ornamental and is very popular with visitors. The lake has three islands and supports a variety of wildfowl. As per the lake management plan, two islands have been replanted to provide both shelter and evergreen colour. An incomplete low privet hedge separates the grass verges surrounding the lake. The lake has a Pulham & Sons rock feature, which has been cleared of vegetation but is still in need of restoration. Trees and vegetation overhang the lake in some areas and obscure views. A grass verge and footpath separate the lake with Park Road/Parsons Walk. This was planted with crocus bulbs to celebrate the Millennium. Inclined beds have been constructed at the entrance of Parsons Walk entrance which provides improved but limited visual impact to visitors as they enter the park.

2.1.3.6 Rose garden

The garden was restored in 2003 and offers a quiet area for relaxation within the park. Trees and rhododendrons surround the garden but have been reduced in height to improve the security and to improve natural surveillance from the Health Trust's Thomas Linacre Out-patients building. The roses in the beds have been replaced and new rose frames erected. A replica of the missing central feature, a stone sundial plinth and dial has been reconstructed.

2.1.3.7 Depot

The maintenance depot historically housed the facilities for servicing the park and the surrounding town centre green spaces. Facilities included glasshouses, potting shed, storage, vehicle garaging, parks head gardener office, staff welfare facilities and small nursery area containing cold frames. The depot supported, at its peak around 22 staff and contributed to the parks sustainability by growing its own annual bedding. The decline of the depot began with the commencement of the Compulsory

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Competitive Tendering (CCT) era, where staffing levels were reduced and externally grown annual bedding became more cost effective than locally grown provision. The glass houses and cold frames were demolished to remove the maintenance liability as no effective use was available. Currently the depot area is larger than the need of the park and the surplus area has become a storage area which is detracting from the overall park appearance. Access to the depot is an issue as service vehicles need to drive through the park get to the location. This issue was looked at as part of a recent options appraisal into the future location of the depot. The conclusion was a final decision on the future of the Depot being deferred until such a point as when capital funding becomes available. I

2.1.4 Site Ownership

On the 28th March 2003, Mesnes Park was transferred to WLCT by virtue of a Transfer agreement Appendix MP4 (submitted in the stage one application) between Wigan Borough Council and Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust, for the provision of Mesnes Park to operate Charitable Activities and Services, as part of WLCT.

2.1.5 Legal Issues and Designations

Mesnes Park is governed by a series of Byelaws, leases and licenses, covenants and listed structures.

2.1.6.1 Byelaws

The existing by-laws for Mesnes Park were introduced in 1922 Appendix MP21 (submitted in the stage one application). A review of the by-laws is well over due. This will require assistance from Wigan Council's Legal and Property Services and resources from within the park services team. Enforcement of existing or new by-laws will be considered as part of this review.

Since 1st October 2000, it has been an offence under the Dogs (fouling of land) Act 1996, not to clean up if your dog fouls in a public place. The Rangers currently carry out an educational role by issuing information to dog owners. Recently some rangers have had fixed penalty notice training and provide information about the law and responsible dog ownership. The Rangers gather information and monitor the site then liaise with the Council's Animal Warden Service who is responsible for enforcing the by-law.

2.1.6.2 Licences and leases

WLCT currently operate and manage the Mesnes Park facility under a licence agreement due to expire in 2013. The Trust is currently in negotiation with the Council to extend all its leases and licences to a longer term arrangement. The Council as landlord is part of the Tri party agreement and has signed up to the aims and objectives of the project. The agreement is between Wigan Council, WLCT and the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). They are fully committed to the project implementation of both the short term capital investment phase and the long term management and maintenance structure. The lease agreement will mirror the majority of terms detailed in the current licence and maintain the current landlord and tenant demarcation for repairs and maintenance where WLCT are responsible for

the soft landscape and Wigan Council are responsible for the buildings and hard landscape repairs.

The Pavilion is currently leased to Frederick's Ice Cream following the successful renegotiation of the terms and conditions of occupation. The lease agreement was established in co-operation with both Frederick's ice Cream Ltd and Wigan Council Legal Property.. WLCT are unable to sub lease elements within the lease of Mesnes Park and therefore Wigan Council are the landlord in the Pavilion arrangement. It should be noted that all rent and service charges come direct to WLCT to sustain the business and that active consultation takes place between WLCT and Wigan Council over lease extensions and terminations.

As part of the refurbishment of the Sports Zone refurbishment it is the intention to establish a sports zone concession to manage the sporting facilities and provide the opportunity for other family orientated facilities. The sports zone concession will be marketed locally and regionally as an opportunity for an established operator to offer a 'licence to occupy' arrangement. This will also include sports zone accommodation within the Bowling Pavilion. The agreement will initially last for 2 years with an option to a further one year extension if successful. The licence to occupy agreement will run between WLCT and the operator as no legal occupancy rights are transferred.

2.1.6.3 Covenant

The Entrance Lodge has a covenant set upon the building usage from the Diocese of Liverpool which specifies 'acceptable' uses for the building. The covenant, stipulates that the future use of the lodge should compliment park activities. To comply with the covenant conditions. The building will be used for a mix use of community, office and exhibition space.

2.1.6.4 Listed Structures

Mesnes Park is a key component in the regeneration of Wigan due to its town centre location. In 1996, Mesnes Park was added to the National Register of Historic Parks and Gardens by English Heritage. Mesnes Park has seven Grade II listed structures.

- i. The Pavilion
- ii. Lodge
- iii. Main entrance gates
- iv. Bandstand
- v. Two flights of Dalton's steps
- vi. Powell Statue

2.1.7 Historical Importance of Mesnes Park

Mesnes Park is Wigan's first municipal park, opened on the 6th August 1878. It safeguarded open recreational space from development and provided a 'green lung' in an otherwise industrial town. It occupies 12 hectares of former manorial demesnes land known as the 'Mesnes' adjoining the town centre. The design of the park was the result of a competition won by John McClean of Castle Donnington.

McClellan design utilised the sloping site to create terraces surmounted by a pavilion, overlooking a formal garden. An ornamental lake was created from former marl pits and provision was made for recreational areas. Sport and play facilities were added to the park at a later date within the design framework and the garden areas were renowned for their bedding displays and horticultural excellence.

To date the park retains the framework and features of the original design by John McClellan. These include the entrance gates and lodge, Dalton steps, pavilion, ornamental gardens, walks, lake and rockwork and subsequent features such as the bandstand. Further details can be found in the Conservation Management Plan which was included in the original application.

2.2 Policy Context

Mesnes Park can be considered in a variety of contexts, national, regional and local. It is also part of a number of strategies and plans. Below is some examples of how Mesnes fits into the political agenda.

2.2.1 National Context

The modern national debate about the future of parks has its origins in the late 1980's/early 1990's. "*Parks in crisis*" was a frequent headline, first in the horticultural and technical press, and eventually picked up by a wider audience. A combination of long-term revenue cuts, lack of investment, and competition from other leisure offers has brought about this "crisis".

Parks/Open spaces are the most heavily used part of the leisure offer – national surveys show 46% use/visit them more than once a week. Municipal parks are generally free to visit, this promotes their accessibility to all. They provide a huge opportunity for Councils and their associated organisations for events and activities that considerably enhance the quality of life and health in communities.

National quality accreditation through the Green Flag Award scheme demonstrates commitment to improving parks and green spaces for their communities.

2.2.2 Regional Context

The Borough of Wigan is the largest in Greater Manchester comprising rural and industrial communities with a population of over 300,000, and two major centres, Wigan and Leigh. Wigan was originally a Roman settlement. It became a Lancashire Borough in 1246 and grew as a market town with trade in local produce and textiles. By the 17th century Wigan was noted for its fine Canals, coal and ironworks.

Industry was stimulated in the 18th century by improvements in water transport with the opening of the Leeds-Liverpool canal and in 1831 by the arrival of the railway. Rapid expansion of the town in the early 19th century resulted in it becoming one of the unhealthiest in the country with abnormally high death rates.

The second half of the century was characterised by municipal enterprise with the development of new streets and housing areas and the opening of a board school, infirmary, library, park, swimming baths and technical college.

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In first half of the 20th century Wigan was a thriving industrial town, but the decline of the Coalfield areas caused high unemployment.

Since the 1980's there has been substantial new investment. The town centre is a major regional centre with its daily market, new shopping areas interwoven with Victorian arcades and surviving medieval street pattern and civic buildings. Wigan Pier, the JJB Stadium, Robin Park retail park, the Grand Arcade town centre shopping development are all evidence of the Borough's successful regeneration strategy but the town still has unemployment and deprivation levels considerably higher than the national average.

The strong Labour council has developed strategies for improvement, implementation and evaluation in all areas of its governance that endorse and deliver the policies of national government.

2.2.3 Local Context – Townships

The Borough of Wigan has been split into ten areas and each area is called a Township. This was developed five years ago. Each Township has a Township Manager and a Township co coordinator and their role is to work with Councillors and local residents to develop more opportunities for local people to have a say about their area.

Each of the Township areas also has a Forum. The Forum is made up of a number of local agencies, organisations, local Councillors and local groups. Township Forums are responsible for producing local action plans that reflect the long-term vision of the Township area.

The action plans are based around eight themes;

- i. community safety
- ii. economy
- iii. education
- iv. environment
- v. health
- vi. leisure and recreation
- vii. neighbourhood development
- viii. traffic and transport

Mesnes Park falls within the Wigan North Township whose action plan includes and action point for Mesnes (Appendix MP10 as submitted in the Stage One application).

LC4 – “Mesnes Park to be restored and residents across the Borough encouraged to use it” as an action point for their plan.

2.2.4 Park Strategy

A new parks strategy has been developed and published in 2008. The strategy aims to reverse the direction of travel of the service overall and to make a significant Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust

improvement to the overall level of resident's satisfaction with parks and green spaces. The Green Flag scheme is seen as one of the key drivers of this improvement – In 2009, Wigan currently has one Green Flag park. The strategy looks at a systematic way of improving greenspace and facilities in the Borough.

The Parks Strategy seeks to rationalise the management of parks and open spaces in Wigan. The Parks Strategy identifies key sites across the borough and proposes a rationale for sustainable development, by concentrating resources and creating a management plan for each of the sites. The management plan will essentially reflect the Green Flag accreditation criteria. Parks and green spaces in Wigan Borough continue to be well used and are generally well regarded.

2.2.5 Other Strategies and Policy Considerations

As the development of Mesnes Park cuts across a number of different themes, a variety of strategies must be taken into account whilst managing the park for the future. Below are some examples.

2.2.5.1 Community Plan

Through the Governments Modernising Local Government agenda, Wigan Council has developed its Community Plan Appendix MP 5 (new draft community plan vision 2026) and Local Culture Strategy.

The Community Plan sets out key priorities to assist in making improvements in the quality of life of Wigan's residents. It has been written following discussions between representatives of organisations and the community, commonly known as Wigan Borough Partnership. Meetings, research and consultation has been undertaken with thousands of people living and working in the Town to establish what would make a difference to improving life in Wigan.

Wigan Council has defined a vision for the Borough with eight main goals stated in the Community Plan, to which the proposals for park restoration and improvement relate. These are:

- Standards of living
 - ii. Better health
 - iii. Education
 - iv. Strong local economy
 - v. Improved transport
 - vi. Decent homes, safe, clean neighbourhood
 - vii. Greener borough
 - viii. Participation in community & culture
- (website <http://www.wigan.gov.uk>)

2.2.5.2 Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust's Heritage Strategy

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The Heritage Strategy is a vision for the future 2006 – 2016.

Action 6 and 7 of the Access Plan for the Heritage Service intends “to improve service access to the community by increasing partnership working within the wider community”. It is intended to achieve this through the Heritage Office (Community Outreach & Education). Good partnerships have already been established with the Heritage Services section, the Friends of Mesnes Park and the Parks and Countryside Activities Team and the Parks Regeneration Team.

Heritage Services are responsible for organising an annual Holocaust memorial ceremony. The ceremony has historically been held in Mesnes Park and included performances and readings from local school children, the Friends of Mesnes Park and local dignitaries centred around the Holocaust tree – a silver birch *Betula jacquemontii* representing a living memorial for those who died. The main ceremony is now held in Wigan Town Hall but the Friends invite attendees to return to the park for an informal ceremony around the Holocaust tree each year.

Mesnes Park is the focus of many articles found in the Heritage Services magazine Past Forward. The Friends of Mesnes Park (FOMP) have used the opportunity to recruit new volunteers through this means and help them to find out information about the park.

The FOMP contributed to Wigan’s Parish Map with a panel specifically for Mesnes Park. This was created to celebrate the Millennium, and was co-ordinated through the Heritage Services team.

A vast amount of historical information was collected during the production of the exhibition ‘Mesnes Park - A People’s History’. The Heritage Services team supported the Friends through the project and the History Shop displays the exhibition from time to time. Selected information and memories formed the 16 panels, which make up the exhibition; however a lot of information wasn’t used due to the lack of space. One of FOMP’s aspirations is to publish a Mesnes Park history booklet, containing all the information that was collated. The idea is to sell the booklets as a means of raising the profile of the park within the community and to raise funds for the Park. This is one strand which links both the work of Heritage Services and Park Services.

2.2.5.3 Other Policies

The following policies have been taken into consideration when preparing this management plan: see appendix or website for more info, insert hyperlink

- Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA) (website <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/>)
- Local Agenda 21 Plan (website <http://www.wigan.gov.uk>)
- Unitary Development Plan (website <http://www.wigan.gov.uk>)
- Wigan Council Corporate Plan (website <http://www.wigan.gov.uk>)
- Parks Countryside Activities Service Delivery Plan 2007-10 (Appendix 4)
- Sport, Health and Physical Education Strategy 2005-10 (SHAPE) Appendix Five.

- The Arts Factor An Arts Strategy for Wigan Borough 06/12 (Appendix MP15 submitted in the Stage One application)
- Community Playground Development Strategy (Appendix MP16 submitted in the Stage One application)
- Children & Young Peoples Participation Strategy (Appendix MP 17 submitted in the Stage One application)
- Street Scene Strategic Plan 2002-06 (still relevant as part of best value review. The principles are still adhered to although a review hasn't been undertaken to date). (Appendix MP18 submitted in the Stage One application)
- Destination Wigan 2004-09 (Appendix MP19 submitted in the Stage One application)
- Greater Manchester Police Policing Plan 2007-2008 (Appendix MP20 submitted in the Stage One application)

2.2.6 Site Condition

With local industrial decline, Mesnes Park in common with many other municipal parks, suffered a period of lack of investment through Compulsive Competitive Tendering resulting in the loss of features and deterioration of the historic fabric. A concerted effort to address issues and reverse the decline in 1996 came when the park's national importance was recognised and placed on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest. This process is hoped to be reversed with a successful Parks for People application for Scheme A, which is due to start in November 2009 and a successful application for Scheme B.

2.3.1 Landscape Character

Generally there is good spatial definition as set out by John McLean of the various zones and enclosure of the park. Limited management, plant growth and natural regeneration have led to the loss of plant layers and in some instances compromised intended views. Recent tree planting has not always been sympathetic in location or species selection.

WLCT has produced a 10 year Soft Landscaping Plan which looks at restoring some of the main historical vistas which is in accordance with the original design of the park by John Mclean.

2.3.2 Building Structure

Mesnes Park buildings and structures are described in more detail in the gazetteer. The descriptions in this section serve to outline the status, appearance, condition and current use of each building and structure and indicate their role and relationship to each other in the context to the park as a whole.

2.3.3 Access to the site

Access to the park can be gained by five entrances. The main park entrance which is situated on Mesnes Park Terrace. Other entrances include Parsons Walk, Park Road, and Walden Avenue and there is also an entrance which leads from Rylands mill development to the park which will be open to residents once the mill development is in progress later this year.

2.3.4 Utilisation of the Site

The current number of visitors to Mesnes Park on an annual basis is 1.5 million people. The profile of its users is different to other parks in the borough as it has more visitors during the week than at weekend. In the main, this is due to the locality of Wigan College with students using the park as a thoroughfare.

The duration of stay of visitors to Mesnes Park is approximately one hour. The Marketing Plan aims to assist in encouraging visitors to extend both the length of their visit and the frequency to which they visit the park. This will also tie in with other key documents such as the Interpretation Plan and Audience Development Plan.

In order to ensure that Mesnes is sustainable for future years, audiences must be developed to include a broader scope. An Audience Development Plan was prepared in 2006. The intention is now to use site data information to market the site and develop selected audiences. See Section 4.3.

2.3.5 Facilities

At present park facilities consist of three bowling greens and pavilion, informal grass pitch, basketball area, four tennis courts, children's play area, bandstand/teen meet area. Also during school holidays, crazy golf is available. The park provides toilet facilities within the Café Pavilion. There are areas of formal lawn, annual bedding displays and informal wooded areas. The park also houses one of the depots of Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust's, Grounds Maintenance Services and four Park Rangers.

2.3.6 Attractions

As mentioned previously, Mesnes Park has 6 Grade II listed features. It has a lake, formal gardens and areas for play. The main features which are restored will be subject to interpretation panels and it is hoped that increased links with the Heritage section, marketing and a diverse programme of events will be able to highlight the attractions of Mesnes and increase visitor numbers.

2.3.7 Events

The Parks and Countryside Activity Team (PACA) are trying to adopt a more formal approach of events management. Performance data is used from event evaluation forms and visitor satisfaction questionnaires to produce a diverse events programme which hopefully will attract a variety of audiences to the site. The addition of a dedicated Parks Officer should be able to diversify the events programme for Mesnes ensuring it will become bigger and better and help to implement the Audience Development Plan and the Training Plan.

2.4 Existing Management & Maintenance

Mesnes Park is managed by WLCT. There are several sections who are currently involved with managing the site, The Parks and Countryside Activity Section (PACA), Park Regeneration Team, Grounds Maintenance Services, Performance Team and the Play Section and the Facilities Management team, Marketing and Finance departments.

2.4.1 Current management policy based approach

WLCT is committed to maintaining a high quality park with management that will ensure the establishment and long term success of the proposals for Mesnes Park. There have been recent changes which lead to restructuring the section. The restructure has brought different service development teams within EM&S which have a greater involvement with the management of Mesnes Park.

The Parks and Countryside Activities Team (PACA) is managed by The Parks and Countryside Activities Manager. They are responsible for the capitol and revenue budgets and are responsible for delivering the service delivery plan in addition to events and activities of several key sites throughout the Borough. They are supported by:

- Five Parks Officers
- Eighteen Park Rangers
- Two Community Information Officers
- Two Activities Co-ordinators

The Park Officer for Mesnes is responsible for the day to day running of the park and liaising with a variety of user and community groups. It is the responsibility of the Parks Officer to pull together a varied events programme and engage with the community. This allows opportunities for communication between sections to be easier. Likewise, PACA are responsible for the development of the management plan and the green flag action plan. The PACA Team also have responsibility of the four rangers who work on a variety of sites but one is specific to Mesnes and spends the majority of time at the Park. Two new officers who are present in the park due to a successful external funding application are the Community Information Officers (job role to be described in detail further on).

The Parks Regeneration Team help to support the Mesnes Park Restoration Project. The Parks Regeneration Manager has the overall responsibility for the Mesnes Park Regeneration Project and staff on this team support the project by actively seeking external funding opportunities for the project, creating and implementing the soft landscaping proposals and developing the wider park master plan.

A detailed specification standard exists for all maintenance operations carried out in the park by the Grounds Maintenance Service. The duty gardener and his team carry out daily routine maintenance work. And any additional works are specified and monitored by Parks and Open Spaces officer for Mesnes.

Currently there are three full time members of staff based in Mesnes Park and one apprentice who is sponsored by CABE space. There is a leading hand and two duty gardeners. Their hours of work are: 35.5 hours of work during the winter and 43 hours during the summer, Monday – Thursday 7.30-17.00 and 7.30-15.00 in the winter. During the summer period when the park has most events, staff hours may vary to accommodate events.

In the summer, March – September, two additional full time staff assist in maintaining the park. Staff are responsible for routine work including litter collection, grass cutting, edging, weeding and pruning. The duty gardeners are also responsible for carrying out a visual inspection of the park on a daily basis. They report and respond to any defects identified.

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In addition to site based staff, there are a team of four men who undertake work such as herbicide applications, tree work and bedding out. The Area Manager is responsible for the staff in the park and he reports to the Green Spaces Manager.

The Performance Section deals with implementation of systems to count the number of parks users and help to interpret this data. In addition, they survey, map and assist with the grounds maintenance systems. They also help to collect, monitor and interpret the HLF performance data.

As the development work is underway, the team will survey and update the core data, developing systems to monitor and evaluate. For example the performance team will help in to change the GMS specification and look at the cost implications. As part of the enhanced soft landscaping proposals, areas of landscaping will have to be measured and quantified.

The Play Section are responsible for the regular inspection and maintenance of the play area. They have also had an input into the design of the new play zone and attention has be paid to the materials used to try to reduce any future management and maintenance issues.

2.4.2 Issues with the current management approach

One issue with the current management approach is the partnership between Wigan Council and WLCT. WLCT has only been in existence for just over five years, during this time, it has not yet established its own identity and is still widely recognised then Wigan Council. Likewise, budget held by the PACA Team should be spent on promoting audience development. This is sometimes to the contrary and is spent on internal infrastructure which should be potentially funded by the landlord, in this case Wigan Council. It is hoped that in future years, these problems and issues can be sorted out.

Further issues include the management of key personnel on site. The Park Ranger for Mesnes is managed by another officer who is responsible for three other park rangers and three other sites. This sometimes can cause communication problems and sometimes if events are being carried out elsewhere in the Borough, it can compromise activities at Mesnes Park. Currently the management of this member of staff is being investigated to see if some solution can be looked at.

2.4.3 On-site Issues

Mesnes Park suffers from several problems which are probably not uncommon to many urban parks.

2.4.3.1 Antisocial behaviour

Anti-social behaviour issues and acts of vandalism are reported to Greater Manchester Police. A FWIN log (force wide incident number) is created and referenced on a completed Trust Accident/Incident Report Form. Statistical analysis on reported crimes is carried out by Greater Manchester Police and the Information Section of the Community Safety Team, part of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership. Parks Officers attend PACT meetings to raise issues around anti-social behaviour.

Community Beat Officers and Police Community Support Officers issue contact cards to people who are involved in acts of anti-social behaviour. Their contact details are added to the APP database (held at the Anti-social Behaviour Unit at Wigan Council); a letter sent to the offenders home, inviting parents to speak to an officer in relation to the incident. In general terms, statistics show that 70% of offenders who are issued with a contact card do not re-offend. However, as contact cards are re-issued to repeat offenders, intervention measures put in place and the severity of the sanction increases. Interventions are assessed, and co-ordinated, and evidence gathered by the Community Safety Officer for the area. Persistent offenders can enter into a six month voluntary contract called a Good Behaviour Agreement. This details conditions by which the offender must comply. Any breach which can be supported by evidence, can result in the issuing of an Anti-social Behaviour Order (ASBO), or a Criminal Anti-social Behaviour Order (CRASBO).

This summer (2009) WLCT, GMP (Greater Manchester Police) and Wigan Council all contributed funding to deliver 'Operation Windburn' which included extra police presence, ranger presence, diversionary activities on site. Fredrick's the café also extended their opening time in the park every Friday night. Operation Windburn has showed that GMP crime has dropped in the park compared to the same period last year upto by 82%. This is very positive but, WLCT would like to role this out on an annual basis and look at delivering other successful diversionary activities to reduce antisocial behaviour.

2.4.3.2 Communication

Communication is an on-site issue. It is difficult to keep staff on the ground updated with all the latest developments. The addition of the two new Community Information Officers will try and bridge this gap to some extent. Also, when restoration works start on site it is hoped that weekly meetings will take place between The Parks Officer and a representative from the Community Information Officers, Park Ranger, Grounds Maintenance, Education and Fredrick's Café on a weekly basis.

Other measures which may help to aid communication is the movement of the Park Officer to the Frog Lane Depot which is where the Grounds Maintenance Section is located. This will help to form improved relationships between the Parks and Countyside Activities Team and Ground Maintenance Team which should help in the smooth running of the park.

2.4.3.3 Vehicles in Mesnes Park

It is recognised that vehicles using the park is necessary from a management and maintenance perspective. However, there is a risk to pedestrian visitors and staff if this is not managed effectively. A vehicle policy has been developed (Appendix Eight) which is trying to be phased in with the implementation of the scheme.

2.4.4 Financial Resources to the Management of Mesnes Park

The park is currently managed to a high standard in terms of management and maintenance of the soft landscape, vandalism response, litter collection and events programming.

Additional resources are required to maintain the hard infrastructure, enhance park ranger presence and reintroduce horticultural practices in order to sustain the capital investment. Increased revenue contributions have been identified (subject to annual review) for maintenance expenditure and an increase in site based staff (CMP).

To complete the desired Master plan for Mesnes, WLCT are looking at a variety of external funding applications. Currently, projects which require external funding include the Sports Zone, Footpaths and Lighting lit routes. Other external funding opportunities will seek funding to internally fit out a community room in Entrance Lodge, the refurbishment of the Shelter to create a community shelter and interpretation.

In addition, it is proposed that the Training Plan and Audience Development Plan will look at training volunteers with essential skills which could help to benefit the park. For example, volunteer groups will be set up which help with parks projects. A member of GMS or PACA could help to supervise these volunteers and help them to gain new skills.

3.0 WHERE DO WE WANT TO GET TO?

3.1 Vision for Mesnes Park

The vision for Mesnes Park is:

“a town centre park with safe access for all. A green space venue that presents opportunity for quality events and activities, education and training where the integrity of the historic landscape is complemented alongside the provision of good contemporary facilities”.

3.2.1 Aims and Objectives

The following aims and objectives have been determined through extensive consultation :

- 3.2.1.1 Improve the standards of care, horticultural quality and diversity by:
- i. Implement the 10 year management and maintenance plan.
 - ii. Establish links with Wigan & Leigh College and GMS through horticultural apprenticeship schemes, using the park as an educational resource.
 - iii. Reduce the issues that have a negative effect on the appearance of the park, e.g. antisocial behaviour and vandalism.
 - v. Develop existing horticultural skills within park staff by implementing the Training Plan.
 - vi. Implement the Lake Management Plan.
 - vii. Implement the Biodiversity Plan

- 3.2.1.2 Improve the health and safety for the benefit of visitors:
- i. Improve the footpath surfaces.
 - ii. Decrease the amount of dog fouling.
 - iii. Undertake a regular risk assessment for the site.
 - iv. Continue to regularly inspect the park.
 - v. Ensure all employees, suppliers, contractors and tenants meet national, Wigan Council and WLCT agreed standards.

- 3.2.1.3 Improve security for park visitors:
- i. Selective vegetation removal to reduce opportunities for anti-social behaviour.
 - ii. Build on good relationships with Police and Safer Neighbourhood Section.
 - iii. Implement the JUMP (Joined up Mesnes Park) proposal and develop mitigation strategies to combat anti-social behaviour.
 - iv. Develop a programme of activities to encourage evening use of the park.

- 3.2.1.4 Conserve the heritage merit of the park:

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- i. Restore the heritage landscape, buildings and structures of the park with minimal alteration to their original fabric.
- ii. Involve appropriate professionals in all aspects of the restoration of the park.
- iii. Sensitively integrate contemporary facilities within the historical framework.
- iv. Use high quality materials where new facilities are proposed.
- v. Use materials compatible with the character and fabric of the traditional materials used in the park.

3.2.1.5 Improve the accessibility of the park:

- i. Develop and enhance physical, sensory and intellectual access opportunities as detailed in the Audience and Access Plans and in line with local and national policies.
- ii. Consider inclusive options in all park refurbishment.
- iii. Review opening hours of parks facilities
- iv. Establish a long-term lease to manage and improve the crazy golf facility and casual crown green and tennis facilities
- v. Physical access will be guided by principles of conservation and inclusive visitor management
- vi. Support and facilitate sustainable forms of transport to and from the park.

3.2.1.6 Volunteers and Training:

- i. Implement the Training Plan and Volunteering Policy.
- ii. Continue to develop staff in line with the Trust's employee policies.

3.2.1.7 Recreate the gardens and landscape character of the park.

- i. Understand the intentions of the original park designer.
- ii. Recreate the historical design intention in annual bedding, shrub and tree planting.
- iii. Recreate the historical vistas in the park.
- iv. Develop a tree trail through the park.
- v. Re establish the herbaceous border.
- vi. Retain historic landscape whilst diversifying and enhancing ecological value.

3.2.1.8 Maintain relationships to other parks.

- i. Develop a local Parks Strategy
- ii. Continue links with Green Space Northwest network.
- iii. Seek national accreditation via the Green Flag process.
- iv. Utilise performance management benchmarking data as determined by AGMA (Association of Greater Manchester Authorities).

3.2.1.9 Maintain relationships to the surrounding neighbourhood.

- i. Continue to engage and develop further links with strategic partners, e.g. Wigan & Leigh College, Drumcroon Arts Centre, Wigan Town Centre & Thomas Linacre Outpatients as per the Audience Development Plan.
 - ii. Continue to be involved with Township planning.

- 3.2.1.10 Education and Interpretation.
 - i. Develop the play shack as a base for organised groups and activities.
 - ii. Develop a programme of informal educational sessions and lifelong learning for the community via the 'be alive' events programme.
 - iii. Establish the park as resource for education.
 - iv. Develop and implement an Interpretation Strategy.

- 3.2.1.11 Generate revenue for the park.
 - i. Implement the park Business Plan.

- 3.2.1.12 Offer a diverse programme of events for visitors.
 - i. Restore and upgrade the bandstand as a venue for performances
 - ii. Sustain a Premises Licence to allow events and activities
 - iii. Encourage Community groups, schools and amateur performances
 - iv. Further encourage the use of the lodge and pavilion as a venue for indoor events/activities.
 - v. Link with town centre activities.
 - vi. Create further links with the Festivals team to organise large-scale events.

- 3.2.1.13 Achieve 'Green Flag' Award
 - i. Appoint experienced and qualified Park Officer to manage the site including all aspects of use, conservation, interpretation, development, consultation and community involvement to achieve the strategic vision for the park.
 - ii. Promote and secure political support for the benefits of the Green Flag Award.

- 3.2.1.14 Visitor and Stakeholder Aims and Objectives
 - i. Continue to involve stakeholders and the local community in the restoration of Mesnes Park.
 - ii. Continue to support the Friends of Mesnes Park (FOMP).
 - iii. Assist the FOMP to recruit new Friends.
 - iv. Continue to determine aspirations and views of the community by means of visitor surveys and regular consultation.
 - v. Develop a Mesnes Park Steering Group.

3.3

Mesnes Park Swot Analysis

| Strengths | Weaknesses |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Town Centre Location 2. Protected as part of the Mesnes Conservation Area. 3. Grade two on the register of historic parks and gardens. 4. Considered an important part of the town centre regeneration. 5. The park already has good numbers of existing visitors. 6. The park has an existing Friends group in Friends of Mesnes Park (FOMP). 7. Staff commitment and knowledge. 8. Progress in networking and community development. 9. High level of support across Wigan. 10. Partner support in Fredericks café. 11. Extensive consultation which informs the whole park development. 12. Strong Historical links and traditions with the community. 13. Free access. 14. Strategic Commitment. 15. Political commitment. 16. Developed core documents that support the whole park project. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The sustainability of FOMP. 2. Limited opening hours of facilities within the park. 3. Concerns about safety. 4. Existing management & Maintenance of Park buildings. 5. Events programme not diverse. 6. Family and play areas are inadequate. 7. Limited area for ball games and informal recreation. 8. Staff availability. 9. Limited education provision. 10. Little visibility in town centre. 11. Access poor for those with sensory/mobility impairment. |
| Opportunities | Threats |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The park has an expandable visitor experience. 2. Development of links with local strategic partners. E.g. Wigan and Leigh College, local businesses. 3. Contribution to health and 'quality of life' for local communities 4. Enhancing the biodiversity | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do nothing – effective decline. 2. Crime and vandalism levels. 3. Failure to implement elements of the JUMP project through the whole park development. 4. Risks of not securing major capital investment. 5. Increased competition from other leisure pursuits. 6. Failure to inform stakeholders of |

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>and ecology.</p> <p>5. An events & activities programme that can be developed.</p> <p>6. Ownership and positive involvement of young people.</p> <p>7. Links to potential new residencies adjacent to the Park.</p> <p>8. Expandable education program.</p> <p>9. Secondary external funding support.</p> <p>10. Improving the parks experience and increasing visitor numbers by implementing the Audience Development Plan, Access Plan, Interpretation Plan and the Training Plan.</p> | <p>developments.</p> <p>7. Current culture of task completion against quality visitor experience.</p> |
|--|---|

3.3.1 Identified Issues

Through the above SWOT and consultation and discussions with stakeholders, parks staff and the Park Officer, the following issues and conflicts have been raised. Listed below are possible solutions to the issues identified, which are incorporated into the overall development of the park.

| Issue identified | Possible Solution |
|--|---|
| Management Issues | |
| Significant funding is required to restore the heritage features and buildings in the park. | Work with the Project Management and Facilities Team, FOMP and WLCT's Regeneration Team to seek external funding and support. |
| Ensure high standards of horticultural maintenance under the existing specification. | Enforce quality monitoring and ensure appropriate resource. |
| Horticultural expertise is lost as traditional 'gardeners' retire and replaced with untrained staff. | Develop apprenticeship schemes and encourage training through links with Wigan & Leigh college and ST Helens College to Implement the Training Plan. |
| Capacity building of the local community. | Keep the Friends group interested by their involvement in projects. Continued support of the Friends of Mesnes Park group and recruiting new volunteers. |
| Incidents and anti-social behaviour | Implement the JUMP proposal. |

| Issue identified | Possible Solution |
|--|--|
| Management Issues | |
| issues. Significant numbers of young people congregating leading to intimidation and perceptions that the park is unsafe. | Reduce opportunities for anti-social behaviour by vegetation removal and increasing appropriate use of the park (natural surveillance). Develop on good links established with Greater Manchester Police and Wigan Council's Safer Neighbourhood Section team. Develop a diverse events programme to increase the appropriate use of the park by visitors. |
| Conflict between ethnic minority groups and the local community. | Develop an events programme using the park as a venue to enable cultural experiences, e.g. WOW multicultural event. Continue to educate/train staff to foster a diverse cultural environment. |
| The impact of the proposed restoration of the pavilion will have on the established café (Fredericks of Chorley) business. | Imperative that timescales for works are kept to a minimum. Develop a marketing plan and high profile re-opening when the pavilion is restored. Re-location of the café facility during the restoration works. |
| Conflicts of users along the path network. | Develop a cycling lane on the primary paths and implement the Vehicle Policy. |
| Lack of parking facilities for the park. | Develop partnerships to encourage town centre parking for the park. Create parking opportunity for visitors. |
| Conservation considerations | The design and restoration of park buildings and landscapes are considered in the light of Conservation Area and Historic Parks and Gardens parameters. |

Other issues that present barriers to people using the park and their solutions are developed further in the Access & Audience Development action plans.

3.3 The Green Flag Award

The Green Flag Award has become the national standard for parks and green spaces in England and Wales. The scheme started in 1996 as a means of encouraging managers of greenspace to improve environmental standards. The Green Flag Award consists of a desk assessment and field assessment. If the applicant scores over 60% in each category it is able to gain a Green Flag Award.

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The award is annual award and must be re-applied for each year. The Green Flag Award is comprised of the following sections: Welcoming, Health safe and secure, Well maintained and clean, Sustainability, Conservation and heritage, Community involvement, Marketing and Management of the site.

3.4.1 Welcoming

At present Mesnes Park has five entrances: Walkden Avenue, Bridgeman Terrace, Mesnes Park Terrace, Parson's Walk and Park Avenue (See plan ??). Mesnes Park Terrace is used as the main entrance for visitors. It is hoped that Phase 2 of the restoration project will see enhancements to all entrances to the park which will improve them aesthetically and be consistent in design throughout. The main entrance will be fully restored with new iron and stone work.

Whilst looking at improving entrances to the park, design and future maintenance will be considered. As the gates of the park are not locked, one gate from each entranceway is left open, which provides easy access for disabled users and park users with prams.

The visibility to the park is to be improved. Selected trees on the boundary of the park are will be removed (though a recent tree survey commissioned) and other vegetation in the park will also be removed to try and open up historic vistas into the park. This will not only visually open up the whole of the park but will provide added security in the park also.

The presence of on-site grounds maintenance staff and park rangers at Mesnes Park, makes for a welcoming environment for park users. The presence of on-site staff ensures that inspections and defects are picked up more easily. In addition, the maintenance in the park is generally clean and with the presence of a Duty Gardener on-site, it ensures that any unprecedented untidiness can be easily cleaned up.

As part of the submission of the Access Plan to the HLF, the Master plan has been developed to consider not just physical but, all other access barriers. The Access Plan looks at sensory, intellectual, social, cultural and financial barriers. To create a welcoming environment, each entrance will include information about the Park's history and the park event programme.

3.4.1.1 Good and Safe Access

Due to it's location to the train and bus station Mesnes Park can be easily accessed on foot by train and bus. Pay and display car parking is available on three of the four boundaries of the park. Two large town centre car parks are found within a ten minute walk of the park.

A new cycle route has been proposed which goes from the town centre to a new link path through the park. The route could be used to encourage use in the new sports zone from the mill building development and from local residents who live in Beech Hill, who could access the site via Walkden Avenue, past the new improved sports zone and directly through the park.

The parks current vehicle policy is being implemented to reduce vehicle use within the park. In addition there was debate around whether the depot should move to the periphery of the park to reduce vehicles having to move through the park to service it. It has been decided that due 's current to lack of funds, it will be best to keep the depot in it's current location. This issue will affect the vehicle policy and risk assessment for the park.

3.4.1.2 Signage

The Parks signage and interpretation was reviewed as part of the Scheme A (Interpretation Strategy). As part of this phase, there will be a new suite of signage and appropriate branding. A planned maintenance program will be implemented to look at signage which is at present on a reactive basis to improve signage

The design and quality of information provided at present could be improved greatly but this is expected to be phased in gradually when the main works packages begin. The type of information will also be controlled, the park may benefit from a limited amount of information but displayed all over the park to ensure the message gets across to park users.

At present there are street furniture and facilities which are located ad-hoc and facilities which may not be being used appropriately. Again, phase 2 of the restoration scheme will look at the design and location of street furniture and will at an appropriate management regime. When placing new benches in the park the Project Implementation Team (PIT) will look at where benches are required and ensure that there is a requirement for seating and carry out an internal audit.

3.4.1.3 Equal Access for All

Access to the park for people with mobility problems is generally good. Most of the entrances are level, making it easy to enter and exit the park environment. The PIT (Project Implementation Team) has been working closely with the Access Group to ensure that in all the design and preparation disabled access has been considered. Examples of this can be seen in the proposed lift in the pavilion and adult hoist in the bowls pavilion which will have full DDA accessible changing facilities. Also, the new footpath path will provide a circular route through the park for people with mobility problems.

All these measures will hopefully ensure that the park provides a welcoming place for users to relax.

3.4.2 Health safe and secure

The gates at Mesnes Park are not locked. Facilities which are open for the general public include the Pavilion (on a daily basis) which includes a café and toilets and the Play shack (which is open for educational sessions and for community use when required).

3.4.2.1 Safe equipment and facilities

Mesnes Park is checked visually daily to ensure equipment and facilities are safe.

- The Park Ranger and Duty Gardener check daily for litter, detritus and visual defects. Any necessary remedial work is carried out immediately or referred to the relevant department for prompt attention.
- The Playground Maintenance Team carries out weekly detailed check of the play equipment. Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA) conducts a full independent check of all play equipment.
- The park buildings and infrastructure are inspected weekly by the Ranger Service. Maintenance requests are forwarded to the landlord, Wigan Council, via its arms length management service N P S Northwest Ltd (NPS).
- The maintenance request system has two levels of priority for repairs P1 and P2. P1 repairs are carried out within one working day, P2 repairs with 5 working days. Larger repairs are costed and included in the planned maintenance programme if funding is available.
- Some examples of where the Corporate Property Maintenance Fund in has been spent include the inside of the rangers office. A new roof installed as part of the planned maintenance programme in winter 2007 and the interior of the toilet block was renovated from the WLCT budget.
- Information boards have been installed at the main entrance and Park Rd entrance giving details of nearest public telephone, first aid arrangements and other contacts for park visitors.
- A full Arboricultural Survey was carried out in the autumn 2006 and has been updated this year, and an arboricultural management plan is being developed. Emergency and routine tree works are carried out as they are identified.
- In addition, regular inspections are carried out by the Grounds Maintenance Services Officers in conjunction with the Parks Officer to identify improvements that can be made to the presentation of the park. Examples of this work include small alterations to the soft landscape; removal of low branches to allow safe passage by pedestrians.
- Programmed soft landscape maintenance is regularly reviewed in terms of ensuring a safe and secure environment for park users.

The new play area will provide new play facilities for children. The equipment which is being considered as part of the restoration scheme have been chosen carefully and are appropriate to a particular age group and fully inclusive. There is a variety of equipment which will provide different play opportunities in a safe and comfortable environment. The function and condition of the equipment will be monitored over time.

3.4.2.2 Health and Safety Policy

All work and operations within the park are carried out in accordance with Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust's and Wigan Council's Health and Safety Policy.

Grounds Maintenance Teams must, throughout the practice of all services, have full regard for the safety of all persons, services and members of the public. Working at all times in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and all regulations and codes of practice, which supplement the Act, e.g. COSHH, RIDDOR, PPC, and EC Directives. The Health and Safety manual is held in the Grounds Maintenance depot.

Risk assessments for operations within parks have been carried out (sample risk assessment appendix 8). All staff are aware of the risk assessments.

Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust regularly reviews health and safety procedures and takes account of new corporate directives, government guidelines and manufacturers (and suppliers) recommendations.

3.4.2.3 Personal security / site security

Contractors must follow a signing in procedure. In order to carry out any work on site, an adequate risk assessment and method statement must be submitted and approved. One of Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust's key aims for all parks is to return site based staff in the form of a site based duty gardener who can provide guidance and presence in the park. Mesnes Park has a team of rangers who are based at the site and work in the park when required. Grounds Maintenance Services also increases security presence of the park during working hours as staff are always present in the park.

Two new members of staff started in April 2009 who work in Mesnes Park (community/information officers) their primary role is to meet and greet the general public. This will increase site presence on site and hopefully security. A Parks Activities Co-Ordinator has also been employed by WLCT who will work hand in hand with other site staff to provide diversionary activities to reduce anti-social behaviour in the park.

In case of emergencies, there is a list of site contacts who will be able to deal with any concerns the general public may have. New signage within the park will also have a contact number in an emergency. All rangers are first aid trained and should be able to deal with any minor first aid incidents.

As part of the restoration process, vegetation will be removed to open up the historical vistas within the park. The removal of thick dense vegetation should reduce areas where people are able to cause anti-social behaviour within the park. This will increase site visibility creating a safer environment.

Consultation regarding the safety of the park has been in conjunction with the community partnership team. As part of the master planning for the park, security of visitors and facilities has been addressed. Key areas which are being looked at are: opening up areas of the park, along with the presence of on site staff. We are looking for the police to use the lodge and provide more of a presence in the park. WLCT also has a Parks Activities Co-ordinator who puts on events in the evenings and at weekends to try and divert youths into activities rather than creating anti-social behaviour in the park.

In addition further security measures planned as part of the Phase 2 restoration works include installing a network of lit routes and keeping park building open for longer to try and increase the amount of park users.

3.4.2.4 Dog Fouling

Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust welcomes responsible dog owners in parks, with the exception of children's play areas. Dog owners are actively encouraged to take dog

mess home to be disposed of. Biodegradable bags are available from the rangers to members of the public along with information about Dog Fouling law.

If there is a persistent problem, the Council's Dog Wardens are asked to attend, with a view to informing the public and issuing fixed penalty notices where appropriate. Dog Fouling signs are displayed around the park.

Rangers have recently been on Fixed Penalty Training in order to issue Fixed Penalty notices to offenders who dog foul in the park.

3.4.2.5 Watercourses

Mesnes Park has an ornamental lake, in the winter frozen ice signs are installed and life jackets are kept in the rangers office.

Mesnes Park currently has Barley Brook which is culverted. If any works need to be carried out in terms of Health and Safety then the Environment Agency should be contacted.

As part of the impending restoration works, there have been flood risk assessments carried out. The Council's Drainage Manager has also been consulted in conjunction with engineers.

3.4.2.6 Review of health and safety mechanisms

Currently, all PACA sites are going through a health and safety assessment with the help of an independent health and safety consultant. All site health and safety procedures and documents are being reviewed and action plans are being put in place.

3.5 Well maintained and clean

3.5.1 Hard Landscape Maintenance

Since the establishment of WLCT in 2003 a landlord and tenant relationship has been in place to define the repairing liabilities for the buildings and hard landscape. All liabilities for building and hard landscape currently rest with Wigan Council to action through its Corporate Property Maintenance Fund.

The Corporate Property Maintenance Fund (CPMF) is a £5.6 million budget charged with maintaining the Council's operational property portfolio across the Leisure, Adult Services, Children and Young People's Services, Engineering and Chief Executives committees. The CPMF is split into 3 main funds:

3.5.1.1 Reactive Maintenance

The Reactive Maintenance Fund is for minor repairs and emergency repairs, primarily costing under a £1000. This budget is effective in addressing minor repairs, vandalism damage and minor building defects effecting the buildings safety and water tightness. Repairs are indentified via the ranger inspection procedure and

reported to the Building Representatives. A 24 hour, 7 days a week service is maintained for this fund by NPSNW Ltd and Wigan Council Security Services team.

3.5.1.2 Planned Maintenance Fund

This is for larger repair schemes of a planned nature. Within this fund, a 5 year external repairs and maintenance programme, 5 year remedial electrical test programme, intruder alarm programme, bridge repairs programme and fire risk remedial programme exists. Annual spending plans are produced in co-operation with WLCT Projects and Facilities Team and Wigan Council Legal and Property Section. Spending plans are produced using information from the Condition Survey programme, identified repair programmes/cycles and repair priorities identified in previous years. The planned maintenance budget covering WLCT properties in 2007/08 totals £365,000.00. Active prioritisation takes place to target key buildings and facilities where long term occupation is strategically important to WLCT.

3.5.1.3 Pre Planned Maintenance/Serviceing

This element of the CPMF ensures that all consistent parts of WLCT and Wigan Council buildings are regularly serviced in line with statutory and best practice guidelines. Pre-planned maintenance and inspections currently cover the following building elements:

- ii. Lifts
- iii. Lifting equipment
- iv. Legionella testing
- v. Gas installations
- vi. Ventilation systems
- vii. Kitchen equipment
- viii. Automatic doors
- ix. Roller shutters
- x. Fire fighting equipment
- xi. Fire alarm systems
- xii. Emergency lighting
- xiii. Intruder alarm systems
- xiv. Boilers
- xv. Pool plant

The CPMF is managed by Wigan Council Legal and Property Department who in turn have contracted NPSNW Ltd to act in a consultancy service to implement the spending plans. NPSNW Ltd, are an architectural and property surveying practice comprising of Architects, QS, Project Managers, Building Surveyors, Access Auditors, Legionella Surveyors, Mechanical Engineers, Electrical Engineers, Structural Engineers, Health and Safety Co-ordinators and Technical Clerks. This resource is responsible for the management of individual planned, reactive and pre-planned repairs on behalf of Wigan Council. NPSNW Ltd are the primary point of call for building representatives during office hours.

Outside of office hours, emergency repairs and maintenance are managed by Wigan Council Security Services, who as part of their 24 hours, 7 days a week, 365 days per year monitoring role act as intermediate between the reporting building representative and the Council approved contractor. NPSNW Ltd and Wigan Council Security Services utilise the Council Approved list of contractors to action building, Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust

mechanical and electrical repairs. The approved list ensures all contractors working on Wigan Council buildings have been vetted for financial, health and safety and technical competency. The Council approved list includes general building, electrical and mechanical contractors with specialist surveying, asbestos, dry rot and restoration contractors.

Appendix MP25 (submitted in the Stage One application) show the role of the facilities manager and how both planned and reactive buildings works are processed.

3.5.1.4 Clean and Well maintained Assessment

The existing arrangements for the repair and maintenance of the buildings and hard landscape within Mesnes Park is effected by the limited resources within the Corporate Property Maintenance Fund, the relationship between planned and reactive maintenance, the competency of the contractors and the lack of a planned maintenance schedule. Historically, maintenance at Mesnes Park has been reactive in nature as the local authority have been unable to implement an extensive planned maintenance programme. In addition contractors currently approved by the Authority to work on its buildings are unable to demonstrate the knowledge, experience and competency levels that are required to carry out a planned maintenance schedule across Heritage buildings.

3.5.2 Hard Landscape Repairs Process

The park is zoned into four areas for the purpose of inspection. The target is to inspect each zone weekly. Additional inspections are carried as resources allow and in response to enquiries. Defects and minor repairs are addressed by either Rangers carrying out repairs themselves or by raising a maintenance request to the technical clerks at Norfolk Property Services NPSNW Ltd. There are two priorities Priority 1 (P1) is an urgent repair where the contractor is obliged to attend to the repair on the same day. A Priority 2 (P2) repair means the contractor has a period of 5 working days to resolve the defect. If the timescales are not adhered to the Ranger will chase the contractor via N.P.S. If the repairs are still unresolved within the timescales the Project and Facilities Development Officer is contacted to resolve.

In addition to the above process, Rangers also carry out a building check during the inspection. This includes a weekly legionella flushing of all nominated water outlets in the park. Café staff carry out this role for the pavilion. The Ranger faxes the completed legionella forms through to NPSNW Ltd for input into their system.

3.5.3 Soft Landscape Maintenance

In compliance with the Local Government Act 1988, the Council subjected the maintenance of the Borough's parks to competition. The contract for Mesnes Park within a larger geographical package was won by the in-house (Grounds Maintenance Team) and is still undertaken by them under the frequency based contract. Appendix ?? details the frequency based specification exists for all maintenance operations carried out in the park.

The table offers the following information that supports: Appendix MP23

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Description | - Description of the Maintenance operation carried out. |
| Quantity / Unit | - The area covered by the operation in square metres |
| Rate | - Cost in pounds for the operation |
| Price per occasion | - The cost for the operation |
| Frequency | - The number of times the operation is carried out |
| Annual price | - The total annual cost for the operation |

The specifications consists of three elements:

1. The written specification that details all aspects of individual operations.
2. The Bill of Quantities (BoQ) that is priced against a set frequency and quantity of regular, routine operations over the year.
3. The Schedule of Rates (SoR) a priced library of operations that may be called upon ad-hoc throughout the year.

The specification also includes the details of the timing of operations by the use of a frequency profile. Performance quality monitoring and a default process are detailed in the contract.

Gardeners carry out the routine maintenance work (as per the schedules contained in the specification) and additional works are specified and monitored by the Parks & Open Spaces Officer responsible for the site.

There is currently only one dedicated member of Grounds Maintenance staff accommodated within the specification. This is covered under the term 'Duty Gardener' which was an attempt to include response, flexibility, a responsible visual inspection and a community interface within what is essentially a rigid frequency based specification. The 'duty gardener' role is usually carried out by the leading hand within the park but can be carried out by any other member of staff by agreement. Any remedial works following an inspection are responded to and reported through a management structure from Parks & Open Spaces Officer, Parks Officer to the Parks & Countryside Activities Manager.

The duty gardener carries out a daily visual soft landscape inspections of the park, and fills in a daily tick off list on a weekly sheet that's signed and dated and returned to the Greenspace Officer. If there is a defect its marked with an 'X', if marked with an 'O' this means the subject is not present on site. If he finds any defects the area is taped off and reported to the Greenspace Officer or the Parks Officer who orders the defect to be repaired through Norfolk Property Services (NPS).

Other Grounds maintenance operatives are used to support the workloads in the park and although the same staff are consistently allocated to the park, under the current framework this cannot be guaranteed. The number of operatives fluctuates to match the peaks and troughs of changing workloads.

Specialist operations such as herbicide application and arboriculture works are undertaken via the GST specialist teams that work Borough wide. Green Spaces

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operatives work a standard contract of 37 hours per week in winter and 40 hours per week in summer.

3.5.3.1 *Analysis*

The loss of flexibility from working to a dated frequency based specification is impacting on the overall quality presentation of the park experience. Maintenance operations are triggered by a frequency profile which tells the contractor when to carry out operations, this in itself is rigid and relies on discussion to vary operations for the best horticultural impact. Internal staff restructures as described in the existing management section, have weakened the mechanism of quality checks and enforcement of penalties for failings within the specification delivery, the discussion needed to vary operation does not take place so ultimately horticultural quality suffers.

Front line staff have never had an understanding or ownership of the quality standard they are being asked to deliver and historically relied on 'inspectors' to identify failing in quality. The 'Duty Gardener' approach to develop flexible response within the park is lost due to the emphasis on his delivery of the routine specification. Although staff are based in the park the understanding of roles and responsibilities erodes ownership between grounds maintenance staff and park ranger staff.

3.5.4 Soft landscape repairs process

The Parks Open Spaces Officer is responsible for responding to any grounds maintenance issues which arise from an inspection by the duty gardener or by information provided from any source. A Comments/Compliments/Complaints (CCC) form is generated which identifies the issue, documents the process and is a record that the work has been completed. This process is successful failings in the contract delivery are found.

3.5.5 Playground Maintenance

The Play and Early Years Team has transferred to the EM&S Division. This includes the Play Area Maintenance Team who carry out play maintenance inspection covering structural integrity of equipment, cleanliness, vandalism and minor wear and tear. The play area inspectors aim to visit the site on a weekly basis as per RoSPA recommendations. This is supported by a visual check of the area surrounding the equipment by the duty gardener. Additionally an independent inspection is carried out twice per year by RoSPA.

Play Area inspectors complete inspections using PlaySafe, a computerised record system on hand held computers and download findings and remedial works. The Play Area Maintenance Supervisor is informed, who implements further action if necessary.

On discovering a hazard that cannot be rectified immediately, action is taken to immobilise or remove the equipment. If that is not possible then the equipment is fenced off with appropriate signage displayed. Play Inspectors have permanent access to fencing and signage to prevent access by the public in such circumstances.

All records are archived and filed in individual site files and retained indefinitely. The Play maintenance team currently carry out their function in a detached way that takes no account of park issues, policies or processes.

3.6 Environmental Sustainability

3.6.1 Environmental Management Systems

Grounds Maintenance Services recognises the importance of environmental protection and is committed to operating its business responsibly and in compliance with all relevant environmental regulations, legislation and approved codes of practice relating to its activities, operations and service follow their own Environmental Policy; and have been accredited with the following ISO9001 ISO1801 (health and safety) and ISO1401.

3.6.2 Vehicle sustainability

To demonstrate its commitment to sound environmental practices new parks vehicles will run on LPG where this option is practicably achievable, Vehicle use is regularly monitored to ensure that journeys are not duplicated and vehicles are being used efficiently.

3.6.3 Energy conservation

Energy consumption in buildings is regularly monitored to prevent wastage and to identify costs. Inefficient energy systems will be replaced as and when is possible. WLCT has invested in a new software system to improve monitoring of energy usage and assessing patterns of usage.

Park buildings within Mesnes Park have been fitted with Smart Meters. Smart Metering Technology was being trialled to provide suppliers with readings directly and eliminate the need for estimated billing.

As part of the new build considerations and improving facilities, energy efficiencies are being considered.

In addition, new lighting which is looking to be installed as part of phase 2 is looking at the possibility of LED Lighting which would reduce energy consumption of proposed lit routes by 95%.

3.6.4 Peat Use

Currently WLCT source plants from a supplier who use the minimum amount of peat for bedding. Where plants have to be sourced externally those able to supply in peat free growing media will be given preference to those suppliers who cannot.

3.6.5 Pesticide Use

Pesticide use will only be considered if all other cultural and mechanical methods have been explored. In addition, where a pesticide has to be used the most effective, and if possible specific, treatment will be used for maximum efficiency. Persistent chemicals will be avoided.

3.6.6 Waste Management

WLCT is an organisation who works to minimise waste. At present, one large bay in the depot stores green waste and chipped arising from tree and shrub pruning, GMS are able to reuse these materials on site in addition to leaf mulch. In addition, woodchip, is used as mulch and surface dressings for informal paths and ground cover.

3.6.6.1 Recycling

Working with the Council's Recycling Officer, areas of the park are being assessed to see if there are any suitable locations to put recycling bins. Early indications have suggested that bins could be located at the back of the lodge in the Thomas Linacre Centre. This would be easy access for vehicles and could provide an educational feature for school children to provide environmental education. Bin design is being reviewed by the Recycling Officer and installation should be possible when Council budgets become available in the new financial year. There is also scope to install a recycling point near to the Extreme Sports Facility which is currently being designed. This would be used to target the large volumes of cans and glass which accumulate in this area .

3.6.6.2 Monitoring & Reviewing

At Mesnes, the GMS team is continually looking at monitoring and reviewing and reducing the amount of waste which the park generates. Some recycled materials are stored at Mesnes, but there is the possibility of extending this by extending the current bays. The GMS are looking at the possibility of recycling waste on site.

There is a piece of work to be carried out to assess if mulch or chippings are able to be left in – situ in some areas within the park. However, as the park is a typically Victorian in design and various key documents will have to be considered in conjunction with this proposal.

As part of the street furniture justification we are trying to reduce the number of bins to try and make better use of the bins to be installed. As part of this process we will continually monitor and review the situation of waste minimisation.

3.7 Conservation and heritage

3.7.1 Heritage value

Mesnes Park was listed as grade II in the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens in 1996. There are seven listed buildings and structures within the park:

- Entrance Lodge 1878 (two storey extension added c 1928)
- Entrance Gateway 1878
- Pavilion 1880
- Double flight of steps to the South of the Pavilion c 1880
- Double flight of steps to the West of the Pavilion c 1880
- Bandstand c 1880
- Powell Monument 1910

The Mesnes Park Conservation Area was designated on the 25th August 1980 and extended on the 21st November 1984. It occupies an area of 18.48 hectares (46.66 acres), the bulk of which is occupied by Mesnes Park.

In line with guidance published by English Heritage in 1997 (updated June 2005), given the time that elapsed since Wigan's Conservation Areas were designated, in addition to the requirements of the Council's Best Value indicators for performance, Mesnes Park became the subject of a Conservation Area Appraisal.

3.7.2 Conservation of heritage and heritage objectives

Since the park opened in 1878, the loss of some entrance gates, boundary railings and some minor features, there has been relatively little alteration to the park. The restoration scheme proposals can, in the main, focus upon the restoration of the original features. In terms of access and safety, only modest changes will be required.

At present there is no indication that the original design drawings and plans have survived. However, a comprehensive collection of photographic illustrations, remnant features and artefacts, and the published editions of the Ordnance Survey, provide clear indication of the layout, distribution of features, spatial arrangements and design themes of the original layout. This provides sufficient information to enable a comprehensive programme of restoration proposals to be identified.

The Conservation Management Plan (Appendix???) addresses the need to safeguard and interpret the heritage and make the park fully accessible by:

- Conserving the fabric of the park
- The repair and restoration of original structures and features
- The re-structuring of the park vegetation to recreate intended views, to improve the appearance and setting of specimen trees and to reintroduce areas of formal ornamental bedding and herbaceous planting.
- Improving the use and appearance of the park by the reinstatement of footpaths, the repair and replacement of boundary railings and entrance gates, the re-use of buildings and structures and the upgrading and where necessary relocation of amenities for play, recreation and sport.

The re-use of buildings focuses on the refurbishment and enhancement of the pavilion and its cafe to provide improved facilities for all year round use and the restoration of the disused Entrance Lodge to benefit the more tranquil areas of the park.

Through the Access Plan, Mesnes Park is trying to reduce barriers to physical access for all. As a destination it is well served by public transport and is easily accessible from its catchment through each of its five entrances. Within the park, the principal barriers to physical access are the routes to the pavilion and internal access to the café. The restoration process will look at solutions to these problems.

3.7.3 Current maintenance and inspection regimes

The current maintenance and management regimes are mentioned above. However, materials which are used in the restoration process for particular buildings may have different maintenance requirements once particular features are restored.

In terms of soft landscaping, the 10 year enhanced soft landscaping proposals will require WLCT to re-measure areas which will change in size, ensuring the specification is up to standard with up to date measurements of the area. An example of this will be the change in formal bedding which is due to increase significantly in year two.

3.7.4 Environmental and Ecological Value of the site

Although Mesnes Park is situated in a town centre location, it attracts a lot of urban wildlife. Park rangers put an annual foxwatch looking at the urban foxes which use Mesnes, batwalks, identifying Pipestrelles and Daubenton's bats and an array of avian species can also be found. See species list Appendix ????

3.7.4.1 Biodiversity audit

A biodiversity audit has been carried out to protect and enhance the biodiversity in Mesnes Park and to increase awareness, understanding and appreciation of local wildlife through an education programme that explains the importance of urban biodiversity.

3.7.4.2 Measures to increase biodiversity

The Mesnes Park Biodiversity Enhancement Plan is attached as follows and is updated on a yearly basis. The main habitats the plan relate to include: woodland, hedgerows and shrubs, aquatic habitats, lawns and grasslands, annual beds, buildings and other structures - see Appendix???

3.8 Community involvement

Mesnes Park is situated close to the town centre, and is able to appeal to a variety of audiences. The Audience Development Plan seeks to increase and diversify audiences as the project progresses. It is also hoped that with increased site presence and the start of the restoration process will raise the profile of the park and help in developing new audiences into the park.

3.8.1 The Friends of Mesnes Park

The park is significant to the local community. This can be demonstrated through the Friends of Mesnes Park who are excellent advocates for the Park and keen to develop its usage among a wider community. They are actively involved with the development and interpretation of the Park. An example of this can be evidenced by the restoration of the rose garden. Through the life of the project WLCT will actively work with the Friends of Mesnes Park to increase its membership. The Friends involvement in the Heritage Lottery Fund – Parks for People, stage one application and the development period for the Stage Two application has been invaluable.

The Friends of Mesnes Park have been fundamental in planning the restoration process and feel that they have a continuing role to play. The group has taken on board the aspirations of the community and support the overall phases of the restoration of the park by leading on securing funding for implementation of the restoration of the Powell monument, restoration of the James Pulham & Sons rock feature and waterfall and the replacement of the Coalbrookdale Fountain.

Another example is the 'Mesnes Park – 'A People's History' exhibition'. The group gave the opportunity for local people to contribute their memories and photographs
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of the park. There was a huge response! The group was supported by WLCT's Heritage Services and produced the 16-panel exhibition. A small version is on view in the café pavilion, which generates continued interest from visitors. The interpretation plan should continue to generate interest for regular visitors.

3.8.2 Current park users

A visitor profile was developed following analysis of a survey carried out in 2000. This is detailed in the Audience Development Plan 2006, which was included in the original application. There has been no significant developments in the park since this time which would indicate a change to the visitor profile.

As part of the strategy to improve information on visitor numbers and event satisfaction people counters were installed at three access points of Mesnes Park in July 2006. Captured data has been extrapolated so that reliable total usage figures for the park are now available. For the 12 months from August to July 2007 (inclusive) Mesnes Park had 1,657,477 visitors. This total headline figure is somewhat less than an original estimate of usage provided within the Audience Development Plan, which estimated a figure around the 2 million level. The people counter data is under ongoing review and it is recommended that this be used as the baseline for future usage assessments.

Trends show that the park's busiest time of day is between 12noon and 1pm and the park is busier Monday to Friday compared to the weekend. This can be attributed to the student population using the park to cut through between the two college buildings.

Additional information on user profile is included in the Audience Development Plan (submitted in the Stage One application) A graph of Mesnes Park visitor numbers is included within the report entitled, 'Recording Visitor Numbers, Participation and Satisfaction – Survey Results Summer 2007' (Appendix Six).

3.8.3 Consultation undertaken/Stakeholders

Consultation has been carried out over a 3 year period with a variety of Stakeholders. The stakeholder meetings are every three months or when any significant information regarding the project needs to be imparted.

The Stakeholder meeting consist of a presentation by WLCT staff and design team followed by a question and answer session. The format of these sessions will change as the project develops, to inform the public rather than consulting with them about the project.

It is essential that the Community Information Officers are in post it is hoped that they can have a stand in the main shopping centre in Wigan and provide information to shoppers and the general public about Mesnes Park and the restoration project.

3.8.4 Partners of Mesnes Park

The Mesnes Park Restoration Programme has many partners working with WLCT to help in the restoration and management of the site. The partners of Mesnes Park are

as follows: Wigan Council, Fredricks Café, the Friends of Mesnes Park and Duncroon Theatre.

In addition, Wigan and Leigh College are extremely supportive of the project and are working with the PACA to look at potential projects both students can help within the park and the park can help provide students with a valuable learning experience.

The Education Business Partnership (EBP) have been helping to deliver and support educational sessions within the Park over the last two years. A seconded teacher works from the park once a week to deliver sessions related to Heritage and the history of the park. This ties in with the national curriculum. In addition the start of this term has seen new enterprise projects and textile projects with secondary school children in conjunction with the large groups.

3.8.5 Range of community led activities

A number of community groups use Mesnes Park for community lead activities. Examples of this include the FOMP, Coops Adult Education and Wigan Access Group. It is hoped that with the addition of the Community Information Officers will be able to sell the Park as a venue, where communities can book areas of the park or buildings for events to promote community lead activities.

3.8.6 Volunteering/opportunities

At present the Community Information Officers are compiling a list and keeping a record of any potential volunteers who are able to help in the park. This could be practical work on the ground, marketing, working to develop the Friends Group or teachers who have just qualified and would like some teaching experience. There is a grounds maintenance operative who volunteers two days a week. A newly qualified teacher is helping with educational sessions and the Wigan Discovery Group helping the community and trying to educate them about archeological investigations which are being carried out in the park.

The original application which was made to the Heritage Lottery match funded volunteer time to the project. Therefore it is essential that we are able to collect and demonstrate the amount of volunteer involvement in the park and foster this to become a successful model for WLCT and the local community.

3.8.7 Skills and opportunities for community involvement

As part of the first application to the HLF, A Training Plan was developed for Mesnes (Appendix ???). The training centre is looking to be delivered as part of the Scheme B works. When the facility is open it will allow elements of the training plan to be implemented. However, some work has already been started to form the relevant links with the community and volunteers to ensure that the training centre will be used to unlock it's potential once opened.

3.8.3 Events

exciting diverse events programme is to be implemented to draw the local community, park users and new user groups into the park. This should go hand in hand with the development of the restoration project.

3.8.3.1 *Events organised by the PACA Team*

The Ranger Service offers a programme of events in the key sites across the key sites in the Borough, under the branding of the 'be Alive' programme. These events are aimed at a wide target audience and include brass band concerts, bat walks, kite making and health walks. Through partnership working with other sections of the Trust, a more diverse events programme is evolving. Each year Mesnes Park hosts the Wigan One World (WOW) festival. The free event, now in its sixth year, unites people of all ages, races and places for a summer party of music, dance and drama. WOW, organised by Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust, welcomes performers from all over the world to celebrate cultural diversity in the Wigan Borough.

The 2008 WOW Festival was attended by over 8,000 people. Last year the festival was moved to Alexander Park in anticipation of restoration works. The festival is due to be moved back to Mesnes in summer 2011.

Events WLCT manage are branded as 'Be Alive: Discover Wigans Parks. It is WLCT's objective is to get Wigan Active as part of the Leisure and Cultural services they provide. The parks events programmes guide for all the key sites aims to support the philosophy of getting people of Wigan more active and healthier.

Other sections such as 'Active Life and Active Living' also carry out sporting and healthy activities in Mesnes such as bike riding, Tai Chi and taster sessions. These events are all managed with the new Events pack which consists of a booking form, risk matrix, risk assessment, the terms and conditions of the site and must have a designated event organiser.

The 'be Alive' events programme will be developed to become more varied and diverse to offer visitors greater experience by diversifying the events on offer. More details can be found in the Audience Development Plan. We will work in partnership with others to enhance the 'be Alive' programme to increase opportunity and participation.

Insert table of events over the last year.

3.8.3.2 *Events organised by Others.*

External organisations and other sections of the Trust are able to use the park as a venue for their events and activities. The Trust has an events pack which gives guidance to organisers in event planning. The Parks Officer offers support and guidance to the group to ensure that health and safety and insurance documentation is appropriate and valid.

3.8.3.3 *Concessions*

Ad hoc events provision e.g. Crazy Golf where an attendant is employed on a casual basis and manages the crazy golf facility, hires bowls and tennis courts and equipment during the Summer school holidays and weekends. The income generated from this activity just about offsets the salary cost of the employed attendant. This facility when developed will need to become more sustainable in the future.

3.8.3.4 *Assessment*

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The Internal 'be Alive' events programme is developed within the available resources and skills of the parks team and its partners. One issue is that the Trust event pack is aimed at covering all events from small scale events to the larger festivals. The detail of information required at first glance is off putting to those members of the community who wish to organise a small scale event in the park. Concessions do not currently fall within a business plan frame work or contribute effectively to the running of the park.

3.8.4 DDA

Throughout the planning stage of the restoration process, the Project Team has consulted with Wigan's Access Committee and tried to take into account the barriers of disability. The Master plan includes improved entrances and access through the installation of a new footpath to link to the existing footpath network to enable disabled users to be able to have access a full circuit of the park, taking in the main features of the park.

In addition, Mesnes Park has an Access Plan which looks at the issues users have with accessing the site and has provided some realistic solutions to try and overcome these.

3.8.5 Monitoring success

The Community Information Officers will record numbers of events and ask people to fill in event evaluation forms to try and build up an accurate picture of what is happening in the park and look to see if we are increasing visitor numbers and audiences. This will go hand in hand with the work the Performance Team is carrying out as part of the Monitoring Success programme for the HLF scheme.

3.9 Marketing

A five year marketing plan was developed in 2007 and we are currently in the second year. The Project Team and the marketing department are working together to ensure that the marketing plan is implemented and adjusting the plan where the project has encountered changes. See Appendix???

Currently events are planned by looking at visitor satisfaction and evaluation to look at what has worked well, it is here that the events guide is put together based on staff cover and budget for the site. The Marketing Department is helping PACA to develop the guide further to ensure it fits with the branding for WLCT and to be able to market this to a wider audience.

3.10 Management

Existing Management Structure Appendix???

3.10.1 Staffing

The park is currently managed by Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust's (WLCT), Environmental Management & Sustainability (EM&S) section. Within EM&S, the PACA is responsible for the management whilst the Greenspace Services Team (GST) is responsible for the maintenance of soft landscapes.

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The previous management structure reflected the impact of Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) of the late 1980's and early 1990's where local authorities split to form 'Client' and 'Contractor' functions.

In January 2004, a new Executive Director for EM&S was appointed and commenced a reorganisation of the previous structure. The new structure has recovered the lost flexibility encountered through CCT, reaffirmed ownership within one service and removed the barriers of 'Client' & 'Contractor'. It also facilitates community engagement through Townships and focuses resources via a Parks strategy to effectively deliver a programme of strategic improvements.

WLCT is committed to a high quality park with management that will ensure the establishment and long-term success of the proposals for Mesnes Park. This service is delivered through a well-defined management structure. The Environmental Management & Sustainability structure charts MP 27 (submitted in the Stage One application) demonstrate the changes from the CCT driven service to the new structure for regeneration and activities.

The structure on Appendix MP 27 has a focus on regeneration and activities and rationalises the functions carried out by the top tier structure of the EM&S section. The new Parks Strategy will produce a smaller number of core sites that will focus resources to better effect to meet the community Township needs. The non-core sites have transferred under the control of the Green Space Services Manager. This removes historical client/contractor duplication of staff time on sites.

The Parks Regeneration Manager is responsible for the development of The Parks Strategy, the development of parks related improvement schemes, identification of funding and project delivery.

The Parks & Countryside Activities Manager is responsible for the presentation of the core sites, the ranger service and all issues relating to events and activities. The structure of Parks Officers and ranger staff currently remains the same as the historical structure chart MP26 (submitted in the Stage One application). Restructuring of these staff is currently being considered to meet the changing needs of the community.

The Mesnes Park Officer from the Parks & Countryside Activities Team is based at Frog Lane, which is a quarter of a mile from Mesnes Park, enabling good daily communication and interaction between staff. The rangers based in Mesnes Park provide ranger services for the west of the borough. The Park & Countryside Activities Manager manages the capital and revenue budgets and is responsible for delivering the service plan.

Parks Officers are responsible for day to day contact with rangers, user groups, community groups and committees, co-ordinate the events programme and organise many events in liaison with others. As the project develops, the role of the Parks Officer will grow, developing and maintaining links with the local community. In particular they liaise with the Friends group and attend their meetings and are members of Township Community sub groups. These sub groups provide regular

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access to other partners including the police and youth services, etc. Their relationship with other park staff, concessionaires and users is good. They are aware of issues, are accessible and responsive to concerns from members of the public.

The Parks and Open Spaces Officer is responsible for service procurement and managing the maintenance contract. Their work includes monitoring, organising the purchase and installation of new park furniture, initiating and supervising minor works and managing day to day maintenance issues in addition to liaison with contractors on site.

Currently the rangers patrol the park as part of a broader role that covers approximately 18 other sites. Their hours are seasonably adjusted and are managed on a 4-day shift system. There is ranger cover from 08.20am throughout the year with finishing times seasonally adjusted from 4.30pm in winter to 9.30pm in summer.

Rangers carry out a park and building inspection on a weekly basis and respond to any defects and minor repairs that are required in the park, as specified by The Parks Officer. Any issues which arise from inspections are processed through the Maintenance & Repair system.

The coordination of the rangers is carried out by the site manager, the Parks Officer (PO) who remotely manages rangers in the park. Frustration can as some staff responsible for the fundamental day to day operations are delivered by staff not under the control of the PO. Part of the Parks Officer role will be to build a relationship with these members of staff to try to ensure smooth running of the park.

The Environmental Management & Sustainability structure has been reviewed and the Park officer role dedicated to Mesnes Park (funded by HLF), in the new structure, will be mainstreamed through the Parks revenue budget.

Their responsibilities includes:

- a. Co-ordination of the work of staff in Mesnes Park
- b. Co-ordinate the restoration of Mesnes Park with others
- c. Planning of maintenance under the overall guidance and in accordance with the management and maintenance plan
- d. Management of tenants and concessions, including the café and sport facilities
- e. Communication with user groups such as the bowlers, Friends groups and Parks Forum
- f. Supporting sub groups of the Friends that deal with specific issues e.g. events, Lake Management group, etc.
- g. Assist Friends with funding opportunity initiatives inclusive of support training

- h. Co-ordination of volunteer activities
- i. Working with other Parks Officers to co ordinate events and to encourage use of the park by existing and new sectors of the community, as determined by the Audience Development Plan
- j. Management of Mesnes Park revenue budget
- k. Responsibility for standards of care and the maintenance and improvement in quality; cleansing, routine maintenance of park fabric, cleaning of toilets
- l. Responsibility for health and safety including vehicle movement
- m. Responsibility for overall security
- n. Ensuring the implementation of the interpretation strategy
- o. Ensuring the implementation of the Access Plan
- p. Representation on the Township groups relevant to the park
- q. Developing any funding/marketing opportunities for Mesnes Park to maximise income
- r. Liaison with Council Departments, other sections within Leisure & Culture Trust, strategic partners, e.g. Wigan and Leigh College, and the Town Centre Manager to co-ordinate activities.
- s. Lead on Green Flag application and implementation process.

3.10.2 Other staff involvement

The following posts are involved with the operations of the park to varying degrees.

3.10.2.1 *Parks Activity Officer (Audience Development) - PACA*

To engage with target age groups using key park sites in Super Output Areas. To deliver a programme of diversionary activities including sports, extreme sports and others within these sites. To work towards developing a sustainable diversionary programme. To complete all monitoring procedures and actively look to increase the number of young people and other target groups participating in sport and other activities. To work in partnership with external agencies to use sport and other means as a tool to reduce anti-social behaviour, crime and substance misuse among young people. To capacity build within and outside the section to expand the programme and provide appropriate training.

3.10.2.2 *Park Ranger - PACA*

To assist the users of Parks and Countryside to enjoy the Boroughs facilities by means of site supervision, cleaning, maintenance and the provision of information.

3.10.2.3 *Parks Officer - PACA*

To carry out the day-to-day supervision of the usage of parks, playing fields and open spaces by the development, support and co-ordination of user groups, events and activities.

3.10.2.4 *Parks and Open Spaces Officer - GMS*

To carry out the day-to-day supervision of parks and open space maintenance and to monitor the performance of the ground maintenance contractor on behalf of other Client agencies against agreed targets and budgets.

3.10.2.5 *Parks & Countryside Activities Manager - PACA*

To carry out day to day management of the Parks Services sector, including line management responsibility for staff and budgetary control, and to assist the Parks and Countryside Manager in developing and implementing policies which will ensure a cost-effective and dynamic service in parks.

3.10.2.6 *Parks Regeneration Manager - PR*

Responsible for the overall strategy for Parks and playing fields. Development of parks related improvement schemes, Grant Applications and securing external funding, Negotiation with the Council and external partners and Advocacy Role

3.10.2.7 *Performance Manager PM*

To carry out the day-to-day management of the Performance team, including line management responsibility for staff and budgetary control. To plan and monitor the Performance teams work plan and contribute to the Environmental Management & Sustainability project programme. To assist the Executive Director in developing and implementing policies which will ensure a cost-effective, efficient and dynamic service. To contribute to a continuous improvement process for Environmental Management & Sustainability.

3.10.2.8 *Landscape Development Officer - PR*

To co-ordinate the EM&S project programme & to bid for resources to support the implementation of these projects. To provide technical support and assistance to schools and voluntary organisations making grant applications for development projects within the EM&S portfolio. To liaise with appropriate partners and pursue the development of partnership projects. To liaise with other development officers and funding bodies to target and attract capital and revenue funding.

3.10.2.9 *Senior Technical Officer (Landscape) - PR*

To carry out the supervision of the landscape design and advisory service, statutory allotment sites and the department's horticultural nursery and floral decoration service, including line management responsibility for staff and budgetary control, and to assist the Parks Regeneration Manager in implementing and developing policies which will ensure a cost-effective and efficient service.

3.10.2.10 Woodland Officer - GMS

To carry out the supervision of the woodland management and advisory, including line management responsibility for staff and budgetary control, and to assist the Parks Regeneration Manager in implementing and developing policies which will ensure a cost-effective and efficient service.

3.10.2.11 Technical Officer (Landscape) - PR

To provide support to other sections and departments through a landscape design and advisory service and to assist the Senior Technical Officer in the production of floral bedding display plans.

3.10.2.12 Landscape Technician - PR

To assist in the surveying for, monitoring, maintaining, securing and provision of information from grounds maintenance information systems, maintaining clear and accurate records and reporting of any system performance issues.

3.10.2.13 Grounds Maintenance Services Leading Hand - GMS

The overall grounds care and maintenance of grounds in accordance with agreed specification. Providing a flexible and responsible service. Supervising individuals or teams and ensuring compliance with agreed quality standards.

3.10.2.14 Duty Gardener - GMS

The duty gardener carries out a visual daily inspection of the park, and fills in a daily tick off list on a weekly sheet that's signed and dated and returned to the Greenspace Officer. The form is completed with a tick if there are no problems, if there is a defect it's marked with an 'X', if marked with an 'O' this means the subject is not present on site. If he finds any defects the area is taped off and reported to the Greenspace Officer or the Parks Community Liaison Officer who orders the defect to be repaired through Norfolk Property Services.

3.10.2.15 Gardener - GMS

General maintenance of grounds including sweeping, hoeing, raking, mowing, strimming, edging, forking, digging, hedge cutting, minor pruning and clearing leaves and litter. Basic horticultural duties including laying turf under supervision and planting e.g. bulbs. Constructional and manual work e.g. barrowing, ditch clearance etc. Assisting with erecting and dismantling of sports posts and other equipment. General cleaning duties e.g. toilets, canteens, store rooms etc. Patrol and attendance duties e.g. opening and locking gates and patrolling. Assisting more highly skilled and experienced gardeners in their work. Instruct the public to comply with regulations and byelaws. To undertake any other duties in accordance with the grade and job title of the post as required by the Grounds Maintenance Management Team.

3.10.2.16 Green Spaces Area Manager - GMS

The Area Manager is responsible for the management and maintenance of Greenspaces within the Borough, including site and service development and contract compliance and performance. In conjunction with the Greenspace Services Manager, the aim of the role is to provide services of the highest quality and in a manner which promotes and demonstrates the Trust's core values and

organisational beliefs within a partnership framework ensuring that the needs of the customer is the driving factor in all activities.

3.10.2.17 Green Spaces Services Manager - GMS

To undertake overall responsibility for the management of the Grounds Maintenance service including the Landscape Construction Service; accountability for the financial performance and quality of work throughout the service; the effective management and development of human resources, together with the efficient and safe utilisation of plant, equipment and materials. To be responsible for the corporate management and planned development of the Grounds Maintenance service, including the preparation and successful implementation of contract bids, business plans, marketing plans and operational strategies.

3.10.2.17 Community Information Officers - PACA

In addition, WCLT has recently been successful in a bid to the Big Lottery to fund two community and information officers for five years. The officers will be based in the park and act as a point of contact for members of the public and collect information on park users and volunteer group who use the park.

3.10.3 Management of Contractors

The Trust's Code of Practice for managing Contractors on site provides a framework for the system which currently operates in Mesnes Park.

For the restoration, contractors will be appointed by being selected to be on an approved list and contractors on this list will be asked to submit tenders and then invited for an interview if successful.

Once a maintenance request is raised, the contractor is instructed to contact the relevant Park Ranger for access to the site.

The contractor has access to a site specific briefing note along with the asbestos register. A signed agreement is required before any keys or access to the park is arranged. Rangers are often contacted to attend site to facilitate the repair process and monitor safe working practices. Add new info on process.

A visual inspection of the completed repair is carried out. If the quality of the work is in question, this is raised and resolved through the Project and Facilities Officer and NPSNW Ltd

The existing arrangements for the management of contractors carrying out the planned and reactive maintenance is effected by the availability of dedicated staff resources on site to implement a robust Contractor Briefing system, the knowledge, experience and competency of the contractors carrying out the work and the support of a briefed and committed Property Surveying consultancy. The existing system is also hampered by the poor access to information relating to the buildings in which the repairs are to take place and the inability to monitor a hard landscape/building maintenance schedule due to limited resources on site. A new system of monitoring contractors on site is in operation.

Dealing with Comments, Complaints and Complements (CCC). Rangers and GMS staff respond to verbal enquiries about the park and events as per the WLCT customer care policy (Appendix Seven). Rangers, Clerical support and Parks Officers deal with telephone, email and letters in line with the WLCT Customer Care Policy.

4.0 HOW WILL WE GET THERE?

4.1 The Restoration of Mesnes Park

Of the £8M required to complete the Restoration Project, over £5.4M has been granted, mainly from Heritage Lottery Funding. Work is now underway by an officer group led by Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust (WLCT) to bridge the funding gap of £2.6M.

Currently Mesnes Park has received £3.8 million from HLF, with Phase 1 restoration proposals underway December 2009. WLCT has also received a Stage 1 pass for Phase 2 of a restoration scheme which links to the proposed master plan (See Appendix ???)

4.1.1 Why Restore?

The park has suffered long term deterioration of its infrastructure, through lack of financial and staffing resources. Prior to April 2003, the role carried out by the Parks and Open Spaces Officer (POSO) covered land managed by Wigan Council departments, e.g. Housing, Planning, etc. as well as land managed by Leisure. This limited the capacity that POSO's had for concentrating on park maintenance issues and ensuring that the specification was being carried out. Since that time the remit has been re-focused on park and green spaces managed by WLCT on behalf of Wigan Council. This means that the role of the POSO has been dedicated to monitoring the routine maintenance contract, processing additional works, and working closely with the Park Officers to improve and develop sites, including Mesnes Park. The soft landscaping plan will look at a ten year development plan to improve the soft landscaping features within the park.

Significant funding is now required to update the existing buildings and infrastructure of the park, which is currently outside the realms of the parks revenue budget. The Mesnes Park Master plan has been prepared, which sets out a realistic and sustainable way of rejuvenating the park and upgrading the facilities so that the park becomes once again a key focus for the local community.

Mesnes Park base Plan

The proposed restoration of Mesnes Park is detailed in the Master plan Restoration Report Volume 1 Section 1A. The first phase of the restoration focuses on the heritage and community benefits from the pavilion, which is used as a café and forms the hub of the park; the bandstand, which will be upgraded so it becomes a venue for the proposed diverse performance programme; and Dalton's steps, which leads visitors to the pavilion and from the top, offers views across the park and into the town centre.

The Mesnes Park development proposals now show the whole park vision in context of Scheme A and Scheme B as detailed below.

The following funding opportunities and schemes are being considered:

External Funding: Identifying and applying for funds to support the restoration scheme from national, regional and local grant awarding bodies, charities, trusts and foundations.

Major Private Sector Partners: Identifying and targeting major national and regional companies to support key restoration elements of the project.

Corporate Opportunities: Identifying local private sector organisations with an interest in heritage preservation and conservation to support smaller restoration projects within Mesnes Park.

Patron Scheme: WLCT is considering launching a scheme that targets local small business and individuals. This scheme if launched, will be under the branding - 'Make Your Mark on the Park'.

Funding will be generated from different sources, see Funding Plan (Volume 2 Section 2c). Wigan Council in its role as Landlord is responsible for upgrading the infrastructure of the park, e.g. the electrical supply, maintenance of the buildings, reconstruction the footpaths and had made a commitment to contribute to the scheme in a phased programme due to the financial implications.

4.1.1.1. JUMP' – Joined Up Mesnes Park

The restoration project is not solely just about facility improvement, it is also about processes that capitalise on any investment. 'JUMP' is a multi-agency approach to tackling anti-social behaviour issues, in relation to young people, within the Wigan Township. The Mesnes Park Master plan captures the key elements of the JUMP concept which will be complemented by the Parks & Countryside Activities Team.

The aims of JUMP are to:

- i. provide a safe environment within Mesnes Park
- ii. promote the safe use of the park for all the community
- iii. engage with young people using the park and offer a programme of diversionary activities
- iv. reduce anti-social behaviour
- v. improve facilities for young people within the park
- vi. develop ownership of the park within the younger generation
- vii. reduce the perceptions that the park is a no-go area

It is intended to do this by:

- i. Creating a number of lit routes through the park
- ii. Lighting the key buildings and structures
- iii. Using dedicated staff to challenge unlawful behaviour

Improving facilities for young people by:

- i. developing a number of areas for them to meet within the park
- ii. providing a co-ordinated programme of activities, e.g. sports, etc
- iii. developing youth mediation accommodation at the 'playshack'

The 'JUMP' Project should consider paths through the park which are used as a thoroughfare between the town centre and local housing areas. The pedestrian gates remain open at night although the paths through the park are unlit. Incidents in the park in the evenings have heightened fears for personal security, and surveys identified security as the issue of greatest concern.

To improve security for evening use of park facilities and paths it is proposed that gates from the Park Rd entrance nearest to the sports zones and the entrance on Bridgeman Terrace, along with the main driveway will remain open for pedestrians as usual, but these routes will be lit to the Walkden Ave north entrance. This will enable access to the sports areas, the area around the playshack and enable people to have an illuminated short cut to housing. The implementation of JUMP will be an important element to the restoration of Mesnes Park.

4.1.1.2 Wigan Boys and Girls Club

In addition to JUMP, private sponsors have come forward to develop the Mesnes Park Field. The plans to develop this site will provide a linked lit route from the town centre to the park and provide facilities for young people. Diversionary activities will be offered to teenagers until 10 pm in the evening, which may then help in the reduction of anti-social behaviour in the park. The park may also be used as a venue for some of the diversionary activities, raising the profile of the park for young people.

4.1.2 Restoration Proposals

The proposed restoration of Mesnes Park is detailed in the Master plan Restoration Report Volume 1 Section 1A.

4.1.2.1 The Play Zone

WLCT has been successful with an application to the Big Lottery – Children's Play Programme as part of Wigan's portfolio of schemes, The award is £175,000 for a new play area. Consultation has taken place and designs have been drawn up for

the play area, which includes combining the existing 0-5's and 6-11's play areas to the one location. The scheme is due to start in December 2009.

The scheme will involve:

- i. resurfacing to reduce the amount of sand
- ii. provide inclusive facilities
- iii. completing fencing to define the zone
- iv. provide stimulating play equipment
- v. provide seating and picnic areas
- vi. provide an informal grass area for play

4.1.2.2 Historic Landscape Restoration

The soft landscaping design treatments proposed have been founded on underlying design principles substantiated by research into the history and development of the park. Investigations have shown that John McLean, the original designer in 1878 intended to produce a picturesque landscape with limited internal views inspired by the poor quality of the surrounding scenery.

McLean, strived to create a rugged and irregular natural landscape of largely native trees and plants but by the last quarter of the 19th century the gardenesque influences were gaining much more appreciation offering freedom to utilise the many exotic imported plants and flowers of the day. The landscape of Mesnes Park although embodying the picturesque principles as its core-planting made use of a decorative or gardenesque margins.

The design philosophy seeks to be as authentic as possible to this approach particularly in McLean's rare formal treatment of the flats and terraces for the pavilion which also embodies the picturesque principles of viewing a high main object from a low vantage point with enclosing lateral screens and selected high screens.

Where historical considerations can be established, landscaping to provide functional but as true to the spirit of the original intention has been a major criteria. This is detailed in Volume 1 Section 1C.

4.1.2.3 Pulham & Sons Water Feature

The Pulham and Sons water feature and rockwork was initially uncovered by The Friends of Mesnes Park and has been gradually cleared over time. The Green Space Conservation Volunteers (volunteers managed on behalf of the Trust by BTCV) have rediscovered the plunge pool and excavated the planting pockets. The FOMP and Parks Officers developed a Lake Management Plan as a result of consultations, which indicated that the lake area was a key attraction within the park.

The FOMP have been in contact with a descendant of James Pulham who has provided information on historical planting schemes, which will be used in the restoration.

A local architect, Anthony Grimshaws, recommended by English Heritage, have produced a feasibility study to progress the restoration of this historic feature. This study has informed the architects solution for the stage two submission. The FOMP have already secured some funding from the New Opportunities Fund. This money will be used to restore the rock work and re establish the planting pockets within the structure.

4.1.2.4 Scheme A

Scheme A consists of restoring the main heritage features within the park. The key features which will be restored include the Pavilion, Bandstand, Shelter, Dalton Steps.

The Pavilion function will remain as a café operation, however, additional uses such as meetings, small events, parties and exhibitions will form part of the Pavilion package once restored and developed.

Specific priorities to achieve this mix are as follows:

- i. Consideration of the external space for additional seating in summer months.
- ii. Improvement to the interior space including floor coverings, decoration, lighting, woodwork and ceilings.
- iii. Improvement to the toilet facilities with consideration for baby changing and disabled facilities.
- iv. Improvements to the catering production space to allow expansion of the menu.
- v. Improvement to the café fit out including counter, refrigeration, extraction, preparation, dishwashing and display. Appointed Architects should consult with Frederick's to obtain a full brief of this element.

The Bandstand will be used to host numerous performance related events. For this to be achieved the following elements have been considered:

- i. Improved permanent electricity supply to facilitate musical performance.
- ii. Improvements to surrounding boundary walls and railings.

- iii. Improved access to the Bandstand for performers with mobility issues.

The Dalton Steps play a key role in access and interpretation. For this end use to be achieved the following have been considered:

- i. Restore treads, landings, walls and copings.
- ii. Check and restore foundations.
- iii. Replace missing historic details including urns.
- iv. Consider improving access for those with disabilities.
- v. Consider the use of robust materials to avoid future vandalism/damage (specifically the urns).

The Shelter has an important role to play in the education, events and interpretation improvements within the Park. For this end use to be achieved the following design elements have been considered:

- i. Restoration of the external fabric of the building including masonry, timbers and roof tiles.
- ii. Removal of the toilet block at the rear of the shelter.
- iii. Restoration of the Internal Fabric to support the proposed users.
- iv. Provision of secure power supply within the shelter to provide future flexibility for events.
- v. Provision of general lighting within the shelter to support the events programme.
- vi. Provision of security gates to control use and misuse of the shelter.
- vii. Provision of large secure fixed interpretation boards within the shelter to promote the history and park story.

The Play shack has an important role to play in supporting the educational programme and the Play zone. For this end use to be achieved the following elements have been considered:

- i. Restoration of the exterior fabric of the building.
- ii. Improvements to the physical access into the building.

- iii. Improvement to the public toilet provision including accessible facilities and baby changing facilities.
- iv. Creation of a small kitchen space with external hatch to support a satellite café function in summer periods.
- v. Creation of a secure flexible space for shelter / lunch for organised groups.
- vi. Creation of an externally covered area for sheltered external seating.

4.1.2.5 Scheme B

Originally the Training Centre was an approved purpose to be delivered in Scheme A. The outcome of an Element Evaluation has changed the proposed location of the training centre from Number 1 bowling green to that of an extension to the back of Entrance Lodge. WLCT are now looking to deliver this as part of the Scheme B proposals, which if approved will see the restoration of entrance lodge.

The Training Centre will provide an activity venue for school groups and other organised groups. For this end use to be achieved the following design elements have been considered:

- i. Design the space to create a training venue with internal and external space.
- ii. The training venue will combine a flexible internal classroom type environment with associated cloakroom, storage and toilet facilities capable of hosting a group of 30 with an external enclosed training area for small horticultural projects. Polytunnel approaches have been considered for the external training environment to facilitate individual growing plots for organised groups including primary and secondary schools, Higher Education colleges, Volunteers and WLCT staff.
- iii. Remodelling the space to improve the vehicle flow around the training area along with dedicated parking for disabled users.
- iv. Integration of energy efficient plant within the design to reduce the carbon footprint for the site.

Entrance Lodge will be utilised as a community space, an office space for key

Partners, key park staff and training purposes. The training centre will become part of an extension and will create a training environment for both staff and the local community. Specific end-use requirements of the lodge have been considered:

- i. To create an accessible community meeting space with associated storage space for chairs and materials.
- ii. To create an accessible information point and exhibition space to support the Audience Development Plan priorities.
- iii. To provide accessible public toilet facilities.
- iv. Creation of office space for key partners and key park staff including associated staff kitchen, toilet and storage facilities.
- v. Creation of a training facility to accommodate at least 30 adults.
- vi. Security considerations to combine the community and office functions.
- vii. Co-ordination with the hard landscaping design brief to ensure a co-ordinated design package between the Entrance Lodge and disabled drop off area.
- viii. Co-ordination with the soft landscape design brief to ensure a co-ordinated design package between the entrance lodge, training centre and surrounding landscape.

The Park Entrances including :

- i. Main Entrance
- ii. Walkden Avenue Entrance
- iii. Pagefield Building Entrance
- iv. Bridgeman Terrace Entrance
- v. Parson's Walk Entrance
- vi. Park Rd Entrance

These are a critical element in creating a welcoming environment and passing on key information on the Park's history and event and activity programme. For these improvements to be considered the following have been included in the design briefs:

- i. Renew and restore brickwork and stonework
- ii. Restore and/or replace gates and railings.

- iii. Replace any lost historic detail at each of the entrances.
- iv. Consider the preferred location for signage and interpretation positions.
- v. Integrate “physical access” improvements to improve the general accessibility.

The bowling pavilion has a central role to play in supporting the Sports zone. For this end use

to be achieved the following elements have been considered:

- i. Restoration of the exterior fabric of the building.
- ii. Improvements in the physical access into the building.
- iii. Consideration of security measures to reduce the vandalism threat.
- iv. Improvement to the public toilet provision including accessible baby changing facilities.
- v. Creation of a small office space with hatch and storage for the issue of hire tennis rackets / golf clubs.
- vi. Creation of a small secure flexible space with associated brew facilities to be used by the bowling teams and other organised sports clubs.

The park lighting will serve two purposes. The primary purpose is to create a safe route through the park with the secondary purpose aiming to enhance the importance of the heritage assets.

For this end use to be achieved the following specific elements have been considered in the design solution:

- i. Lighting routes to encourage pedestrians to access street footpaths at the earliest opportunity.
- ii. Specific feature lighting around the key heritage assets therefore the Entrance Gates and Lodge, location of Coalbrookdale Fountain, Powell Monument, Pavilion and Bandstand.

- iii. In considering the lighting solution, contemporary designs have been considered however sensitivity and robustness are key factors that have been taken into account.
- iv. Energy efficiency is also a key factor to consider, alternative power supplies have been considered to support the standard electricity supply.

4.1.2.6 The phasing of the project

The current programme of works is due to start in November '09 and April '10. If scheme

B as part of the stage 2 application which will be submitted in December 2009 is approved by the HLF then WLCT will seek to deliver Scheme B of the restoration programme.

4.1.2.7 Current timescales for Scheme A include:

Site services: December – May 2010

Play Area: January 2009 – April 2010

Play Shack: February 2010 - May 2010

Shelter: June 2010 – September 2010

Dalton Steps: June 2010 – September 2010

Bandstand: June 2010 – September 2010

Pavilion: June 2010 – September

Footpaths around Heritage core: May 2010 – April 2011

4.2 Proposed Maintenance and Management

Appendix MMP30 (submitted in the Stage One application) shows what actions are proposed and who has the responsibility for carrying them out to achieve the management objectives.

4.2.1 Future Management of Soft Landscape

In addition to the basic frequency specification and to accommodate the horticultural improvements over and above the standard specification, a 10-year plan of action is attached Appendix MMP33 (submitted in the stage one application) that details:

- i. the methodology of the proposal
- ii. the rationale for the works

- iii. overall cost implications
- iv. a proposal of works within the 10 year projection

4.2.2 Management and Maintenance of Hard Landscape, Listed Buildings and Historic Structures

Works on site are due to start at the end of November 2009. Planned and Pre planned Maintenance will be carried out during the project construction.

During the construction phase of the Project planned maintenance will be limited to pre planned and statutory maintenance activities to ensure those buildings awaiting development are safe and operational. Planned maintenance programmes to buildings/surfaces included within the restoration project will be delayed until the completion of the restoration to avoid wasted expenditure.

During the construction phase the proposed enhanced maintenance allowance of £20k per annum will contribute towards the capital investment. Beyond restoration the enhanced maintenance allowance will resource the enhanced maintenance schedule.

4.2.2.1 Reactive Maintenance – During the project construction

The primary focus for repairs and maintenance during the construction phase is to ensure the Park environment remains safe and operational. As such reactive maintenance will be actioned as and when required utilising the Fund 1 resource within the Corporate Property Maintenance Fund. The Park Officer with support from the Facilities Officer will be responsible for the management of reactive maintenance during the construction phase of the project.

The control of reactive maintenance issues will rest with the Park Officer who will utilise the Site Specific Contractors briefing system as a tool. The briefing system sets out the rules and regulations for contractors working in the Park environment and will be revised during the construction phase to account for the Heritage, infrastructure and new work construction packages on site. Issues will be reported to the Facilities Officer who will actively liaise with NPS to instigate improvements.

4.2.2.2 Planned and Pre-planned Maintenance – Post project construction

Following the completion of the restoration project Wigan Council and Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust are committed to sustaining the capital investment through an adequately resourced and programmed Maintenance Plan for the buildings, structures and hard surfacing.

To assist the enhanced maintenance of the landlord liabilities Wigan Council have committed an extra £20,000 year on year investment from the CPMF towards the enhanced maintenance programme. Over the 10 year management and maintenance plan an extra £200,000 has been committed by Wigan Council in addition to the current revenue maintenance spend on reactive, planned and pre-planned programmes.

A comprehensive maintenance programme will be developed across the buildings, lighting, CCTV and hard surfacing elements of Mesnes Park. This contained in the attached maintenance schedule.

The maintenance programme addressing the buildings/structures will cover the Entrance Lodge, Pavilion, Bandstand, Powell Monument, Shelter Depot, Training Centre, Bowling Pavilion and Play shack. The following pre-planned and planned repair/servicing programmes will be established as each building is restored:

- i. Annual gutter clean/repair
- ii. Annual roof inspection/minor repairs
- iii. 5 year external repairs and maintenance/decoration programme
- iv. 3 year internal decoration programme
- v. 5 Year electrical test programme
- vi. Annual emergency lighting servicing
- vii. Annual fire alarm servicing
- viii. Annual intruder alarm servicing
- ix. Annual boiler servicing and repair
- x. 5 year floor covering replacement programme
- xi. Annual extractor/ventilation system servicing and repair

The Planned maintenance programme will be managed by the Facilities Officer within the Trust and supported by on site quality monitoring by the Senior Park Ranger. Consultancy and surveying input will be obtained through NPSNW Ltd who are appointed on behalf of the Local authority to manage the maintenance of Council buildings.

4.2.2.3 *Reactive Maintenance - Post project construction*

The planned and pre-planned repair and servicing programme will be supported by the CPMF reactive maintenance fund which will continue to repair damaged and vandalised aspects of the building fabric along with the removal of graffiti.

Reactive maintenance will be managed by the Senior Park Ranger with support from the Facilities Officer. An established procedure for reactive maintenance is in place to ensure priority repairs are actioned within a short timescale. Reactive maintenance will utilise Fund 1 of the Corporate Property Maintenance Fund and draw on the surveying and contractor input from NPS NW Ltd and the Local authority partner contractors.

The control of reactive maintenance on the Heritage assets within the Park will be the responsibility of both NPS NW Ltd and the Senior Park Ranger. NPS along with key partner contractors beyond construction will be formally briefed on the requirements for each of the restored heritage assets to create a level of

understanding on the nature of the external and internal fabric. In addition the Park Officer will be responsible for the management of the Contractor briefing system which clearly sets out the rules and regulations for the contractors working in the Park environment, this will include vehicle movement control, control of working areas, fire alarm arrangements and most importantly the requirement to recognise the Heritage merit and refer to appropriate CDM documents to take advice on reactive fabric repairs. Issues will be reported to the Facilities Officer who will liaise with NPS NW Ltd and partner maintenance contractors to action improvements.

4.2.2.4 Lighting Installation Maintenance - Post project construction

The maintenance programme covering the lighting column and associated fitting installations will be managed through a service level agreement between WLCT and Wigan Council Environmental Services Department. The Environmental Services Department in conjunction with the Authority's Street Lighting Contractor (H.D.L.O) are currently responsible for the maintenance of street and amenity lighting on the adopted highway and by agreement throughout the Wigan Borough. The service level agreement will encompass reactive and planned maintenance arrangements to ensure lighting columns and associated equipment remain in a safe and operational condition, defective fittings replaced, damaged or vandalised lighting columns replaced and lighting columns painted on a regular basis (to be agreed and time scale entered) to maintain the intended aesthetics of the lighting solution. The Authorities' Electrical Contractor (Leigh Building Services) by agreement maintains the electrical infrastructure within and attached to buildings under the control of the Authority.

4.2.2.5 Security Installation Maintenance - Post project construction

The maintenance arrangements for the CCTV installation will be managed in conjunction with Wigan Council Security Services who are responsible for the maintenance of all Council owned and managed CCTV systems. Security Services currently utilise their approved Security Contractor, Unique Integrated Services, for security installations and maintenance alike. The CCTV installation will receive annual servicing to ensure operational continuity and reactive maintenance following misuse and/or vandalism. The CPMF pre-planned servicing budget will address the CCTV maintenance over the term of the management and maintenance plan.

4.2.2.6 Contractor Appointment

During the restoration project appropriate contractors will be appointed to complete the capital investment. In addition to the existing Council approved contractors the restoration contractors will be utilised as a pool of appropriate contractors to complete the enhanced planned and reactive maintenance programmes.

The choice of contractors will be dependant on the extent of conservation work involved in the repair scheme and the reactive nature of the work. Reactive maintenance will primarily be carried out by existing Partner contractors whilst planned maintenance activities will be completed by more specialist contractors.

It is envisaged that NPSNW Ltd who currently implement the CPMF on behalf of Wigan Council will continue to manage the repair schemes in co-ordination with the Facilities Officer/Senior Park Officer and in line with the 10 year management and Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust

maintenance plan to which NPSNW Ltd have been actively involved in the development.

4.2.2.7 *Future Maintenance Arrangements*

Following the completion of the restoration project Wigan Council and Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust are committed to sustaining the capital investment through an adequately resourced and programmed Maintenance Plan for the buildings, structures and hard surfacing.

To assist the enhanced maintenance of the landlord liabilities Wigan Council have committed an extra £20,000 year on year investment from the CPMF towards the enhanced maintenance programme. Over the 10 year management and maintenance plan an extra £200,000 has been committed by Wigan Council in addition to the current revenue maintenance spend on reactive, planned and pre-planned programmes.

The maintenance programme for the hard landscape will utilise a large proportion of the additional Council Maintenance funding allocation for Mesnes Park. The capital restoration project is unable to address the totality of the footpath network, therefore an improvement programme is required over the term of the management and maintenance plan to improve the network and ensure that safety of park users is maintained. Through the restoration project and development phase condition surveys on the footpaths have been completing defining the treatment for the various sections of footpath network. It is anticipated that the sections requiring rebuild will be addressed through capital investment to account for the level of resource required for the rebuild process. The primary function of the 10 year management and maintenance plan in regards to the footpath network is to address the sections of network where surface treatment is required. This will ensure that specific sections of footpaths are treated appropriately and are treated in full to avoid obvious breaks in the footpath condition and surfacing. A programmed surfacing improvement schedule will be established to address the footpath network in a priority approach.

The CPMF reactive fund will also support the hard landscape maintenance programme be addressing minor repair issues as and when they develop over the duration of the management and maintenance programme.

4.2.2.8 *Quality and Performance Management*

Performance quality monitoring and a default process are detailed in the contract. The Greenspace Officer and the Area Manager inspects the park on a weekly bases to monitor the grounds maintenance operations for that week. The operations are on the computer (micro rate), and the Performance Team produce Work schedules in weekly batches, four weeks in advance and sends them to Grounds Maintenance Services. The Planner/estimator and the Area Manager produce the operations on paper, that the leading hand receives to carry out the work for that week. The leading hand then signs that the work has been completed, and returns the paper work to his manager. If the work is not up to standard or not finished when monitored, the gardeners are made to go back and complete the work as per the schedules or monies will be deducted from the contract. If the work when monitored is satisfactory, then the schedules are paid.

Through involvement in the Maintenance and Management planning process, staff are aware of the policies and procedures that are in operation in the park and report any breaches to the appropriate line manager for action.

4.3 Key Documents

There are a number of key documents which have been produced and which will be regularly updated to help measure our success.

In addition, a Green Flag Action Plan has been produced which outlines measures to be taken to contribute to achieving the Green Flag Award. See section 5.4.

At each stage of development we will consult with the stakeholders as a quality control measure to ensure that what WLCT is doing on site is what the community wants and indeed will use.

4.3.1 Audience Development Plan (ADP)

The Audience Development Plan identifies the proposals which will require further development during delivery of scheme A & B. The Audience development Action Plan develops the solutions prepared for the Stage One submission and progresses them at Stage Two to support the whole park restoration project. This plan links with the Marketing, Interpretation, Training and Access Plan and aims to deliver the people offer of the park.

In general terms solutions developed in the Master plan benefit all park visitors, however, where a specific audience benefits more significantly in the proposal, the audience is identified. The action plan aims to strengthen links and the offer for existing audiences and sets out a framework for engaging new audiences in context of a revised Master plan.

The original framework of the Stage One submission has been retained to include Community Engagement, Events, Education and Interpretation, Heritage Merit and Landscape Character, Security, Health and Safety, Access, Marketing and Profile Raising and Management and Standards. Timescales for implementation will be concentrated over the next five years and beyond. Promoting the park to different audiences will be an ongoing consideration.

4.3.2 Interpretation Plan

The Interpretation Plan has been prepared to accompany the Audience Development Plan for Mesnes Park Wigan by Graham Barrow Research and Consulting Ltd. It is based on existing published work and has not involved extensive consultation. Extensive public consultation and survey work has already taken place in the preparation of the Audience Development Plan.

The objectives for the provision of interpretation facilities and services in the park are to:

- i. increase visitors interest and understanding of the historical importance of

- ii. the park in the development of Wigan
- iii. enhance visitor's enjoyment and persuade them to stay longer, visit more often and tell their friends and relatives about the park
- iv. develop products that will enhance the park as a visitor and tourist attraction
- v. encourage various educational groups to study aspects of the park's design, history and ecology and use it as a living classroom
- vi. attract more people to volunteer and in particular to join the Friends of Mesnes Park, a voluntary group that works closely with the Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust to help manage and interpret the park
- vii. encourage appropriate behaviour in the park and foster a sense of care and a desire to conserve the place

4.3.3 Training Plan

The Training Plan has been prepared to provide a framework to train people working with and on the project, ensuring that they are in a position to deliver the needs of the project and to provide a positive visitor experience.

The Training Plan will also identify and improve the training opportunities that the project offers for the community and staff, to help realise Mesnes Park as a People's Park for the 21st Century. This will include;

- i. How community volunteers can research and learn about the Parks heritage.
- ii. What training opportunities arise for staff from managing and maintaining the hard and soft landscapes and structures within the park on a day to day basis.

To review what skills already exist within the organisation and other partner organisations to deliver the restoration project.

- iii. Identify any skills gaps and identify opportunities to re-address this.
- iv. Provide a three year framework to train people working on the restoration project to ensure it is successfully delivered in a sustainable way.
- v. How the park can be used as an educational resource for the community and staff.
- vi. Provide a robust and cost effective framework to deliver the Training Plan.

- vii. Consult with partners and assess the opportunities for training that the project will offer.
- viii. Demonstrate how the cultural resource in Mesnes Park will be a training asset for education.
- ix. Identify barriers to learning and offer solutions to reduce these barriers.
- x. Identify any informal and formal accreditations arising from the project.
- xi. Identify any opportunities of increasing community capacity through volunteering.
- xii. Identify key requirements which are essential to further developing the park as an educational resource for the community and staff.
- xiii. Identify how training will be delivered, monitored and reviewed.

4.3.4 Access Plan

The Access Plan in the Stage One submission was informed by the Access Audit and based on schematic diagrams only. The Stage One Action Plan has informed the design briefs for the architects and Landscape Design Team for the Stage Two submission. Detailed architect design solutions and landscape proposals have been developed for each of the buildings and areas of the park. These take into account a review of the original Action Plan and in light of further consultation carried out during the development period.

An overall access philosophy has ensured the Master plan has been developed so that it considers not just physical but all other access barriers.

The proposals in the revised Master plan include solutions which improve access to the park and its facilities for all audiences in a non-discriminatory way as possible.

Areas of development which still need to be addressed have also been identified. These actions will be developed through further consultation and implemented over the restoration period. Timescales and resource implications are also identified.

The action plan identifies solutions from the Stage One Access Plan submission which have informed the review of the Master plan. This review remains within the physical, sensory, intellectual, social and cultural and financial framework. The needs of all audiences have been considered. Where the action has specific audience benefits it is noted. Actions where an audience isn't identified indicates that the benefit is for all audiences.

A proposal from the Stage One submission which has been implemented is the preparation of a restoration leaflet to inform people about the planned developments

at Mesnes Park. It focuses on the fact that the park is being developed in response to feedback from local communities (August 2007). The restoration leaflet will be reviewed and republished as information becomes out of date.

The proposal to install hand rails on the Daltons steps has been reviewed in context of the Master plan and has been addressed by creating new circulation routes within the park which are supported by appropriate seating.

4.3.2 Marketing Plan

Mesnes Park is a traditional Victorian Park located within five minutes walking distance of Wigan town centre. It has a range of original features located within it, such as a café pavilion and bandstand which are of significant heritage value both locally and regionally. There are also a range of facilities within the park including bowling pitches, play areas and tennis courts. The park currently receives 1.6 million visitors per year.

Mesnes Park has submitted a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund to obtain funding to restore the park and to ensure its development so that it is a sustainable attraction. The Marketing Plan will assist in the development of the park both prior to the funding award and once the funding is obtained.

The Mesnes Park Restoration Project Marketing Plan is in addition to Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust's Parks Marketing Plan, which outlines general marketing activity taking place to promote all WLCT managed parks across the borough. The Parks Marketing Plan is a document produced on an annual basis. Publications which are currently used to promote parks are detailed in Appendix One.

The marketing plan will be delivered by Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust's marketing team in conjunction with the Parks Officer. This will be led by the Marketing Manager and the Marketing and Communications Officer responsible for parks marketing.

The overall aims of the marketing plan are to assist with the following:

- i. surrounding districts (within 30 minutes drive time).
- ii. To increase the overall usage of Mesnes Park through developing its audiences, and encouraging visitors to extend the length of stay and frequency of visits.
- iii. To generate awareness of Mesnes Park and its facilities both locally and regionally (to within 60 minutes drive time depending upon the event).
- iv. To increase revenue from park activities and café facilities to ring-fence for future investment in Mesnes Park.

4.4 Community Consultation

Over the last few years WLCT have carried out a series of consultation with Stakeholders and the local community see Appendix ??? for the list.

4.4.1 Stakeholders

Many stakeholder groups and individuals are involved with the park: Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust Parks Activities team, Grounds Maintenance Service, Active Living team, Wigan Council's Leigh Township programme, Planning Department, Neighbours of the park etc etc

All stakeholders will be represented either in the Friends of Mesnes Park or an alternative group). There will be continuing opportunities for all stakeholders to have input into the development of the park.

Opportunities to comment on the park are available to people who attend events and those who visit the park, through twice yearly consultations that will continue to be carried out and evaluated. Additional to this will be consultation that is carried out for elements of the development through the planning process or more specifically with users; for example off site consultation on the development of the play facilities. A list of consultation that has been carried out with Stakeholders.

4.4.2 Visitor satisfaction surveys

Over the last two years, two visitor satisfaction surveys a year have been carried out at Parks across the Borough. The results showing the biggest disparity are the satisfaction in the condition of buildings and toilets; the play facilities; and information and signage. There are several results where the satisfaction is above the average for the borough. An overall result is also shown for evaluation carried out at three of the events in the park over 2007 – satisfaction levels are high with the organisation of the events.

4.4.3 Play Survey 2007 – attached at appendix 13

The survey was carried out by WLCT Play Section with two groups of local children, the survey was not carried out on site as play facilities are considered to be very poor. The overwhelming request is for more and better equipment, and acknowledges that some of the equipment should be inclusive. It interestingly includes two requests for a café. The children also display a pleasingly broad awareness of issues in the park from misuse by youths to poor toilet provision

5.0 HOW WILL WE KNOW WHEN WE HAVE ARRIVED?

5.1 Monitoring Success

There are a range of documents and plans which will be used to monitor 'how will we get there'. As part of the HLF funding we have signed up to a Measuring success programme which consists of:

Overall Project Monitoring

Project monitoring of the 10 year Management Plan will take place at a number of levels. These include the following:

5.1.1 *Strategic*

Progress will be reported at the Wigan Leisure and Trust Business Change Board. Progress against the Management Plan is a discrete item contained within the Trust's Environment Programme in the 2007-10 Business Strategy.

5.1.2 *Strategic Divisional*

Through the monitoring of service delivery plans at EM&S Divisional Management Team meetings.

5.1.3 *Operational*

Through an ongoing review, at least annually. The spider chart MP 35 (Stage 1 submission) shows how the Park Officer through the Parks Steering Group can enlist the assistance of stakeholders, agencies and community groups to review the 10 Year Maintenance & Management Plan.

A review will take place to reflect the changing operational procedures required to be introduced as the Restoration Scheme progresses. This will take the form of prescriptive management policies, guidelines and operational work schedules.

5.2 Performance Monitoring

Monitoring the long term impact and outcomes of the regeneration programme, as perceived by both users and non-users of Mesnes Park, will be undertaken as part of a coordinated longitudinal programme, over the next 10 years. The programme reflects the recommendations made by ABL Cultural Consulting and identified within our core submission document Mesnes Park Audience Development Plan, relating to visitors.

The programme will comprise a series of consultations and research activity and will include the following:

Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust

| Detail | Frequency | Method | Key Outputs / Information |
|-------------------------|---|-------------------|--|
| Event description | Per event | Survey | A record of each event which will include: participation and prime purpose of the event, usage by special groups such as schools, colleges, (eg, lifelong learning, health improvement, etc) |
| Event evaluation | Per event | Survey | A sample of user perceptions of the value of the event, including, perceived impact and demographic details of respondent |
| Visitor numbers | Continuous | People Counter | Visitor numbers by time of day and access point |
| Park Satisfaction | Annual (data collected winter and summer) | Survey | Satisfaction for a range of quality criteria, including age, gender and postcode. See Appendix Six for areas covered |
| Parks usage | Annual | Citizen's Panel | This will provide data on parks |
| General Resident survey | Every 3 years | Government survey | Overall satisfaction with parks and green spaces across the borough |
| Mesnes resident survey | 2010 and 2014 | Postal survey | Satisfaction and impact of Mesnes Park Regeneration work. This will include postcode and demographic data and user profile |

Performance data relating to the above is included within the Environmental Management and Sustainability Delivery Plans shown at Appendix MP 12 (submitted in the Stage One application).

In addition to the above programmed survey work, information on satisfaction will also be collected through Mesnes Park Focus Groups, FOMP

5.3 Monthly site visits

Recently PACA and GMS have started to have monthly meetings to discuss operational issues and the Green Flag Award Process. This has lead to the creation Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust

of an internal site checklist which is scored on a monthly basis. This process involves the Park Officer, Park Ranger, Grounds Maintenance Area Manager and the Lead Charge Hand. This will enable smooth communication and consistency between sections in the way the site is managed.

5.4 Green Flag Action Plan

The stipulations from the Heritage Lottery Fund aim for a Green Flag for Mesnes within five years. The following action plan highlights how WLCT plan to gain a Green Flag Award. It is a comprehensive Green Flag Action Plan which aims plan works required for Mesnes to reach Green Flag Standard.

5.5 Business Plan

The details of the costs involved with the running of the park are shown in the Revenue Cost Plan in Volume 2 Section 2B. The summary of the plan is below:

This Business Plan aims to establish the strategic background for the Mesnes Park Restoration Project and detail the development work up to submission of the stage 2 Heritage Lottery Fund application in September 2007 for Phase One and subsequent stage one application for Phase Two in March 2008.

The Business Plan defines the aims of the Project, links the Project into wider town centre developments, links the project into WLCT strategies and details the mechanism to realise the stated aims and objectives for the project.

The Business Plan confirms the capital and revenue elements of the project, summarises the cost plan and funding strategy and summarises the programme for the delivery of the Master plan elements.

The Business Plan recognises the park catchment area, the target audiences, and the local competition and details a Marketing Plan to engage with the target audiences during the development phase, during construction and post construction.

The long term (ten year) operation of the Park is summarised in section 7 of the Business Plan where income and expenditure is profiled over the ten year period. Assumptions and estimates for new income and expenditure items are detailed and related back to the predicted usage profile of the Park assets.

The Management Structure for the capital phase and operational phase of the project is detailed in section 8 where relationships between internal and external resources are described and confirmed

A risk register is described in section 9 including the output of a SWOT and PEST analysis. Risks are identified and measured and allocated to key project team members to reduce and monitor.

Finally section 10 of the Business Plan sets out the parameters for the monitoring and evaluation of the project from a financial and public benefit perspective and

Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust

defines the regular research and data collection to feed into future operational and strategic decision making.



Mesnes Park

Management and Maintenance Plan 2022 – 2027

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| Appendix | List of Appendices | |
|-----------------|---|-----------------------------|
| A | Action plan summary | Uploaded |
| B | Maintenance Specification (Routine) | Available on request |
| C | Maintenance Specification (Reactive and Arboriculture) | Available on request |

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

A jewel nestled on the edge of Wigan town centre, Mesnes Park has enjoyed a Heritage Lottery funded £6.1m restoration programme which included seven Grade 2 listed features in the park, including: the entrance lodge, main gates, statue of Sir Francis Sharp Powell MP, two sets of Dalton steps, the pavilion and bandstand

From pleasant walks in the sunshine to enjoying a workout on the outdoor gym, the beautiful surroundings of Mesnes Park are the perfect place for people to relax and unwind.

1.2. Wigan Council, supported by the Friends of Mesnes Park, and a wide range of volunteer organisations, are delighted to submit this Green Flag application for Mesnes Park, Wigan's restored Victorian Park.

1.3. Mesnes Park is identified by the Parks Strategy (2008) and the 2013 Open Space and Recreation Survey as one of the Key Sites within the Wigan Borough and is highly valued by residents and visitors to Wigan.

1.4. This application continues a commitment made with the Heritage Lottery Fund, and the Big Lottery, to ensure that Mesnes Park achieved and retains the Green Flag award from 2015 onwards, following the £6.1 million restoration project, which concluded in 2013.

1.5. The Mesnes Park Management Plan is the formal plan that brings together a 5year improvement strategy for Mesnes Park. The Plan takes stock of the externally funded works that have recently been concluded, reviews the current position, including national and local contexts, addresses key issues around the 8

standards that make up the Green Flag assessment and sets out actions and priorities over the next 5 years

1.6. In 2015, Mesnes Park achieved Green flag status for the first time and has retained the accreditation since then. This is a great achievement for everyone who has been involved in the enhancing and maintaining the park. This achievement is not just the effort of the Council but, each and every one of our volunteers and partners for which, we rely on more and more.

Content, Structure & Preparation of the Plan

1.7. The Management Plan development process has involved the Senior Greenspace Office, Parks & Streetscene Operational Teams; Facilities Management, Elected Members, strategic partners, Friends of Mesnes Park, and the community who use Mesnes Park.

1.8. The Management Plan will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis, led by the Senior Greenspace Officer. The Plan will be updated following the annual review. Any comments and feedback from any formal 'walk arounds will also form part of this review process. This management plan is a working document that aims to set a framework for development of the park. It outlines existing features and facilities, describes how these are maintained and by whom, and how they are used.

1.0. The management plan sets out an improved management and maintenance regime for the park that will ensure a better standard in the future, by clearer use of resources. It provides a framework for, and informs decision making about, the park's future, and sets out aims and objectives for the site in line with existing policies and consultation with its users

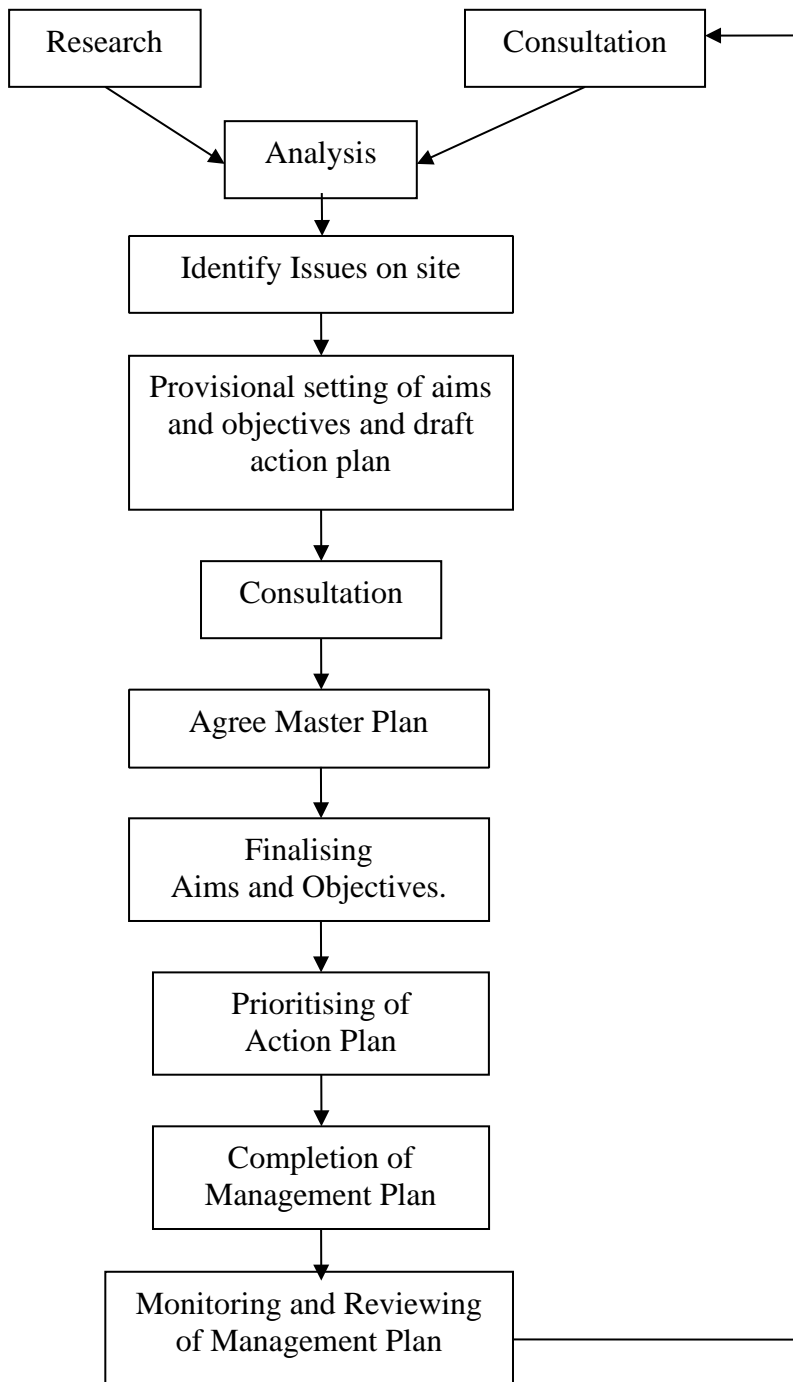
1.9. This Management Plan includes an Action Plan (attached at **Appendix A**), which is a dynamic document, in that items will be added / amended and shown as

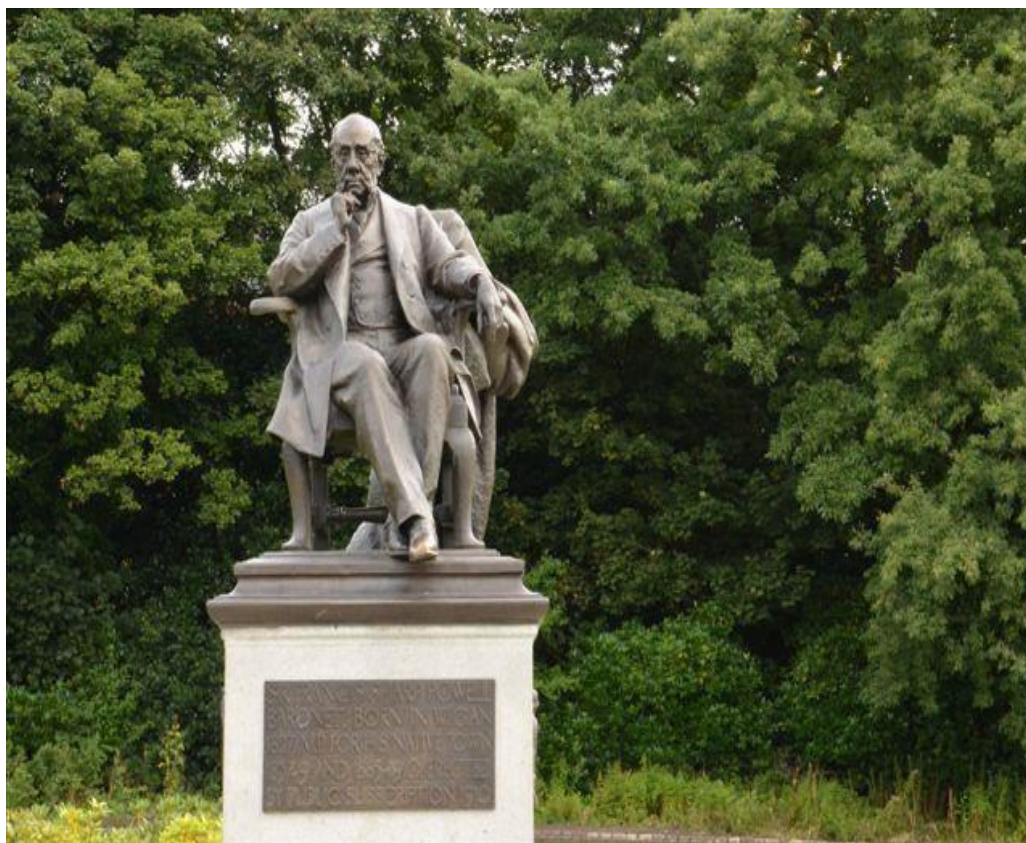
completed. Tasks within the Action Plan will predominantly be allocated to the permanent workforce and friends' group.

1.10. The following identifies a schematic diagram showing the development of the

Mesnes Park Management plan.

Process of compiling the Management Plan





Part 1 General Information

2 GENERAL INFORMATION

2.1 This section provides a general overview of the management structure of the park, in context with the vision and objectives of Wigan Council and any policies that it aims towards.

Wigan Council Vision & Objectives

2.2 The current parks strategy dates to 2008. It includes a thorough assessment of the parks then managed by WLCT. It also involved stakeholder consultation. It linked the benefits of parks to wider health and social benefits, linked to national policy developments and concluded that Wigan parks, while heavily used, had low customer satisfaction which correlated with low levels of spend per head of population. It responded to this with a prioritised action plan which, to deliver in full, would have required £20m-£26m of investment over 12 years (some of it from external sources). It advocated the adoption of Green Flag as the key standard to drive improvement; and underpinned the Lottery-funded regeneration of Mesnes Park. Further investment, however, was curtailed by the council's changed financial situation after 2010.

The Council recognises that a new approach to its land management is needed and it recently begun work on a new vision – Greenheart: Parks and Natural Capital.

The project's vision is that

“Together, we will create an environment that we are proud of, where our greenspaces are safe, accessible, and attractive, promoting the health and wellbeing of our residents. Where habitats and biodiversity are protected and enhanced, and where our natural environment helps safeguard us from the impacts of climate change”.

The Council’s positive approach to land management will preserve the borough’s ‘natural capital. Collectively all the borough’s parks and open spaces are now to be given the brand name ‘Greenheart’ – to recognise it as one of the borough’s key assets in terms of its contribution to making the borough an attractive place to invest and live in; its potential to promote health and wellbeing; and its environmental and unique biodiversity value. The Greenheart broad objectives are below:

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>1. Parks strategy & Mgt Plans</p> | <p>Develop overarching parks strategy (see also Play Strategy and Bowling Greens Strategy – separate work) Develop management plans for priority parks as per the parks strategy. Use and manage land sustainably to ensure conservation of biodiversity</p> |
| <p>2. Better outcomes</p> | <p>Improved <i>health and wellbeing</i> outcomes Support urban regeneration and housing growth Maintain and improve parks and greenheart incl. Green Flag Protect and improve biodiversity Improve the borough’s image Make Wigan a <i>bio-town</i> (“people & nature form mutual alliances”)</p> |
| <p>3. Better customer experience</p> | <p>Improve <i>health and wellbeing</i> as part of the visitor experience Improve the customer journey Develop policies to clarify and manage expectations</p> |
| <p>4. Selfsustainability</p> | <p>Increase footfall and visitor numbers Increase % of visits from deprivation areas Maximise commercial income and external grant revenue Maximise community involvement Develop & implement a CAT and disposal strategy for Greenheart Link income and expenditure—business model</p> |
| <p>5. Efficiency</p> | <p>Define roles and responsibilities Remove duplication and silos Introduce lean working principles Fresh look at maintenance practices in line with new strategies</p> |
| <p>6. Natural capital</p> | <p>Help Wigan tap into GM / regional / national opportunities regarding: Air quality; Water quality; Climate change and emissions; Soils and geology; Green infrastructure. Develop new and innovative funding mechanisms towards the achievement of biodiversity outcomes</p> |

2.3 The Wigan Deal

The Deal is an informal agreement between the council and everyone who lives or works in the borough to work together to create a better borough. Wigan council has committed to a series of pledges and in return need residents and businesses to play their part too. So far through working together the council has saved £115m. The council now has the second lowest Council Tax rates in the whole of Greater Manchester, and we believe we can continue to balance our books if residents help by doing things like recycling more, volunteering in

their communities and using online services. Thanks to the hard work and commitment of residents and communities The Deal has been a huge success.

2.4 The Deal 2030

Formed from the views of thousands of our residents, the Deal 2030 is an exciting and ambitious strategy for Wigan Borough. The Deal 2030 provides a unifying strategy for the whole of the borough to make it the best possible place to live and work over the coming decade. It was created after the biggest ever consultation undertaken by Wigan Council called The Big Listening Project, which visited 83 locations across the borough, spoke to 6,000 people directly and collated 10,000 brilliant ideas, from the future of town centers and opportunities for young people, to being part of a caring community and living in a clean and green place. One of the things that came out loud and clear was how proud people are of the borough - but they are also passionate about making change for the better. They said they want to move at pace towards a better future for everyone. This plan sets out how we can work together to bring about this change and to make sure that this borough, which matters so much to everyone who lives and works here, is a place we can continue to be proud of. All the views and comments have been read and analysed and collated into ten key priorities, which the council and its partners will focus their efforts on in the coming decade.

The 10 priorities for the Deal 2030 are:

- Best start in life for children and young people
- Happy healthy people
- Communities that care
- Vibrant town centres
- An environment to be proud of

- Embracing culture, heritage, and sport
- Economic growth that benefits everyone
- A well-connected place
- Confidently digital
- A home for all.

The Deal 2030 is a plan which aims to make Wigan Borough the best place it can be over the coming decade. From improving the borough's town centres and making sure people are healthy, to getting children the best start in life and ensuring a litter-free environment, the strategy sets out 10 ambitious goals for the borough.

<https://www.wigan.gov.uk/Council/Strategies-Plans-and-Policies/Deal2030.aspx>

National and Regional Context

2.5 The national debate about the future of parks has its origins in the late 1980's / early 1990's. "*Parks in Crisis*" was a frequent headline, first in the horticultural and technical press, but eventually picked up by a wider audience. A combination of long-term revenue cuts, lack of investment, and competition from other leisure offers had brought about this "crisis".

2.6 This situation continues, decades later. A report by Nesta "Rethinking Parks" published in November 2013, has identified that a 60% fall in public sector funding for non-statutory services, like parks, will take place over the next decade. Reductions in parks staff, rangers, gardeners, and other green space professionals has been taking place nationally. Regionally, in the North West, many local authorities have now disbanded the formerly traditional park ranger service which has also taken place in Wigan.

2.7 Despite the risk to future public funding, parks and open spaces remain the most heavily used part of the leisure offer – national surveys show 46% use / visit them more than once a week. Municipal parks are free to visit, and this promotes their accessibility to all. They provide a huge opportunity for local authorities and their associated organisations, to lay on events and activities that considerably enhance the quality of life and health in communities. Within the Wigan Borough 80% of residents say they have visited a park or open space within the past 12 months and satisfaction is also high - we plan to tap into this enthusiasm to develop and promote our services.

2.8 The Nesta report adds that *“we need new visions of how parks can be managed and maintained, how they can generate income and use resources differently, how they can empower communities and drive social action”*

2.9 In 2016 the Communities and Local Government Committee launched an inquiry into public parks to examine the impact of reduced local authority budgets on these open spaces and consider concerns that their existence is under threat. The Committee will look at how parks should be supported now and in the future. This includes studying alternative management and funding models, such as a mutual or a trust.

2.10 There is a growing deficit between the rising use of parks and the declining resources that are available to manage them. This gap does not bode well for the future condition and health of the nation’s public parks – State of the Parks Report. Heritage Lottery Fund (2016).

2.11 The 2021 APSE State of UK Public Parks reported: “Parks budgets in the main continue to be cut, with an estimated £190 million being lost from local authority parks budgets over the last 5 years. The level of cuts has not been equitable

across the UK, with the North-west region being one of the areas most affected by reducing finances and also the area with the largest reported number of parks in a declining condition”.

Furthermore “In an attempt to future-proof parks, many local authorities have now begun to develop green space strategies which clearly highlight the value of these spaces within their corporate priorities. Linking parks into health and wellbeing, achieving climate change targets, increasing opportunities for biodiversity, improving air quality and encouraging economic development, has seen many services now willing to invest in these areas, recognising them as important solutions to their wider strategic and operational aims and objectives. As well as local authorities recognising the value of parks and green spaces, the recent government emphasis on ‘levelling-up’ should also feature heavily in such strategies as green spaces often sit at the heart of more deprived communities” This will be explored further in the management plan

Local Context

2.12 The Metropolitan Borough of Wigan stretches over 77 square miles and its current boundaries date back to the reorganisation of local government in 1974. Across the borough a dispersed settlement pattern of small market towns and villages situated in rural settings subsequently developed. Industrialisation built on and blurred these settlement patterns but did not obliterate them. These historical developments have left a legacy of urban townships and villages that have retained their unique character and local pride.

2.13 Within Wigan Borough the shape of the built-up areas has been very much influenced by the history of coal mining and related heavy industries, overlaying

the earlier agricultural settlements. Each local community has its own park/recreation site that is typically small in scale. Local communities in Wigan feel proud of their parks and this can be evidenced by the increasing number of 'Friends of Groups'.

2.14 A further main driver in the local context is the gap in health disparities that exist between the most affluent and deprived communities in the Wigan Borough. Parks and open spaces remain a valuable resource in encouraging access to exercise and activities for all age groups. The Action Plan reflects this critical requirement.



Part 2 Where are we now?

3 WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Introduction

3.1 This section of the plan describes the current position at Mesnes Park. It provides an audit of the site from the perspective of the Green Flag criteria

3.2 The operational maintenance of Mesnes Park is undertaken by Parks & Streetscene while the overall strategic management is the responsibility of the Be Well - Parks team which looks at the strategic management of all Leisure land under one umbrella (parks, open spaces, playing fields, allotments, etc). The Be Well team manages the land strategically and develops new relevant policies relating to the management of land across the borough.

Site Description

3.3 Mesnes Park occupies a 12-hectare site immediately to the north-west of Wigan town centre. Its boundaries are formed by a railway line to the west, Parsons Walk and Mesnes Park Terrace to the south, to the east Wigan and Leigh College and the former Gidlow cotton works and Bridgeman Terrace with its row of good quality, handsome period houses of similar date to the Park. It has a good range of recreational facilities, opportunities for children's play and for experiencing excellent vistas and good quality soft landscaping.

3.4 Mesnes Park considerably enhances the urban townscape and has an important visual impact on the Mesnes Park Conservation Area.

3.5 The park has an active, constituted Friends of Mesnes Park (FOMP) group which has been in existence for 25 years, consisting of members of the local voluntary community and residents. The "Friends" have helped in the future development and management of the park. Wigan Council now needs to work

closely with this group to refocus resources, build local capacity within the group and promote the park.

3.6 Park facilities consist of three informal kick about areas, bowling pavilion, informal grass pitch, children's play areas, outdoor gym, and bandstand. The park provides toilet facilities within the Café Pavilion. There are areas of formal lawn, annual bedding displays, community allotment and informal wooded areas. The park also houses a Parks & Streetscene operational depot.

3.7 As mentioned previously, Mesnes Park has seven Grade II listed features. It has a lake, formal gardens, and areas for play. The main features that have been restored now include interpretation panels to enable visitors to learn about the heritage of the park. Wigan Council's Heritage, Marketing and Event teams actively promote the facilities. An increasingly diverse programme of events highlights the attractions of Mesnes Park and increase visitor numbers.

3.8 The Base Plan below shows the current layout of the park, post renovation works.



Mesnes Park- Base Plan

Park History and development

3.9 Mesnes Park is Wigan’s first municipal park, opened on the 6th of August 1878. It safeguarded open recreational space from development and provided a ‘green lung’ in an otherwise industrial town. It occupies 12 hectares of former manorial demesnes land known as the ‘Mesnes’ adjoining the town centre. The design of the park was the result of a competition won by John McClean of Castle Donnington.

3.10 McClean’s design utilised the sloping site to create terraces surmounted by a pavilion, overlooking a formal garden. An ornamental lake was created from former marl pits and provision was made for recreational areas. Sport and play facilities were added to the park later within the design framework and the garden areas were renowned for their bedding displays and horticultural excellence.

3.11 To date the park retains the framework and features of the original design by John McClean. These include the entrance gates and lodge, Dalton steps, pavilion, ornamental gardens, walks, lake and rockwork and subsequent features such as the bandstand.

Location

Address: Mesnes Park, Mesnes Park Terrace, Wigan, WN1 1TU

Ward: Wigan Central

Township: Wigan North

Ordnance Survey: SJ65299

Size: 12 hectares

3.12 Access to Mesnes Park is as follows:

- By Car: At J6 M61, turn right on Dicconson Rd, follow signs to the Town Centre and Wigan Pier at Wigan Market take a right onto Mesnes Street and take the first left into Mesnes Park Terrace and the main entrance can be seen.
- From the M6, Junction 23, follow A49 Warrington Road. At the roundabout take the right-hand lane into Poolstock road. Follow this road until the end and then take a left onto Riverway. At the end of the road take a left hand turn onto Powell Street which continues onto Northway. At Wigan Market take a left onto Mesnes Street and take the first left into Mesnes Park Terrace and the main entrance will be in view.
- By public transport: Most buses stop at Wigan Town Centre and the Park is a 5- 10-minute walk from the bus station.
- Train: Wigan Wallgate and Wigan Western (approx. 0.6 miles From Station to Park).

- Parking: The perimeter around Mesnes Park operates pay and display and the main Wigan town centre car park is a 10-minute walk on foot.

Ownership

3.13 The park is owned by Wigan Council.

3.14 The red site boundary indicates the land that is owned by Wigan Council. The park forms part of the Mesnes Park Conservation Area, marked by a bluehashed line on the plan.



By-Laws

3.15 The existing by-laws for Mesnes Park were introduced in 1922. A copy can be viewed on request.

Covenant

3.16 The Entrance Lodge has a covenant set upon the building usage from the Diocese of Liverpool which specifies 'acceptable' uses for the building. The covenant stipulates the use of the lodge should complement park activities. The building is currently used for community activities, office space, police drop in and weddings.

Restrictions

3.17 Mesnes Park is situated within a Conservation area. Any development or change in the conservation area requires consent from Wigan Council's Planning Department.

3.18 The Mesnes Park Conservation Area was designated in December 2006. As in all conservation areas, the trees are protected by a blanket tree preservation order.

Character zones

3.19 Mesnes Park has been split into the Character Zones listed below; these are represented on the plan below.



Formal Landscape

3.20 The Formal Landscape consist of several intricate patterns of bedding situated at each side of the main drive (some of them known as ‘Fleur de Lis’ beds). The wide main driveway that leads to Dalton’s steps and elevated pavilion building dissects this area. The lodge building is located at the main entrance of the park, at the junction of Bridgeman Terrace and Mesnes Park Terrace. The building, after being sensitively restored is now currently used by various community groups, registrars, GMP and is available for hire

3.21 The formal lawns (known as the 'flats') and flower beds provide seasonal colour and the rhododendrons still exhibit the remains of the scroll design of the original planting. The design is reminiscent of a parterre, which perhaps was intended to be viewed from the pavilion. The bronze statue of Sir Francis Powell punctuates the landscape, and you often find visitors rubbing his now shiny shoe for good luck. The shelter has been restored and acts a shelter for events and an interpretation point. Within the formal area of the park, a soft landscaping scheme was implemented which saw the recreation of bigger flower beds within the main heritage core of the park to recreate the original intention of the designer John McClean.

3.22 Beyond the pavilion, which is the focal point of the formal gardens, the bandstand is set within a circular promenade and surrounded by vegetation. The soft landscaping layout presents the vision of the 1878 park designer John McLean. His intention to produce a 'picturesque' landscape with limited internal views, inspired by the poor quality of the surrounding scenery. The design strived to create a rugged and irregular natural landscape of largely native trees and plants. The landscape of Mesnes Park although embodying the picturesque principles as its core-planting made use of a decorative or 'gardenesque' margins by using many exotic imported plants and flowers of the day. The park has a rare example of McLean's formal bedding treatment of the flats and terraces that viewed from the pavilion embrace the picturesque principles of viewing a high main object from a low vantage point with enclosing lateral screens and selected high screens.

3.23 Bridgeman terrace boundary – A long term phased thinning of the trees and shrubs along Bridgeman Terrace commenced in February 2021, this is to remove trees identified as a risk, based on their condition / health. The thinning

of the trees and rhododendron also improves the site lines into the park, improving personal security within the park.

3.24 The vegetation management along Bridgeman Terrace will improve the connectivity between the park and the handsome buildings along the Terrace.

Sports zone

3.25 This linear zone runs parallel to the railway embankment and previously comprised 3 bowling greens, a grassed events area, 8 Tarmacadam tennis courts, and 1 basketball court. This area needs investment and redevelopment. The Bowling Greens have been decommissioned due to declining demand and use by dog walkers and informal football. These three greens have been repurposed as in-formal lawned areas which have had a positive impact and provided additional play space. The whole of the Sports zone area is identified as a priority area for improvement / development. A working group has been set up within the Council to look strategically how this can be developed to provide visitor attractions.

3.26 This area is used at weekends and during the school holidays by a inflatable concession.

Playing field

3.27 This is a grassed area, edged with mature trees and shrubs between the central path and the former Wigan & Leigh College - Pagefield Campus, which relocated to a new building some 200m from the park on Parsons Walk. A drainage scheme has enabled the area to be used for sports and events. There are the remains of a tarmac surface of a former play area by the north entrance of the park. 5 a side posts are used frequently and park staff direct users to this site when informal football is being played on the formal lawns. The disused

Pagefield campus is now derelict and provides an unwelcome backdrop to the park.

Woodland

3.28 This area which is adjacent to the Bridgeman Terrace entrance is home to the Holocaust Memorial and the Workers Memorial trees, it is also the location of a green 'heart' installation which is being used by a local artist to paint inspiring messages.

3.29 Within the woodland area is the remains of a heather garden, records of this area are not clear. The members of the Friends group recall the garden and there is an aspiration within the Friends group to reinstate the garden. Conversations took place with the group to progress with the reinstatement, the Council would fund the plants whilst FOMP would plant and maintain the garden. Sadly covid-19 paused this work, it is hoped to re-visit this project later in 2023.

3.30 There is a plan to establish a pinetum in this area, this will complement the aspirations of the friends' group (heather garden) and some of the existing coniferous trees. The establishment of a pinetum will result in the removal of several trees (mainly Leylandii and Cherry) whose height and condition have been identified as posing a risk. The planting of the pinetum, once complete will result in a net increase in tree numbers in the park.

Play Area

3.31 This area includes the 0-5's and 6-11's play area and the play shack. The play areas were completely refurbished in 2012 and re-landscaped to provide brand new play facilities and a flexible facility in terms of the Play shack.

3.32 The total area which can now be used for play has expanded. It includes open green space to be used as informal picnic area.

3.33 The outdoor gym equipment was installed in 2014 and has proved to be very popular; the success of this equipment has led similar equipment installed in other parks within the borough. The Friends of Mesnes Park with support from the Council successfully submitted a funding bid to provide exercise sessions for the local community, although this has now come to an end the participants who attended the sessions have continued to use the equipment on a regular basis.

Lake area

3.34 The lake area is ornamental and is very popular with visitors. The lake has three islands and supports a variety of wildfowl, two of the islands have been replanted to provide both shelter and evergreen colour. An incomplete low privet hedge separates the grass verges surrounding the lake. The lake has a Pulham & Sons rock feature, which has been restored and planted up as part of the HLF restoration. Trees and vegetation overhang the lake in some areas and obscure views. A grass verge and footpath separate the lake with Park Road/Parsons Walk. Inclined beds have been constructed at the entrance of Parsons Walk entrance which provides improved but limited visual impact to visitors as they enter the park.

3.35 The existing path at the rear of the lake has been fully resurfaced. All the main paths in the park have been fully reinstated as part of the restoration scheme.

Rose garden

3.36 One half of the rose garden was restored in February 2016 with Wigan Council (staff volunteer days, Friends of Mesnes Park and Wigan College) and offers a quiet area for relaxation within the park. Trees and rhododendrons surround the garden but have been reduced in height to improve the security and to improve natural surveillance from the Health Trust's Thomas Linacre Outpatients

building. The historical rose varieties have been removed to plant newer more hardy varieties which are very similar to species and colour of the originals. The Friends Group aspire to create a replica of the missing central feature, a stone sundial plinth and dial for the garden.

3.37 A further addition to the rose garden will be made in 2023, a rose bush has been donated to the Council in memory of Katharine Fussell (1929-2020), Katharine was instrumental in setting up Wigan's first mammography unit at the adjacent Linacre centre. In addition to the rose, a memorial plaque has been installed on a Mesnes park bench and there is a English Heritage blue plaque on the house in Mesnes Park terrace where Katharine lived.

3.38 During the rose garden project one member of the Wigan College team took a keen interest in the horticulture element and ended up being employed as a temporary gardener. He then applied for the Wigan Council apprenticeship programme and has been successfully employed.

Depot

3.39 The maintenance depot historically housed the facilities for servicing the park and the surrounding town centre green spaces. Facilities included glasshouses, potting shed, storage, vehicle garaging, parks head gardener office, staff welfare facilities and small nursery area containing cold frames. The depot supported, at its peak around 22 staff and contributed to the park's sustainability by growing its own annual bedding. The decline of the depot began with the commencement of the Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) era, where staffing levels were reduced and externally grown annual bedding became more cost effective than locally grown provision. The glass houses and cold frames were demolished to remove the maintenance liability as no effective use was available.

3.40 The depot currently hosts the Parks & Streetscene gardeners who are based in the park and responsible for the maintaining the park's horticultural standards.

3.41 Within the depot there is the Mesnes Park Community Allotment, and prior to the covid pandemic, was used to great success by a gardening group that successfully applied for funding on several occasions to develop and expand the allotment area to include several polytunnels and raised beds. To support the community use of the allotment area a number of rooms in the depot building was turned into a flexible space that could accommodate both the park gardeners and the allotment / community group. Since the pandemic, the use of this space has reduced, and a long term, anchor community group is sought.

Park Assets and Main Features The Pavilion

3.42 The Pavilion is the most iconic feature within the Park and is Italianate in design. Designed by W H Fletcher the pavilion was opened in 1880. Octagonal in plan and approximately 14 metres across, the building has two storeys with a central glazed lantern. Polygonal single storey wings project on northern, eastern, and western axis. Its south eastern elevation features a lofty 5-sided open porch supported on twisted cast iron columns with foliated open work brackets forming decorative spandrels. The porch and terrace offer an elevated prospect over the formal gardens.

3.43 The Pavilion (Grade II listed) was completely restored (April 2012) both internally and externally. The building is used as a café and contains toilet provision for 4 people plus a disabled toilet. The building has the concession Fredrick's Ice Cream downstairs and overspill seating and exhibition space upstairs behind a glass balustrade. The hard standing area outside the building

has terracing for park users to enjoy the historic vistas while being able to be served quality refreshments.

Bandstand

3.44 The bandstand is listed Grade II listed. It is an open-sided structure, octagonal in plan, with tall in-swept roof. Located at a lower level 70 metres to the northwest of the pavilion. Set on a slightly raised plinth, the bandstand is enclosed by a low hedge following the octagonal plan, surrounded by a circular paved area of about 55 metres overall diameter.

3.45 The Bandstand has been completely restored to its former glory (2012). It now stands between the Play shack and the Pavilion and new additions to the Grade II listed feature includes lighting and electricity. This allows performances to take place without the need of a generator big events take place with smaller community events interspersed between these times.

3.46 The bandstand is also licensed and is used to hold weddings and other formal ceremonies.

Shelter

3.47 An open sided 'Tudor style' shelter is located on the loop path approximately 30 metres to the east of the ornamental pond. Originally housing toilets this structure dates from around 1936. Constructed in brick with half-timbered twin gables with fascia boards and plain tiled roof. Prior to the restoration project, the building was in a state of disrepair and had been boarded up for some time.

3.48 The Shelter structure as you approach the main drive has been completely restored with a new roof installed. It now contains roller shutters which are opened and shut each day and contains an exhibition space where people can see the Friends of Mesnes Park, A People's History Exhibition.

Entrance Lodge

3.49 Adjacent to the main entrance gateway, the Swiss Chalet style lodge, listed grade II, was constructed in 1878. In 1928 the building was extended by the addition of a two-storey wing.

3.50 The Entrance Lodge is at the main entrance of the Park and is the hub of the Park, used by Park staff, community groups, GMP, and is also used as a training centre.

3.51 The Lodge is also licensed to host weddings and other ceremonies, Wigan Council's registrars carry out over 150 ceremonies a year. Since the restoration was completed, this figure is increasing year on year.

3.52 The Friends group also hold a set of keys for the lodge, this allows the group to use the lodge for meetings, history walks etc. The group can use the Lodge without council supervision.

Play shack

3.53 The existing play shack is orientated on an axis with the bandstand and pavilion. All paths have been laid to gradients within DDA guidelines. Additional access from the sports arena footpath to the play shack provides further ease of access for disabled visitors.

3.54 The Play shack was restored in 2010. Following a short-term catering lease in 2019 / 2020, A long term tenant of this building is sought.

Bowling Pavilion

3.55 The original bowls pavilion (Number 1) was situated adjacent to the southernmost bowling green, but this fell into disrepair and eventually this timber structure

collapsed and was removed. The site is now vacant. Bowling pavilion Number 2 was constructed in the 1920's.

3.56 The Bowling Pavilion was restored in 2012 to create a more flexible space that can accommodate a variety of groups. Since 2018, the building has been used by Wigan Council's Start Well service who meet twice weekly during term time and more frequently during school holidays, it is used for activities aimed at supporting young parents and families.

Dalton Steps

3.57 The Dalton steps were erected in 1880 and constructed of sandstone ashlar and originally had terra cotta ornamental urns placed at the landing pedestals. The Dalton Steps were restored in 2012.

The Powell Monument

3.58 The Powell Monument is located mid-way along the formal axis. The bronze life size statue is of Sir Francis Sharp Powell, one of the town's long serving MP's, in the late 19th century and early 20th centuries. Generations of Wiganers rub his foot for good luck, a tradition which has gone on for years. The statue was restored in 2013.

Pulham Feature

3.59 At the northern edge of the lake is a substantial rockery originally incorporating a waterfall, which was designed and installed at a cost of £500 by Messrs Pulham and Sons, in association with the construction of the lake. The waterfall is now fully operational with rock formations, channels and basins remain. The waterfall was restored in 2013.

The Coalbrookdale Fountain

3.60 The fountain, which stood at the northernmost point of the formal axis, was an original feature of the park which was removed in 1914. It was a large ornamental cast iron fountain supplied by Coalbrookdale Company and stood 4.26 metres and had a diameter of 7.6 metres. It was replaced in 2014.

3.61 The fountain, having been replaced in 2014, was starting to exhibit tiredness from exposure to the elements. The fountain was removed for 6 weeks in 2022 for sandblasting and re-painting.



The Boer War Memorial

3.62 The Boer War Memorial was unveiled in Mesnes Park to honour the Wigan soldiers that fell during the South African War. The memorial originally comprised of a detailed stone figure of an officer in Boer War campaign uniform and slouch hat holding a banner and pistol, on the inscribed stone plinth. Sadly, the original marble statue of the soldier was removed in 1965 due to deterioration and vandalism and was subsequently lost. The granite has been cleaned as part of the Heritage Lottery funded restoration work in the park and a replacement statue, funded through multiple partners including the Friends of the Boer War was unveiled in 2013.



4 ASSESSMENT OF MESNES PARK FOLLOWING THE GREEN FLAG CRITERIA

A WELCOMING PLACE

Welcome

- 4.1 Mesnes Park has five entrances: Walkden Avenue, Bridgeman Terrace, Mesnes Park Terrace, Parson's Walk and Park Avenue. Mesnes Park Terrace is used as the main entrance for visitors. The restoration project has seen enhancements to all entrances to the park which has improved them aesthetically and consistent in design throughout. The main entrance has been fully restored with new iron and stonework.
- 4.2 Whilst looking at improving entrances to the park, design and future maintenance has been considered. As the gates of the park are not locked, one gate from each entranceway is left open, which provides easy access for disabled users and park users with prams but halts vehicles from entering the park.
- 4.3 The visibility into the park has been improved significantly. Selected trees on the boundary of the park were removed (this was informed through a tree survey) and other vegetation in the park was also removed to open historic vistas into the park.
- 4.4 Most of the perimeter boundaries within Mesnes Park are fronted by hedges. In recent years to ensure there are clear sight lines into the Park, the hedges are regularly pruned.
- 4.5 Work has been carried out to lift the horticultural standard of the bedding on the 'flats' to ensure the visual quality of bedding as the visitor enters the Park.

Recycled green waste is regularly added to lift the fertility and standard of planting.

4.6 The presence of on-site Streetscene staff at Mesnes Park, makes for a welcoming environment for park users. The presence of on-site staff ensures that inspections and defects are picked up more easily. In addition, the maintenance in the park is generally clean and with the presence of site-based staff, it ensures that any unexpected untidiness can be easily cleaned up.

Signage

4.7 The Parks signage and interpretation was recently reviewed as part of a borough wide programme to update and refresh signage in parks and open spaces. The signage in Mesnes Park is due to be updated towards the end of 2023.

4.8 The noticeboard at the lodge entrance is used for regular and frequent notices such as events, tree removal notices etc. The Friends group have a set of keys for the notice board; this allows the group to advertise their events.

4.9 There is directional signage within Wigan town centre.

Good and Safe Access

4.10 The Master Plan was developed to consider not just physical but, all other access barriers, it also looks at sensory, intellectual, social, cultural, and financial barriers. To create a welcoming environment, each entrance now includes information about the Park's history and the park event programme and 4 out of the 5 entrances are DDA accessible and provide good and safe access.

4.11 As part of the regular site inspections, access points into the park are checked regularly to ensure they are unobstructed and free of litter; gates, barriers, footpaths and roadways are visually checked for defects, and remedial action for minor repairs is carried out as soon as is practically possible

4.12 Due to its location in relation to the train and bus station Mesnes Park can be easily accessed on foot, by train and bus. Pay and display car parking is available on three of the four boundaries of the park. Two large town centre car parks are found within a ten-minute walk of the park.

4.13 A new cycle route has been proposed which goes from the town centre to a new link path through the park. The route could be used to aid connectivity between the town centre and local communities.

4.14 The park has a vehicle policy which was implemented to reduce vehicle movement within the park. Vehicle access is restricted to Parks & Streetscene operational staff and a small number of Frederick's staff (who park in designated areas).

Equal Access for All

4.15 Access to the park for people with mobility problems is good due to many footpaths within the Park being resurfaced. Most of the entrances are level, making it easy to enter and exit the park environment. Consultation was carried out with the Access Group to ensure that disabled access has been fully considered throughout the design process. Many developments regarding equal access within the project have been considered. A gold standard hygiene suite and an adult hoist in the lodge has full DDA accessible changing facilities. Also, a new footpath provides an easier circular route through the park for people with mobility problems. All these measures contribute to a park that provides a welcoming place for users to relax.

HEALTHY, SAFE AND SECURE

4.16 The entrance gates at Mesnes Park are not locked (closed halfway to prevent vehicles entering the park). Facilities which are open for the public include the Pavilion (daily) which includes a café and toilets and the bowling pavilion (which is open for educational sessions and for community use when required).

- 4.17 There is lighting at various points within the park, including a lit walking route and the depot is operational during the working day
- 4.18 During 2018 a defibrillator was installed within the pavilion; this was funded by the family of a gentleman who sadly passed away during an event in a nearby park. Training has been made available to the café staff, the gardeners, and the friends group. The defibrillator is checked on a weekly basis.
- 4.19 There is CCTV coverage throughout the Park, this has had a positive impact on the incidents of anti-social behaviour in the Park.
- 4.20 Wigan Council maintains a successful positive and pro-active working relationship with Greater Manchester Police, who have an operational base in the Entrance Lodge. This serves as an additional police presence within the Park.

Appropriate provision of quality facilities and activities

Mesnes Park is excellently equipped with a broad provision of quality facilities. The offer within the park is varied and diverse and appeals to the public across a wide spectrum.

The range of facilities and activities is influenced by the park's heritage but also from previous consultation with residents, friends' group etc. This led to the introduction of new facilities such as the outdoor gym, community allotment etc whilst retaining and improving facilities such as the rose garden, the Coalbrookdale fountain and the Pulham feature. The park contains a combination of both formal and in-formal facilities; there are expansive play facilities, sports, horticulture, and wildlife attractions as well as more formal, traditional attractions such as the horticultural and heritage features. The park also has the rose garden and many benches which offer quiet areas.

- 4.21 Mesnes Park has a varied and interesting events programme that runs throughout the year attracting a wide range of people. This is publicised through the channels

highlighted in the marketing section. Events are organised in the park by various groups and organisations and is supported by the Council’s Events and Be Well teams, Wigan Council actively encourages the use of its parks as venues for suitable events.

4.22 During 2020, Wigan Council established a corporate events team, whose remit was to plan and deliver a wide range of events across the borough and Mesnes Park. The Events team are progressively establishing Mesnes Park as a location for local and regionally significant events.

4.23 Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles have access to a bequest from a local businessman known as William Higham who had several florists in the North West. On his death, IHL were bequeathed a significant amount of money to set up a Trust to put on military bands in the park. The Council’s Be Well team access this bequest to fund a series of armed forces events in the park.

4.24 In the last 12 months, the park has hosted the following events:



| Date | Event |
|------|----------------------------------|
| May | Wigan Athletic Party in the Park |

| | |
|------------|-----------------------------------|
| May | Wigan College music event |
| June | Wigan College 5k |
| June | Ladies Euros event |
| June | Platinum Jubilee event |
| June | Military band concert |
| June | Wigan bike festival |
| July | Military band concert |
| August | Brass band concert |
| August | Wigan Pride |
| September | RAFA 75 th anniversary |
| September | Proms in the Park |
| December | Santa Parade |
| Throughout | Litter picks |
| Throughout | History Walks |
| Throughout | Couch to 5K |



Safe equipment and facilities

- 4.1 External organisations and other sections of Wigan Council can use the park as a venue for their events and activities. The Council has an events pack which gives guidance to organisers in event planning. The Council Events and Be Well teams offers support and guidance to groups to ensure that health and safety and insurance documentation is appropriate and valid.
- 4.2 The park is visually checked daily for litter, detritus, and visual defects by the Streetscene staff. Any necessary remedial work is carried out immediately or referred to the relevant department for prompt attention.
- 4.3 The park trees, buildings and infrastructure are inspected by tree and asset inspectors (Parks & Streetscene). Maintenance requests are forwarded to the council's property maintenance team.
- 4.4 The maintenance request system has two levels of priority for repairs, P1 and P2. P1 repairs are carried out within one working day, P2 repairs with 5 working days. However larger repairs are costed and included in the planned maintenance programme
- 4.25 The Playground Maintenance Team carries out weekly checks of the play equipment. Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA) conducts a full independent annual check of all play equipment. Health and Safety Policy – The service is accredited to OHSAS 18001. All work and operations within the park are carried out in accordance with Wigan Council's Health and Safety Policy. Streetscene have full regard for the safety of all persons, services, and members of the public, always working in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and all regulations and codes of practice, which supplement the Act, e.g. COSHH, RIDDOR, PPC, and EC Directives. The Wigan Council Health and Safety manual is held at the Streetscene Services depot.

4.26 Risk assessments for all operations undertaken within parks are in place, and these are reviewed at least every two years. All staff are aware of the risk assessments and play an active role in their production. Parks & Streetscene regularly reviews its health and safety procedures, and takes account of new corporate directives, government guidelines and manufacturers (and suppliers) recommendations.

4.27 In addition, regular joint inspections are carried out by the Council's Be Well and Parks & Streetscene teams to identify improvement work. Examples of this work include small alterations to the soft landscape maintenance schedule, refocusing resources and identifying new projects and improvements.

Personal Security

4.28 The presence of Parks & Streetscene staff and maintenance depot in Mesnes Park makes for a welcoming environment for park users. The site-based staff provides a visible presence and point of contact for park users, creating a safe feel to the area. Outside of office hours, Park Keepers also visit the site. This staff presence provides reassurance to park users and ensures that any issues or problems can be dealt with promptly.

4.29 As well as the Council staff, the concession within the Pavilion is open 7 days a week and contains a defibrillator and first aid kit.

4.30 The neighbourhood policing team have a satellite office within the entrance lodge; they use this office as part of their regular patrols which offers reassurances to the wider public.

4.31 Programmed soft landscape maintenance is regularly reviewed in terms of ensuring a safe and secure environment for park users; the perimeter hedges along Bridgeman Terrace and Parsons Walk are regularly pruned to improve sightlines.

4.32 There are lighting columns along the main path network and CCTV located at strategic points within the park.

4.33 The signage within the park contains contact details for the Council (office and out of office numbers) as well as the emergency services.

Dog Fouling

4.34 Wigan Council welcomes responsible dog owners in parks, except for children's play areas, where dogs are strictly excluded. Dog owners are actively encouraged to take dog mess taken home to be disposed of responsibly. Dog Fouling signs are displayed around the park.

4.35 Public Space Protection Order – A proposal to introduce a PSPO using the legislation below was approved by cabinet in 2020. The PSPO was introduced in 2022. Due to a resource issue, the PSPO is being used to target locations that have an identified issue.

**Wigan Borough Council
Public Spaces Protection Order 2020
Dog Control
Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, Part 4**

WELL MAINTAINED AND CLEAN

Litter and Waste Management

4.36 Mesnes Park is litter picked daily and inspected weekly by Parks & Streetscene. Ample litter bins are provided and emptied daily as part of the duty gardener's role. In the last 12 months, 16 bins have been replaced with new, larger capacity bins.

- 4.37 The site-based staff have developed a sense of ownership of the park, they take personal responsibility for litter within the park and will not ignore incidents of litter.
- 4.38 The park is located between two college campuses and a busy town centre, the litter picking by the staff is structured around the high footfall times and honey pot areas
- 4.39 The boroughs waste refuse centres are operated by FCC, the company have donated several benches constructed from recycled materials. The benches have been installed across the borough's Green Flag parks as part of the Council's litter reduction / educational awareness programme.
- 4.40 Graffiti with offensive or abusive content is removed as a matter of priority. Incidents of vandalism are also dealt promptly, both by rectifying the damage and reporting to the police. Standards of cleanliness and incidents of vandalism are continually monitored to identify emerging patterns of misuse.

Horticultural Maintenance

- 4.41 Mesnes Park, following its extensive and sympathetic restoration contains a fine display of formal beds, lawns and horticultural detail that echoes the values of the original park as designed by John McClean. The picturesque design with 'gardenesque' margins is further complemented by the intricate Fleur de Lis beds and vibrant seasonal colour.
- 4.42 The introduction of features such as play, and sporting facilities are more typical of a modern urban park. Subtle changes have been made regarding the soft landscaping compared with the original designs; orchard planting, differential mowing and naturalised planting have been introduced, albeit still maintained to a high horticultural standard.

- 4.43 Grounds maintenance within the park is carried out by Wigan Council's Parks & Streetscene, the commitment to its role allows for an efficient and coherent approach to service provision improving responsiveness, prioritisation and better use of staff and resources. The service is committed to the training and development of the skills of its staff required to carry out the ground's maintenance tasks. As part of the on-going objective to provide a clean and well-maintained park, the maintenance requirements of the park are regularly reviewed and challenged.
- 4.44 Appendix B details the frequency-based specification that exists for all routine maintenance operations carried out in the park.
- 4.45 Gardeners carry out the routine maintenance work (as per the schedules contained in the specification) and additional works are specified and monitored by the Parks and Streetscene Area officer responsible for the ground's maintenance on site in addition to the actions on the action plan.
- 4.27 The routine maintenance of the park is mainly carried out by the site-based staff, most of whom who have been based in the park for several years, this allows for greater 'ownership' of the park by the staff, who have a wealth of experience that they use to keep the presentation standards within the park at a high standard.
- 4.46 Other Parks & Streetscene operatives are used to support the maintenance of the park. The number of operatives fluctuates to match the peaks and troughs of changing workloads and seasonal demands, Specialist operations such as occasional herbicide application and arboriculture works are undertaken via the Parks & Streetscene specialist teams that work across the Borough.
- 4.28 Streetscene have an apprenticeship scheme in operation. There are several apprentices learning traditional horticultural techniques at several parks

including Mesnes Park; they receive several projects to fulfil within the park where both the apprentices and the park will benefit from these new skills.

4.29 Whilst, in the main we have a frequency-based approach to maintenance, the gardeners are empowered and trusted to embrace and take responsibility for the park's presentation standards whilst taking a flexible, responsive, and less rigid approach within the park which gives a year-round high standard of horticultural quality.

4.47 Maintenance operations are currently triggered by a frequency profile which tells Parks & Streetscene when to carry out operations; this is supplemented by regular meetings with the frontline staff but also between the Parks and Streetscene Officers and the Senior Greenspace officer to vary operations for the best horticultural impact. Front line staff are trained in the quality standard they are being asked and trusted to deliver - they had, in previous years relied on 'inspectors' to identify failings in quality. Having continued presence within the park, the gardeners adopt a flexible response within the park to enable a prompt rectification of problems such as seasonal changes, litter etc as they arise.

Arboricultural and Woodland Maintenance

4.48 The condition of the tree stock in Mesnes Park is good. This is because of regular inspections by the Council's Tree and Assets inspector, who identifies and commissions a programme of planned, remedial work when needed.

4.49 New and replacement tree varieties are identified by the Senior Greenspace and Parks & Streetscene officers who consider their suitability based on criteria such as, provenance, suitability to the local climate, soils, impact from climate change etc.



Building and Infrastructure Maintenance

4.5 The park buildings and infrastructure is inspected and assessed regularly by Wigan Council's Parks & Streetscene team. Any defects or repairs identified are forwarded to the Council's Property Maintenance team, who then arrange for the repairs to be carried out (subject to available budget)

4.6 In terms of repairs and maintenance all liabilities for building and infrastructure are funded through the Council's Corporate Property Maintenance Fund.

4.7 The Corporate Property Maintenance Fund (CPMF) is a budget charged with maintaining the Council's operational property portfolio across the Leisure, Adult Services, Children and Young People's Services, Engineering and Chief Executives committees. The CPMF is split into 3 main funds:

4.8 Fund 1: Reactive Maintenance – for small scale “running” repairs including emergency repairs and health and safety requirements.

4.9 Fund 2: Planned Maintenance Fund – for larger scale repairs that can be planned ahead. Bids can be made to this fund for work to be carried out in the following financial year.

4.10 Fund 3: Pre Planned Maintenance/Serviceing - covers electrical, plant and heating servicing and maintenance

4.11 The CPMF is managed by Wigan Council's Corporate Contracts and Assets team

Reactive Maintenance

4.50 The Reactive Maintenance Fund is for minor repairs and emergency repairs, primarily costing under a £1500. This budget is effective in addressing minor repairs, vandalism damage and minor building defects affecting the building. Repairs are identified via the inspection procedure and reported to the property maintenance team.

Planned Maintenance Fund

4.51 This is for larger repair schemes of a planned nature. Within this fund, a 5-year external repairs and maintenance programme, 5-year remedial electrical test programme, intruder alarm programme, bridge repairs programme and fire risk remedial programme exist. Annual spending plans are produced in cooperation with the Corporate Contracts and Assets team. Spending plans are produced using information from the Condition Survey programme, identified repair programmes/cycles and repair priorities identified in previous years. The planned maintenance budget covers Wigan Council properties. Active prioritisation takes place to target key buildings and facilities where long term occupation is strategically important to Wigan Council.

Pre-Planned Maintenance/Serviceing

4.52 This element of the CPMF ensures that all parts of Wigan Council buildings are regularly serviced in line with statutory and best practice guidelines. Preplanned maintenance and inspections currently cover the following building elements:

- Lifts
- Lifting equipment
- Legionella testing
- Gas installations
- Ventilation systems
- Kitchen equipment
- Automatic doors
- Roller shutters
- Firefighting equipment
- Fire alarm systems
- Emergency lighting
- Intruder alarm systems
- Boilers
- Pool plant

4.53 The CPMF is managed by Corporate Contracts and Assets team containing Architects, QS, Project Managers, Building Surveyors, Access Auditors, Legionella Surveyors, Mechanical Engineers, Electrical Engineers, Structural Engineers, Health and Safety Co-ordinators and Technical Clerks. This resource is responsible for the management of individual planned and reactive repairs.

4.54 Outside of office hours, emergency repairs and maintenance are managed by Wigan Council's Central Watch, who as part of their 24 hours, 7 days a week, 365 days per year monitoring role can arrange emergency repairs using Council approved contractors. The approved list ensures all contractors working on

Wigan Council buildings have been vetted for financial, health and safety and technical competency. The Council approved list includes general building, electrical and mechanical contractors with specialist surveying, asbestos, dry rot and restoration contractors.

- 4.55 The existing arrangements for the repair and maintenance of the buildings and hard landscape within Mesnes Park are affected by the limited resources within the Corporate Property Maintenance Fund; a priority list at the beginning of the year is drawn up. Historically, maintenance has been reactive in nature but, this has now changed, regular walk arounds, site meetings and 'staff ownership' has seen a proactive maintenance regime implemented. The Senior Greenspace Officer works closely with the CPMF Officer to identify and programme significant building and landscaping projects.
- 4.56 Tree and Asset Inspectors carry out regular inspections using handheld devices, arranging for minor repairs to be carried out.

Equipment Maintenance

- 4.57 The maintenance equipment used within the park is procured on behalf of Streetscene by Wigan Council's transport section. All grounds maintenance equipment is subject to daily safety checks by a competent operator when in use. Parks & Streetscene ensure that machinery that is faulty or has defects will not be used. Machinery is tested in accordance with all Health & Safety polices with repairs carried out by the Council's transport maintenance team.
- 4.58 Play equipment is maintained by the Parks & Streetscene team, their inspections cover the structural integrity of equipment, cleanliness, vandalism and minor wear and tear. In addition some gardeners have also been trained to undertake play area inspections and report any issues to the play maintenance team to

resolve as per Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) recommendations. Additionally, an independent inspection is carried out once a year by RoSPA .

4.59 The Play Area Maintenance Supervisor is informed of any defects, who implements further action if necessary. On discovering a hazard that cannot be rectified immediately, action is taken to immobilise or remove the equipment. If that is not possible then the equipment is fenced off and appropriate signage displayed. The play maintenance team and gardeners has access to fencing and signage to prevent access by the public in such circumstances. All records are archived and filed in individual site files and retained as per GDPR / Retention guidelines

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Managing Environmental Impact

4.60 Wigan Council recognises the importance of environmental management and is committed to operating its business responsibly and in compliance with all relevant environmental regulations, legislation and approved codes of practice relating to its activities and operations.

4.61 Wigan Council's Parks & Streetscene has retained the ISO14001 accreditation again for this year. This ensures that the service continues to operate to the very highest environmental standards. They have also been accredited with the following ISO9001 ISO1801 (health and safety) and ISO1401 for several years.

Waste Minimisation

4.30 Wigan Council is an organisation who works to minimise waste. Green waste, leaf mulch and chipped arisings from tree and shrub pruning are reused on site

–around the borders, community allotment etc. These materials are also given away to local allotment groups free of charge.

4.31 The Parks & Streetscene team is continually monitoring, reviewing and reducing the amount of waste which the park generates. Some recycled materials are stored and used elsewhere but, Wigan Council recycles most of the green waste on site

4.32 Where green material has been chipped, we will make an assessment to establish whether these can be left in situ within the park. However, as the park is typically formal in design, in some areas this is not appropriate.

4.62 There are dry recycling bins are in the lodge.

4.63 Across the borough we are constantly reviewing the location and provision of bins and strategically place them around the park to try and make better use of the bin stock and to minimise waste.

Chemical Use

4.64 Chemical use will only be considered if all other mechanical methods have been explored. In addition, where a chemical must be used, the most effective, and if possible specific, treatment will be used for maximum efficiency. Persistent use of chemicals will be avoided.

Peat Use

4.65 Plants are only ever sourced from peat free suppliers. The contract for the supply of bedding plants will soon be tendered and we will again require the plants to be grown in peat free conditions

Climate Change Adaption Priorities

- 4.66 To demonstrate its commitment to sound environmental practices the fleet vehicles will be fully air quality compliant by the end of 2022.
- 4.67 Energy consumption in buildings is regularly monitored to prevent wastage and to identify costs. Inefficient energy systems will be replaced as and when is possible. Wigan Council has invested in a new software system to improve monitoring of energy usage and assessing patterns of usage.
- 4.68 Park buildings which have been newly restored have been fitted with Smart Meters. Smart Metering Technology. This can provide suppliers with readings directly and eliminate the need for estimated billing as part of the new build considerations and improving facilities, energy efficiencies are being considered.
- 4.69 Some of the buildings which have been recently restored have LED lights installed at the footings which will reduce energy consumption by 95%.
- 4.70 Wigan Council is part of the Greater Manchester Climate Change Strategy, which sets out how Wigan will become a cleaner, sustainable borough.
- 4.71** A new work strand for the Council is to look at how we can mitigate the effects of climate change corporately and whether we need to look at adapting our maintenance regimes accordingly. As temperatures change, we see great opportunities to manage our portfolio of land differently, review maintenance regimes, plant appropriate tree species, increase wildflower areas, utilising land as nature-based solutions, the work strand is called Naturalising the Borough.
- 4.72** The entrance lodge has had a 'green' roof since 2012 which reduces heating costs, water run off etc

BIODIVERSITY, LANDSCAPE AND HERITAGE

4.73 Since the park opened in 1878, there has been the loss of some entrance gates, boundary railings and other minor features, there has been relatively little alteration to the park. The restoration scheme has in the main, focused upon the restoration of the original features. In terms of access and safety, only modest changes have been implemented.

4.74 At present there is no indication that the park's original design drawings and plans survived. However, a comprehensive collection of photographic illustrations, remnant features and artefacts, and the published editions of the ordnance survey, provides clear indication of the layout, distribution of features, spatial arrangements, and design themes of the original layout. This has provided sufficient information to enable a comprehensive programme of restoration proposals to be identified and implemented.

4.75 The Conservation Management Plan addresses the need to safeguard and interpret the heritage and make the park fully accessible by:

- i. Conserving the fabric of the park ii. The repair and restoration of original structures and features
- iii. The re-structuring of the park vegetation to recreate intended views, to improve the appearance and setting of specimen trees and to reintroduce areas of formal ornamental bedding and herbaceous planting.
- iv. Improving the use and appearance of the park by the reinstatement of footpaths, the repair and replacement of boundary railings and entrance gates, the re-use of buildings and structures and the upgrading and where necessary relocation of amenities for play, recreation, and sport.

- v. The re-use of buildings focuses on the refurbishment and enhancement of the pavilion and its cafe to provide improved facilities for all year round use and the restoration of the disused Entrance Lodge to benefit the more tranquil areas of the park.

4.76 Through the restoration scheme Mesnes Park has tried to reduce barriers to physical access for all. As a destination it is well served by public transport and is easily accessible from its catchment through each of its five entrances. Within the park, the principal barriers to physical access are the routes to the pavilion and internal access to the café. Solutions have been sought for problems.

4.77 Current maintenance and inspection regimes. - The current maintenance and management regimes are mentioned above. However, materials which have been used in the restoration process for buildings have different maintenance requirements now particular features are restored; this includes the Pulham feature, Coalbrookdale Fountain, and the Boer War. O & M manuals are stored at Mesnes Park to help the Council ensure that the right materials are used to repair a defect.

Management of Natural Features, Wild Fauna and Flora

4.78 The Mesnes Park Biodiversity Enhancement Plan identifies the main habitats as woodland, hedgerows and shrubs, aquatic habitats, lawns and grasslands, annual beds, buildings, and other structures.

4.79 As part of the enhancement plan, a biodiversity audit was carried out to protect and enhance the biodiversity in Mesnes Park and to increase awareness, understanding and appreciation of local wildlife through an education programme that explains the importance of urban biodiversity. Wigan Council would like to look for a third party to deliver environmental education in this respect.

4.80 The Friends group undertake annual survey of the bird population within Mesnes Park; this is part of the RSPB's Birdwatch scheme.

4.81 Mesnes Park, including the Friends group and the community allotments has received several awards for taking part in the Britain in Bloom (NW) campaign, in recent years, the community allotments received a Level 5 (outstanding award), and the park received a Level 4 (thriving) award. This is due to the new planting schemes replicating much of what was there historically.

4.82 Mesnes Park is now considered to be a modern urban park that whilst it contains many heritage features you would expect to find in a Victorian park, it also contains more modern features and attractions, we have amended the maintenance of the land to the rear of the lodge to a less intensive mowing frequency, this allows the grasses to flower, providing a welcome habitat for pollinators.

4.83 Towards the depot area, we have several fruit trees, these have been chosen to provide increased variety within the park and pollinating opportunities.

4.84 The community allotment is one of the jewels of the park, the allotment area has developed over several years and is a real success, and there are several raised beds, poly tunnels, and landscaped areas. This area grows a wide range of produce along with flowers and perennial plants. This area links in with the Council's commitment to community food growing and providing green corridors for pollinating species.

Conservation of Landscape Features

4.85 As previously described throughout the management plan, the park was restored and now maintained to carefully represent and retain the park as originally laid out by John McClean.

- 4.86 Permanent landscape features are managed to preserve their overall aesthetics and balance to the park. Planting is regularly assessed for its overall quality and impact and added to, or replaced, to improve the overall appearance of the park. New horticultural features are developed using traditional practices, these skills are shared with the apprentice gardeners, who are involved in the maintenance and development of the park. This will ensure future sustainability.
- 4.87 The Friends of Mesnes Park have a successful relationship with Wigan Council and Wigan College which helped restore one half of the historic rose garden. The work retained the roses which are still thriving and those which are not, were replaced with newer varieties of roses which have been colour matched with the old varieties. The original soil was excavated and replaced with new soil, manure, and fertiliser
- 4.88 Tree planting is carefully considered to preserve the parkland landscape. The wider aim is to broaden the range of species and age groups in the park.
- 4.89 As part of McClean's original design, the park featured several Holly trees, in 2018, the Council re-introduced hollies into the formal lawns to complement the Fleur de Lis beds.

Conservation of Buildings and Structures

- 4.90 The following buildings and structures within the park have been fully restored: The Pavilion, Bandstand, Shelter, Dalton Steps, Entrance Lodge, and the Bowls Pavilion. New features such as the Coalbrookdale Fountain (new feature installed), Pulham features, Sir Francis Sharpe Powell, and the Boer War memorial. These buildings and structures within the park that are worthy of conservation because of their contribution to the landscape and will be maintained and repaired in a sympathetic manner.

4.91 The historic structures featured above are all important for varying reasons and to different groups. The Powell and Boer war memorials have local significance, whilst the Pulham feature is nationally significant as a fine example of pulhamanite work.

4.92 The property maintenance team who manages the repairs and maintenance of the park's assets are very aware of their significance and the need for careful and sympathetic repairs, which may require the involvement of specialist contractors. The council continue to use Lost Art to service and repair the Coalbrookdale Fountain.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Community Involvement in Management and Development

4.93 Mesnes Park is situated close to the town centre and large residential estates and is enjoyed by a variety of audiences, who the Council involve when developing and managing the park.

4.94 The park is significant to the local community. This can be demonstrated through the Friends of Mesnes Park who are excellent advocates for the Park and keen to develop its usage among a wider community. They are actively involved with the development and interpretation of the Park. An example of this can be evidenced by the restoration of the rose garden, as well as their support in funding applications (outdoor gym, Boer war stature, Coalbrookdale fountain) as well as their continued support at events held in the park – Proms in the Park, Run Festival etc.

4.95 The Friends of Mesnes Park was formed in 1998 as a lobbying group to clean up the lake which was in a very unclean state at the time. This expanded and a formal group was both formed and constituted. The Friends of Mesnes Park

meet on a regular basis and carry out events within the Park and support the park in a productive way. They are also good advocates for the heritage of the site. They have produced annual calendars using old historical photos of the park and carry out regular history walks in the Park.

4.96 The Friends group aspire to reinstate the heather garden, which is in the woodland area, the Council fully support this project and will contribute funding and officer time to the project. It is hoped the project will shortly resume.

4.97 Consultation – As part of the Deal 2030 Big Listening project, we consulted with over 10,000 people, the results of which, help shape the built and green environment at Mesnes Park.

4.98 Wigan Youth Voice is a local youth group who attend the Friends meetings and use the meetings to raise any issues young people have in the Park.

4.99 Partners of Mesnes Park are as follows: Wigan Council, Just B U CIC, GMP, Registrars and Fredericks Café. In addition, Wigan and Leigh College are extremely supportive of the project and are working with Wigan Council to look at potential projects both students can help within the park.

Appropriate Provision for the Community

4.100 There are several volunteer opportunities within Mesnes Park. These generally consist of Friends of Mesnes Park who do workdays, litter picks and history walks. We have a good working relationship with Wigan and Leigh College, we also have employee volunteer days where Council staff can volunteer for 3 days per year within the community. There are other ad-hoc opportunities which we advertise in the park or on the volunteer website of the Council.

4.101 The community allotments have been used by a number of groups in recent years, initially a 'Mesnes Park Community Allotment' group formed, this group

has now diminished, the space was used in 2021/22 on a short term licence by a community group to grow wildflowers and bedding plants.

- 4.102 The Friends group also arranged the 'Mesnes Park – 'A People's History' exhibition'. The group gave the opportunity for local people to contribute their memories and photographs of the park. There was a huge response! The group was supported by Wigan Council's Heritage Services and produced the 16panel exhibition. A new version is on view in the shelter and will generate continued interest from visitors. The interpretation plan should continue to generate interest for regular visitors.
- 4.103 Within the park the friends group arrange to annual events, Holocaust Memorial Day, and Workers Memorial Day, both events take place near memorial trees in the park that the friends group funded
- 4.104 Wigan Council's Leisure team (Be Well) offers a programme of events at several the key parks across Borough. Events that are held within parks - are aimed at a wide target audience and include (predominantly) outdoor type activities, such as Couch to 5k, bat walks, sports activities, and health walks. Through partnership working with other sections, a more diverse events programme is evolving.
- 4.105 Be Well are also responsible for the annual Last Night of the Proms event which has taken place in the park for several years. The event hosts over 750 people with tickets in high demand.
- 4.106 The friends group hold a set of keys for the entrance lodge, this enables the group to hold regular meetings, AGM's, events etc within the park without Council supervision.



MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION Marketing and Promotion

4.107 The marketing for all Parks is carried out by the Council's Communications, Events and Public Relations team. This includes event and activity promotion through Council social media channels and printed material. The council website contains information on the borough's parks as well as volunteer opportunities available through the community groups

4.108 The aim of marketing the borough's Parks is to promote the park and its attractions, increase visitor numbers and encourage visitors to extend the length of stay and frequency of visits. Outside of onsite information signage and boards, advertisements for events are publicised through targeted marketing campaign and via the Wigan Council website and social media. Press releases will be issued as appropriate to increase awareness of both events and park development milestones.

Appropriate Information Channels

4.109 Through the change in the public consumption and access of information we are looking at methods of providing more information digitally – Digital First. We are releasing more information online (website/Facebook/Twitter) and getting volunteers involved to promote the park through various on-site activities

4.110 Events are promoted through the Council website, Council Twitter, and Council Social Media

4.111 As most of the population have access to a camera enabled smart phone, Council staff are encouraged to take and post photos of the park and borough via the public facing social media channels – twitter, Instagram etc but also through the staff only Facebook page

Appropriate Educational and Interpretational Information

4.112 The Park is used by several local nurseries who bring their children for a daily mile activity.

4.113 There is extensive educational and interpretational signage throughout the park, this covers the significant history of the park, its features and the individuals featured in the park's heritage – Sir Frances Sharpe Powell, Sir Ian McKellen etc

4.114 Aside from the traditional information channels – signage, leaflets etc, the park is increasingly used by Council teams to promote their services, the Clinical Commissioning Group have signage that promote healthy hearts / walking, the adoption team use the park for their events and the Shared Lives regularly use the park.

4.115 A local artist, is also using the park to promote positive, healthy, and creative lifestyles. He has used calligraphy to paint inspiring messages on a feature in the park.

4.116 Wigan Council is committed to improving the working lives of our employees and promoting health and wellbeing in the workplace, part of this is promoting the use of Mesnes Park for meetings, in particular walking meetings. The park is a short walk from the town centre campus, home to 800+ employees; colleagues are encouraged to hold meetings whilst walking around the park.

This promotes both mental and physical wellbeing whilst promoting the park.

4.117 The allotment provision within the park is an excellent tool to promote healthy and sustainable living.

MANAGEMENT

Implementation of the Management Plan

4.118 The strategic management of Mesnes Park is carried out by Wigan Council's Be Well (BW) team, within the Digital, Leisure and Wellbeing directorate. This team is responsible for determining the strategic direction and overall management of the parks and green spaces it maintains. The operational maintenance is carried out by Wigan Council's Parks & Streetscene service (P&SS)

4.119 Both teams work closely together to ensure that the management plan is implemented, reviewed, and kept live and relevant. We do this through regular communication between the teams

4.120 The management plan is mainly written and updated by the Senior Greenspace Officer (BW), the Parks and Streetscene Officer's (P&SS) input is hugely important, they also ensure the site-based staff can contribute to the plan.

4.121 Over the last 12 months, regular, 'Green Flag' walk arounds have been carried out and to identify and progress development works and observing general management and maintenance of the site. This will continue to improve the

standards within Mesnes Park. The walk arounds are attended by the Senior Greenspace Officer, Parks and Streetscene officer plus the supervisor and gardeners.

4.122 Wigan Council will also carry out a mock judging around April to ensure the Park remains on track and to continually improve the site.

4.123 The friends group also contribute to the management of the park by acting as the park's critical friend and reporting any defects or issues, either directly to the gardeners or to the Be Well team.

Key Officers within Be Well and Parks & Streetscene

4.124 Senior Greenspace Officer (BW) - The Senior Greenspace Officer manages the development of key sites (Parks, open spaces, grass pitches, bowling greens, allotments etc), support community groups, develop partnerships, secure external funding, and support new business opportunities. Part of the Be Well Team (BW).

4.125 Parks and Streetscene Area Manager (P&SS) – Is responsible for managing all operational staff on site.

4.126 Parks and Streetscene Supervisor (P&SS) – Assists the Parks and Streetscene Area Manager

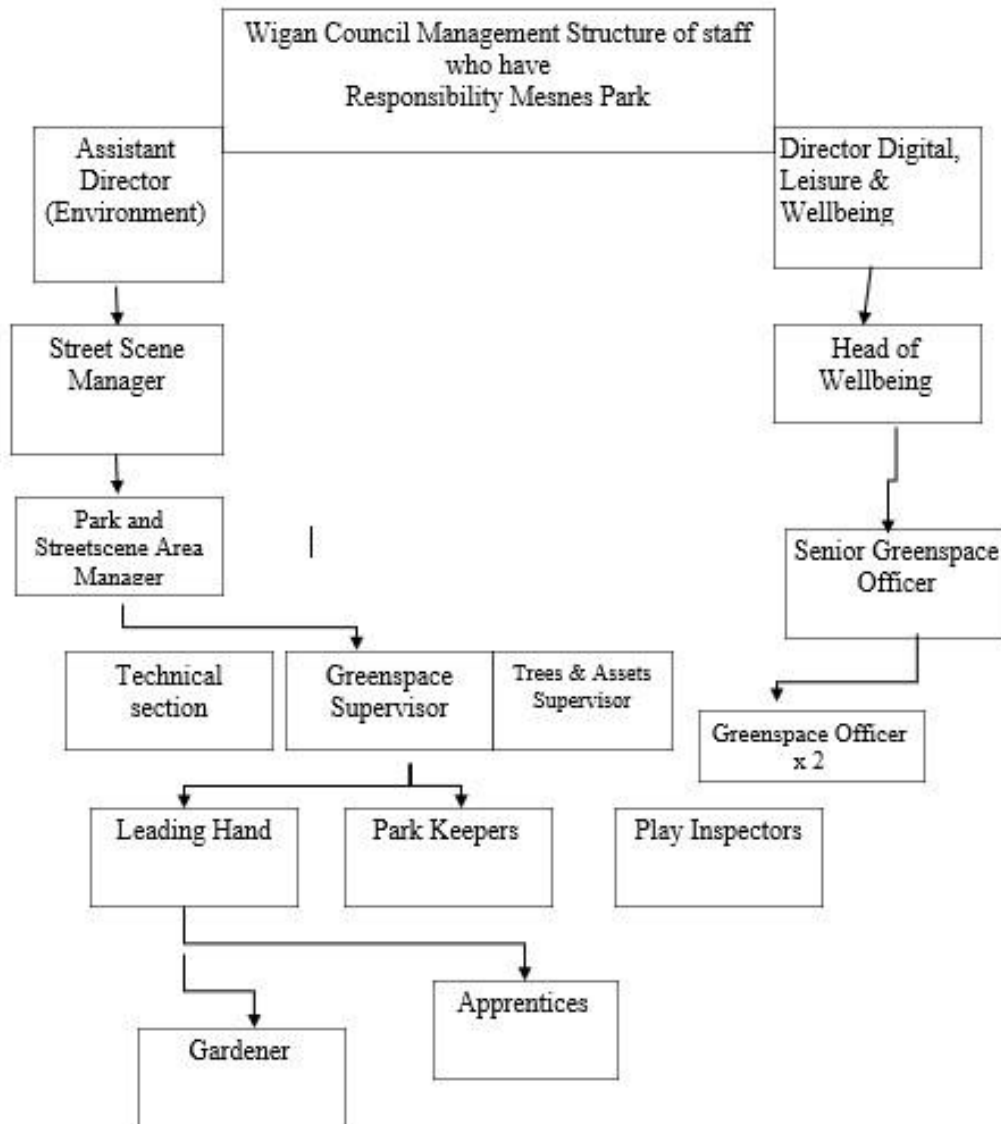
4.127 Tree and Asset Inspector (P&SS) - This member of staff is responsible for site, tree, and buildings inspections on the West of the Borough.

4.128 Technical Section (P&SS). The team provides a range of operational and management support functions, including divisional performance management, GIS mapping system, green space asset management/financial information and undertaking policy and performance reviews

- 4.129 There are currently 4 site-based members of staff (leading hand plus 3 gardeners) in Mesnes Park, this team are responsible for the routine and reactive maintenance. If tree work is needed, a separate arboriculture team is drafted in.
- 4.130 Leading Hand – (P&SS) -The role covers the overall grounds care and maintenance of grounds in accordance with agreed specification. Providing a flexible and responsible service. Supervising individuals or teams and ensuring compliance with agreed quality standards. This role also carries out Play inspections and anything which is damaged or needs replacing is forwarded to the Play Maintenance Team.
- 4.131 Gardener – (P&SS) - The 3 gardeners carry out a visual daily inspection of the park, they also carry out general maintenance of grounds including sweeping, hoeing, raking, mowing, strimming, edging, forking, digging, hedge cutting, minor pruning and clearing leaves and litter. Basic horticultural duties including laying turf under supervision and planting e.g. Bulbs. Constructional and manual work e.g. Barrowing, ditch clearance etc. Assisting with erecting and dismantling of sports posts and other equipment. General cleaning duties e.g. Toilets, canteens, storerooms etc. Patrol and attendance duties e.g. Opening and locking gates and patrolling. Assisting more highly skilled and experienced gardeners in their work. Instruct the public to comply with regulations and byelaws. To undertake any other duties in accordance with the grade and job title of the post as required by the Streetscene Services Management Team.
- 4.132 Park Keeper – (P&SS) General litter collection, meeting contractors, opening, and closing buildings, cemeteries etc. The park keepers operate borough wide.

- 4.133 Parks & Streetscene Service Manager – (P&SS) The Manager is responsible for the operational management and maintenance of Council managed green spaces within the Borough.
- 4.134 Management of Contractors - The Council's Code of Practice for managing Contractors on site provides a framework for the system which currently operates in Mesnes Park.
- 4.135 The following diagram show the relevant posts closely related to the delivery of management, operational and support to Mesnes Park.

Management Structure Diagram





Part 3 Where do we want to get to?

4 WHERE DO WE WANT TO GET TO?

5.1 This section of the plan explains outlines our vision for Mesnes Park

5.2 Wigan Council commissioned a re-visioning of Parks – Greenheart: Parks and Natural Capital.

5.3 The primary vision of the project is to:

Together, we will create an environment that we are proud of, where our greenspaces are safe, accessible, and attractive, promoting the health and wellbeing of our residents. Where habitats and biodiversity are protected and enhanced, and where our natural environment helps safeguard us from the impacts of climate change.

5.4 Whilst the re-visioning continues, the emerging outcomes are:

- Develop a new Parks Strategy to reflect the current local authority landscape
- Embed the principles and outcomes of The Deal 2030 within the management of Parks.
- Encourage people to use and enjoy their local green spaces and participate in activities promoted at key sites within the borough by providing attractive and accessible facilities suitable for all
- Provide a key amenity to local communities, promote healthy and active lifestyles, draw visitor expenditure unto the local community, reflect and celebrate the heritage and history of the local area.
- Build upon the key features and assets of each site and improve connections between locations.

- Support employment opportunities and skills training, particularly in leisure and recreational sectors, create opportunities for residents and volunteers looking to help manage and maintain key sites.
- Support habitats and biodiversity of regional and national importance, including parklands, wetlands, waterways, and woodlands.
- **Retain the Green Flag Award for Mesnes Park**



Part 4 How are we going to get there?

6 HOW ARE WE GOING TO GET THERE?

6.1 This section identifies how the vision and the aims and objectives outlined in the previous section will be achieved.

6.2 The key strategic developments will be to:

- Develop, at pace the park strategy
- Embed the Deal 2030 principles into park management and community engagement
- Build additional local capabilities in both vocational & non-vocational skills by harnessing and developing the talents and skills of the local community through defined training programmes and self-development initiatives
- Expand the range of support activities that volunteers, and friends' group can provide within the park
- Deliver a business model which is sustainable and self-funding
- Seek external funding opportunities and commercial opportunities
- Use the Green Flag Criteria to manage the borough's parks

6.3 The above strategic developments will be achieved through the ongoing management approach. Funding opportunities to support this programme will be sought and investment will be targeted at our volunteer workforce.

6.4 The key infrastructure developments will be to:

- Take a fresh look at the usage of the Lodge and Play Shack, with a view to increasing usage.
- Develop a tree management plan focusing on succession planting.
- Commence the phased thinning and re-planting along Bridgeman Terrace and in the woodland area.

- Review the maintenance behind the lodge.
- Establish a pinetum in the woodland area.
- Improve and sustain horticultural features and standards.
- Look for development opportunities to maximise the potential of the Sports Zone.
- Continue to improve the landscape through improvements and increase visibility from outside the park.
- Develop a lake management plan.
- Reinstate the heather garden

6.5 The key event developments will be to:

- Work in partnership with the Council's event team to develop a varied programme of events utilising the park's assets.
- Develop the utilisation of the Mesnes Park Lodge / training centre. This will provide both a training venue and provide an indoor base for youth work and family learning activities.
- Develop a varied volunteer work programme to assist in providing participatory activities and events.

6.6 The following priorities have been determined from the Greenheart: Parks and Natural Capital vision.

- Implement the 5-year management plan.
- Improve the standards of care, horticultural quality, and diversity
- Use the park as an educational resource and to develop horticultural skills for Parks & Streetscene through the apprenticeship scheme.

Reduce the issues that have a negative effect on the appearance of the park, e.g.

- Antisocial behaviour and vandalism.
- Review the use of annual bedding and seek alternatives (where appropriate) – perennial planting, naturalised & wildflower areas.
 - 2. Improve the health and safety for the benefit of visitors
- Maintain the welcoming aspect of the park.
- Decrease the amount of dog fouling.
- Undertake regular risk assessments.
- Continue with regular site inspections and undertake repairs when necessary and in a timely manner.
- Ensure all employees, suppliers and contractors meet national, Wigan Council and agreed standards and procedures.
 - 3. Improve security for park visitors
- Selective vegetation removal to reduce opportunities for anti-social behaviour and increase visitor perception of safety – such as Bridgeman Terrace.
- Build on good relationships with Police and the Council's Safer Neighbourhood Section.
- Develop a programme of activities to encourage evening use of the park.
 - 4. Heritage and conservation merit of the park
- Increase the information available to park visitors to place the park in its historical context in Wigan.
- Involve appropriate professionals in all aspects of the development of the park.
- Use high quality materials where new facilities are proposed.

- Use traditional horticultural techniques to increase the sustainability of new and existing planting.
- Introduce recycling and composting processes in the park.
 - 5. Improve the accessibility of the park
- Consider inclusive options in all park refurbishment.
- Develop and enhance physical and sensory opportunities in line with local and national policies.
- Physical access will be guided by principles of conservation and inclusive visitor management
- Support and facilitate sustainable forms of transport to and from the park.
 - 6. Development of people – The Deal / Deal 2030
- Increase opportunities for volunteering through the Friends of Mesnes Park.
- Expand the range of functions and areas of involvement for volunteers.
- Continue to train and develop staff in line with the Council's employee policies
 - 7. Maintain and develop the gardens and landscape character of the park.
- Rationalise the landscape design of the park.
- Improve the horticultural quality of annual bedding, shrub, and tree planting.
- Develop vistas in the park.
- Develop part of a borough wide tree trail in the park.
- Diversify and enhance ecological value.
 - 8. Maintain relationships to other parks

-
- Develop the new parks strategy
Retain national accreditation via the Green Flag process.
- Maintain good relationships with other Local authorities in relation to parks and open spaces.
 - 9. Maintain relationships to the surrounding neighbourhood
- Continue to engage and develop further links with strategic partners, e.g. Wigan & Leigh College, Wigan Youth Zone, local schools, and local voluntary sector organisations.
- Continue to be involved with Conservation Area planning.
- Develop better links with the town centre management.
 - 10. Education and Interpretation
- Develop the Park as a base for organised groups and activities and informal educational sessions and lifelong learning for the community.
- Establish the park as resource for education.
- Develop and implement interpretation through marketing.
 - 11. Generate revenue for the park
- Develop a park income plan.
- Promote weddings.
- Progress with the sports zone options.
- Fulfil the potential of the play shack.
- Offer a diverse event programme
 - 12. Offer a diverse programme of events for visitors
- Support the Council's Event team to deliver a varied event programme.

- Promote the Bandstand performance area.
- Sustain a Premises Licence to allow events and activities • Encourage Community groups, schools, and amateur performances
- Link with town centre activities.
 - 13. Achieve 'Green Flag'
- Implement the Action plan (Appendix A).
- Promote and secure political support for the benefits of the Green Flag scheme.
- Utilise Green Flag success to market the park and to encourage new investment and volunteering
 - 14. Continue to involve stakeholders and the local community in the development of Mesnes Park
- Continue to support the Friends of Mesnes Park
- Assist the Friends to seek funding opportunities in line with the Action plan



7 GREEN FLAG ACTION PLAN

7.1 The Action Plan (**Appendix A**) summarises the issues and action to address them, together with responsibility and timescales for action. Implementing the action plan will achieve the aims and objectives of this management plan in line with the Green Flag assessment criteria. It prioritises actions that need to be taken in terms of their impact on the park.

7.2 The Action Plan will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure development is on target for completion.

7.3 As the Friends of Mesnes Park and community involvement expands and increases its capacity, it is envisaged that they will contribute further tasks to the action plan as well as assisting with the implementation of difficult to achieve actions. The Action plan will become a rolling programme of work to sustain the improved standards in the park.

7.4 The Green Flag Action Plan Summary is attached at Appendix A.

8 FINANCIAL PLAN

Finance and Resources

9.1 The staffing resource on the ground for Mesnes Park consists of 1 leading hand, and 3 gardeners who are based in the park. The Park Keeper resource attends

mainly out of normal working hours The staffing requirements is supplemented by additional resource when needed.

Routine Maintenance

- 9.2 The core maintenance work is shown in Appendix B. This itemises the value of routine work associated with the park. This will be reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure that the work schedules are optimal, given budget constraints and opportunities to introduce more environmentally sustainable maintenance routines.

Revenue Expenditure

- 9.3 There is additional revenue expenditure in Mesnes Park that is spent on events, repairs, and reactive maintenance. From Jan 2022 - Jan 2023 additional revenue expenditure for the various elements was:



Part 5 How will we know when we have got

there?

9 HOW WILL WE KNOW WHEN WE'VE GOT THERE?

Review

- 10.1 A Park Management Plan Review Group has been formed by Be Well and Parks & Streetscene. The aim of the group will be to review all the information that relates to the development of the park. The group will determine a variety of issues relating to the park e.g. If Grounds maintenance standards have been achieved and are appropriate, progress on the action plan, projects, event programme etc. Officers from other areas e.g. Events, planning will be invited to meet with the group and input specific information, along with additional staff from CPMF etc.
- 10.2 Consultation – new ways of consultation will take place that include utilising social media, the results will help inform decisions on the management of the park and help make positive changes. The information will be used to review the improvements that have occurred over the previous 12 months and plan for the following year.
- 10.3 Events – over the course of the management plan the event programme will evolve with event numbers and visitors increasing. We will be encouraging community groups to take a greater role in the managing and delivery of events. There will be an increase in commercial events that are held at the park.
- 10.4 Participation – levels of participation will be increased by delivering the above events programme plus ongoing and increased community interest in the community allotment, outdoor gym etc
- 10.5 Friends of Group – the group will be supported by officers from Wigan Council to become a self-sustaining group that contributes to the future of the park by seeking funding for projects that are beyond current budget capacity. The Council has a partnership with a community funding manager whose role is to work with community groups to seek and secure external funding.

10.6 Green Flag – Achieving the nationally recognised accreditation for Mesnes Park, and retaining the award, will be the most significant marker of having achieved the aims and objectives of the management plan. Feedback from the judging process will be incorporated into the information that the management plan review group uses each year to continue the improvement process and create a rolling plan of improvements.

Appendix A – Action Plan

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| A Welcoming Place | | | | | | |
|-------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|

| Welcome | Location | Action | Responsible Officer | Priority | Completion date | Progress |
|----------------------|---|---|---------------------|----------|--|--|
| | Main entrances | Ensure all entrances are clean, tidy, and free from litter, graffiti. Planting around lodge entrance, weed free | Gardeners | High | Part of daily inspection and monthly officer walk around | Ongoing |
| Good and Safe Access | Location | Action | Responsible Officer | Priority | Completion date | Progress |
| | Perimeter vegetation (hedges and trees) | Ensure perimeter hedges are pruned on a regular basis to provide clear sightlines in / out of the park | Gardeners | High | Autumn / Winter each year | Ongoing, Bridgeman terrace estimated completion March 2025 |
| | Mesnes Park Terrace | Install perimeter railings to deter access through formal hedge | Be Well / CPMF | Med | Spring 2024 | Funding dependant |
| Signage | Location | Action | Responsible Officer | Priority | Completion date | Progress |
| | Main entrances | Ensure all signage is clean, contains up to date | Gardeners | High | Part of daily inspection and monthly | Ongoing |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|--|----------------------------|-----------------|--|---|
| | | notices and accurate contact details | | | officer walk around | |
| | Throughout the park | Monitor vandalism | Gardeners / Be Well | High | | Ongoing |
| | Replace and update park signage | | | High | Autumn 2023 | Funding secured, borough wide roll out commenced, Autumn 2023 completion date |
| Equal Access for All | Location | Action | Responsible Officer | Priority | Completion date | Progress |
| | Throughout park | Ensure staff are identifiable | All council officers | Med | Part of daily / routine approach | Ongoing |
| Healthy, Safe and Secure | | | | | | |
| Appropriate Provision of Quality facilities and Activities | Location | Action | Responsible Officer | Priority | Completion date | Progress |
| | Lake | Ensure safety / advisory signage is clean and readable | Gardeners | High | Part of daily inspection and monthly officer walk around | Complete |
| | Lake | Develop Lake management plan | Be Well | High | 2024 | |

| | | | | | | |
|--|------|--------------|-------------------------------------|------|-----------------------------------|--|
| | Lake | Pest control | Be Well / Environmental Enforcement | High | Risk assessment complete. Baiting | Complete, subject to review in spring 2023 |
|--|------|--------------|-------------------------------------|------|-----------------------------------|--|

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| | | | | | when needed | |
| | Throughout the park | As part of the Borough's cycle strategy, promote a cycle route from the lodge entrance to the depot / college entrance | Be Well / Major Projects team | Low / Med | 2023 | Initial conversations held with major projects; route identified. |
| | Sports Zone | Develop a masterplan for this area | Be Well / Streetscene / Event team | High | Initial scope brief July 2023 | Two designs have been commissioned. |
| Safe Equipment and Facilities | Location | Action | Responsible Officer | Priority | Completion date | Progress |
| | Throughout Park | Make the Park Events Pack / Process available digitally | Be Well / Events team | Low | August 2022 | Event portal is now live |
| Personal Security | Location | Action | Responsible Officer | Priority | Completion date | Progress |

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|--|----------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|--|
| | Pavilion | Review CCTV arrangements to help reduce drug taking in the toilets and vandalism to the pavilion | Be Well / CCTV suite. | Med / High | August 2023 | Met with pavilion concession holder for initial discussions. Will be picked up as part of their lease renewal discussions. |
| Control of Dogs / Dog Fouling | Location | Action | Responsible Officer | Priority | Completion date | Progress |

| | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|--|--|-----------------|------------------------|---|
| | Throughout park | Progress and implement Public Space Protection Order to control dogs / dog fouling | Environmental education and enforcement team with support from Be Well | Med | 2022 | PSPO approved and implemented , awaiting PSPO signage roll out. |
| Well Maintained and Clean | | | | | | |
| Horticultural Maintenance | Location | Action | Responsible Officer | Priority | Completion date | Progress |

| | | | | | | |
|--|------------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|------|--|---|
| | Lake / Community allotment / depot | Control Japanese Knotweed | Parks and Streetscene area manager | High | Ongoing | Record the knotweed on the Council's invasive weeds register to ensure twice yearly control. Knotweed is spreading, treatment under review. |
| | Area to the rear of the lodge | Review maintenance regime – registrars have asked for an uplift in presentation when weddings take place | Streetscene / Be Well | Med | Ongoing | Scheme in place to landscape area behind the lodge. Giving an uplift in presentation |
| | Throughout | Review use of annual bedding, opportunities to introduce | Streetscene / Be Well | Med | Ongoing as part of a wider Council plant | Contract currently out for tender (Jan 2023) |

| | | | | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------|---|----------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|----------------------------|
| | | perennial planting. | | | procurement exercise. | |
| | Lodge entrance | Increase number of spring flowering bulbs | Be Well | med | 2023 and 2024 | Planting across two phases |
| Arboriculture | Location | Action | Responsible Officer | Priority | Completion date | Progress |

| Maintenance | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---------------------------|------|---------------|---|
| | Lake | Remove 4 trees around the lake that have been identified as problematic. | Trees and Asset inspector | Med | March 2022 | complete |
| | Woodland area and along Bridgeman terrace | Remove trees identified following inspections. Implement phased thinning and re-planting programme. | Be Well, Streetscene | High | November 2023 | Dead / dangerous trees removed February / March 2022. Thinning / Replanting in line with planting season and avoiding bird nesting season |
| | Woodland area | Establish pinetum | Be Well, Streetscene | Med | November 2023 | Initial completion date November 2022, planting delayed by 12 months |
| | Behind Lodge | Plant 2 Holm Oaks, in memory of a local | Be Well, Streetscene | Med | November 2022 | Complete |

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| | | servicemember | | | | |
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|--|------------------------|---|----------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|---|
| | Behind Powell statue | Plant Platinum Jubilee Oak | Be Well, Streetscene | Med | April 2022 | Complete |
| | Along Parsons Walk | Plant Cherty to celebrate Samaritans 50 th anniversary | Be Well, Streetscene | Med | January 2023 | Complete |
| Building and Infrastructure Maintenance | Location | Action | Responsible Officer | Priority | Completion date | Progress |
| | Lake | Seek alternative fencing for the Pulham feature | Be Well | Med | Dec 2024 | Discussions underway with CPMF on costings for more robust fencing (within the context of a conservation area) On hold, issue with funding |
| | Depot | Building transformation into a flexible community / staff space | Be Well / CPMF | High | March 2022 | complete |
| | Coalbrookdale Fountain | Re-paint | Be Well / CPMF | Med | September 2022 | Complete |
| Environmental Management | | | | | | |

| Waste Minimisation | Location | Action | Responsible Officer | Priority | Completion date | Progress |
|--------------------|-----------------|---|--------------------------------------|----------|-----------------|--|
| | Throughout park | Increase the use of 'green' waste throughout the park | Trees and Asset supervisor / Be Well | Low | Ongoing | The community allotment now receives green waste – wood chip, manure etc. The fleur de lis beds are mulched up using wood chip and manure from local stables |
| | Play area | Install bench made from recycled plastic | Streetscene / Be Well | Med | 2021 / 2022 | Complete. FCC have donated a bench constructed from recycled plastic. |
| | Borough wide | Implement litter strategy | All Council officers | High | 2025 | External consultants have drafted a strategy with Council officers tasked with implementing the action plan. |
| | Throughout park | Replace bin stock on a rolling programme | Be Well / Streetscene | High | 2025 | 16 bins replaced in 2022 (using s106) |

| Climate Change Adaption Strategies | Location | Action | Responsible Officer | Priority | Completion date | Progress |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|---|-----------------------|----------|-----------------|---|
| | Throughout park | Appropriate tree and plant selection in | Be Well / Streetscene | Med | Ongoing | Succession planting plan and tree selection |

| | | | | | | |
|--|--------------|---|----------------------|------|------|---|
| | | response to climate change. | | | | underway as part of Naturalising the Borough. |
| | Borough wide | Implement and embed the Council's Climate Change strategy | All Council officers | High | 2038 | Climate change strategy adopted 2020. |

| | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Biodiversity, Landscape and Heritage | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|

| Management of Natural Features, Wild Fauna, and Flora | Location | Action | Responsible Officer | Priority | Completion date | Progress |
|---|----------|--------|---------------------|----------|-----------------|----------|
|---|----------|--------|---------------------|----------|-----------------|----------|

| | | | | | | |
|--|---|--|----------------------------------|-----|--------------------------------------|--|
| | Area behind the lodge | Continue with differential mowing and naturalised planting, opportunities for pollinator friendly planting, habitat improvements | Streetscene and Be Well | Med | Initially May 2019 and then ongoing. | Ongoing work as part of Naturalising the Borough / Climate change strategy |
| | Heather garden (Bridgeman Terrace entrance) | Reinstate the Heather Garden | Be Well / Friends of Mesnes Park | Med | Aug 2023 | Project led by Friends of Mesnes Park to reinstate the heather garden, plants chosen and maintained by FOMP and funded by Be Well. On hold |

| | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------|--|----------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|---|
| | | | | | | in 2020, will resume in 2023. |
| | Lodge roof | Survey the condition of the green roof – overseed if necessary | Be Well | Med | Autumn 2023 | Meeting in the calendar with the Council’s Biodiversity officer |
| Conservation of Landscape Features | Location | Action | Responsible Officer | Priority | Completion date | Progress |

| | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------|--|--|-----------------|------------------------|--|
| | Pulham feature | Review planting / maintenance plan, there are gaps appearing in the feature that need planting up. This is within the context of the conservation area / HLF | Streetscene and Be Well | High | September 2023 | HLF soft landscaping plan is informing the plant list. |
| Conservation of Buildings and Structures | Location | Action | Responsible Officer | Priority | Completion date | Progress |
| | Play Shack | Seek new uses for the play shack – commercial, community or combination of both. | Be Well | High | March 2023 / 24 | |
| | Pavilion | Ice cream / café concession lease due to expire | Be Well / Corporate Contracts & Assets | High | Autumn 2023 | Discussions commenced summer 2022 |

| | | | | | | |
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| | | shortly, begin discussions with the leaseholder on a new lease. | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|--|--|--|

| Community Involvement | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------|--|-------------------------|----------|---------------------------|--|
| Community Involvement in Management and Development | Location | Action | Responsible Officer | Priority | Completion date | Progress |
| | Throughout park | Support Friends of Mesnes Park in activity / event planning and delivery | Streetscene and Be Well | High | Ongoing | Regular communication with the group |
| | Rose Garden | Support Friends of Mesnes Park with the project to restore the sundial | Be Well | Med | Spring 2024 | Indicative costs obtained from Lost Art. |
| | Sports Zone | As part of the emerging masterplan, consider the inclusion of a BMX pump track | Be Well | High | Initial options July 2023 | Meetings have taken place with a BMX group / national champion regarding the installation of a pump track in Mesnes Park. Will be picked up by the wider sports zone |

| | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|------------------|
| | | | | | | development work |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|------------------|

| Appropriate Provision for Community | Location | Action | Responsible Officer | Priority | Completion date | Progress |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|---|--------------------------------|----------|-----------------|---|
| | Throughout park | Develop and adopt new parks strategy | Be Well | High | 2024 | Scope of strategy underway and site assessments commenced. |
| | Community Allotment | Engage an anchor group to fully use the community growing space | Be Well | High | 2023 | Several groups have used the space since 2020, on short term licences. |
| Marketing and Communication | | | | | | |
| Marketing and Promotion | Location | Action | Responsible Officer | Priority | Completion date | Progress |
| | Throughout park | Develop an alternative memorialisation offer other than benches | Be Well / Bereavement Services | Low | Spring 2024 | The park has a finite amount of space for benches and locations are carefully considered. An alternative memorialisation offer is needed. |
| Appropriate Information Channels | Location | Action | Responsible Officer | Priority | Completion date | Progress |

| | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------|---|----------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|--|
| | Throughout park | Improve website content | Be Well / Web team | Med | Ongoing | Limited |
| Management | | | | | | |
| Implementation of the Management Plan | Location | Action | Responsible Officer | Priority | Completion date | Progress |
| | Throughout park | Retain Green Flag accreditation | Be Well / Streetscene | High | July 2023 | Application submitted January 2023 |
| | Throughout park | Seek additional funding through s106 payments | Be Well | High | Ongoing | Continue to lobby colleagues in planning to allocate s106 monies to the park |



Mesnes Park

Management and Maintenance Plan 2017 – 2021

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| | LIST OF APPENDICES | LOCATION |
|----------|--|----------------------|
| A | Green Flag Action Plan | Uploaded |
| B | Maintenance specification (routine) | Available on request |
| C | Maintenance specification (reactive and arboriculture) | Available on request |

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Covid-19

The covid-19 pandemic has placed unprecedented pressure on Wigan Council and its residents. In the context of Mesnes Park and the teams responsible for its management, the effect of the pandemic will be felt for the foreseeable future. Since March 2020, Mesnes Park has seen a range of contrasts – a 100% drop in commercial income, a cancellation of all park-based events, a depleted workforce (illness and shielding), play areas closed etc, this contrasted with a significant increase in visitor numbers, voluntary redeployment opportunities for staff to support critical services and a local and national recognition of the value and benefits provided by urban green space.

The teams responsible for the management and maintenance of Mesnes Park have consistently risen to the challenges faced during the pandemic, whilst the maintenance standards have been strained at times, the Green Flag standards have been maintained. Credit and recognition must go to the gardeners who have maintained these standards.

During the last 12 months, staff from Corporate Land Management, Streetscene wider Council services have been deployed to support critical, front line services, this has had a temporary impact on the timescales contained within the action plan.

1.2. Wigan Council, supported by the Friends of Mesnes Park, and a wide range of volunteer organisations, are delighted to submit this Green Flag application for Mesnes Park, Wigan's restored Victorian Park.

- 1.3. Mesnes Park is identified by the Parks Strategy (2008) as one of 18 Key Sites within the Wigan Borough and is highly valued by residents and visitors to Wigan Town centre.
- 1.4. Since embarking on the restoration project back in 2007, much has changed in the political, economic, and organisational landscapes. These changes are pertinent to future plans for all parks and are discussed in the context of Mesnes Park, in the following sections.
- 1.5. This application continues a commitment made with the Heritage Lottery Fund, and the Big Lottery, to ensure that Mesnes Park achieved and retains the Green Flag award from 2015 onwards, following the £6.1 million restoration project, which concluded in 2013.
- 1.6. The Mesnes Park Management Plan is the formal plan that brings together a 5year improvement strategy for Mesnes Park. The Plan takes stock of the externally funded works that have recently been concluded, reviews the current position, including national and local contexts, addresses key issues around the 8 standards that make up the Green Flag assessment and sets out actions and priorities over the next 5 years
- 1.7. In 2015, Mesnes Park achieved Green flag status for the first time and has retained the accreditation since then. This is a great achievement for everyone who has been involved in the enhancing and maintaining the park. This achievement is not just the effort of the Council but, each and one of our volunteers and partners for which, we rely on more and more.

Content, Structure & Preparation of the Plan

- 1.8. The Management Plan development process has involved the Senior Greenspace Office, Streetscene Operational Teams; Facilities Management, Elected

Members, strategic partners, Friends of Mesnes Park, and the community who use Mesnes Park.

1.9. The Management Plan development process has involved staff from Wigan Council's Corporate Land Management Team, Street Scene service and the Friends of Mesnes Park.

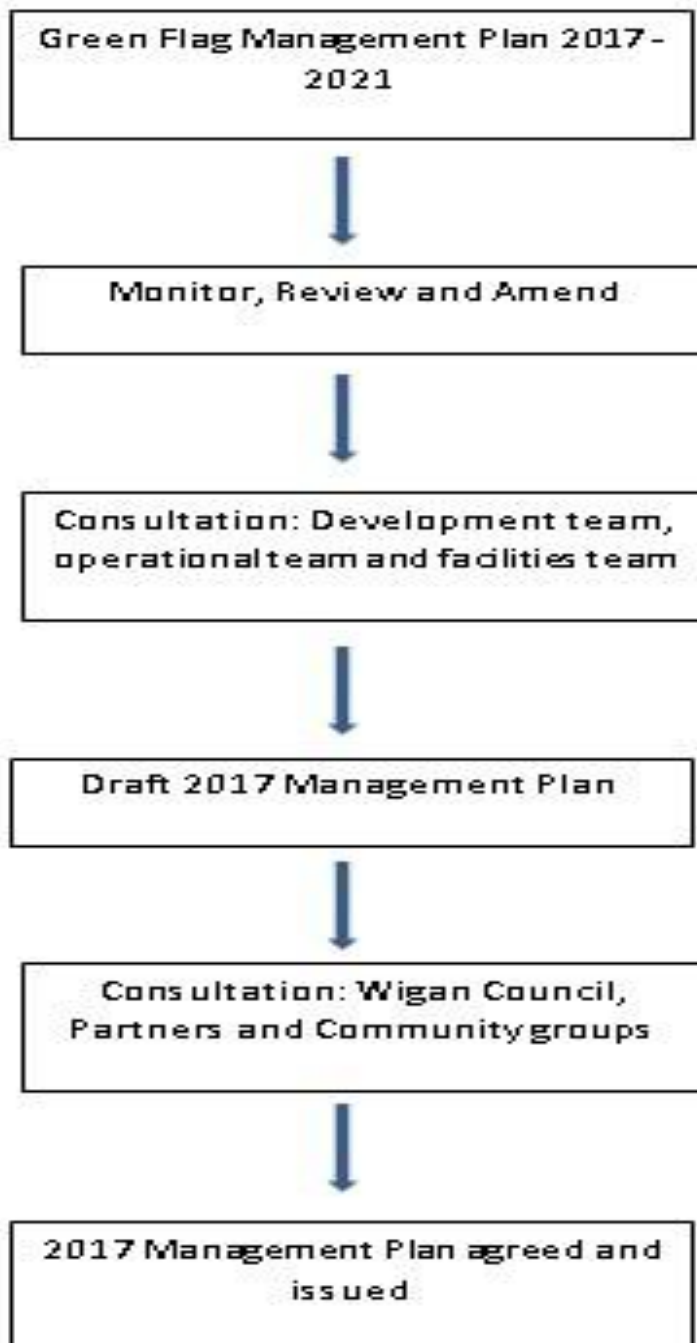
1.10. The Management Plan will be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis, led by the Senior Greenspace Officer. The Plan will be updated following the annual review. Any comments and feedback from any formal 'walk arounds will also form part of this review process.

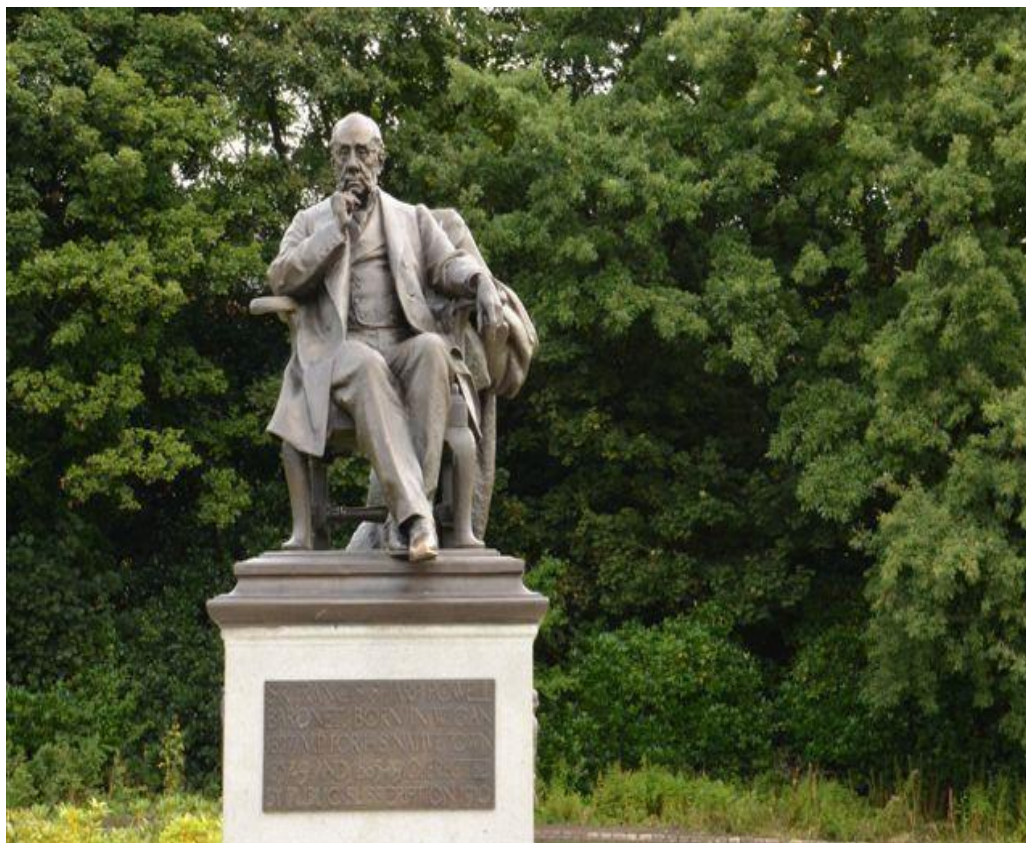
1.11. The management and maintenance plan of Mesnes Park considers the major renovations that took place through Heritage Lottery Funding. A summary of the main infrastructure changes and renovations are as follows:

- The restoration of the Pavilion, the Shelter, the Bandstand, Dalton Steps, the Pulham Feature, Powell Statue and Bowls Pavilion
- The restoration of the Entrance Lodge and the provision of training facilities, which will be made available to community groups
- The installation of the replica Coalbrookdale Fountain
- Renovated footpaths (95%), street furniture and interpretation boards
- Play facilities and renovation of Play shack
- A wide range of soft landscape improvements

1.12. This management plan is a working document that aims to set a framework for development of the park. It outlines existing features and facilities, describes how these are maintained and by whom, and how they are used.

- 1.13. The original Maintenance and Management plan has been expanded upon and sets out an improved management and maintenance regime for the park that will ensure a better standard in the future, by clearer use of resources. It provides a framework for, and informs decision making about, the park's future, and sets out aims and objectives for the site in line with existing policies and consultation with its users.
- 1.14. This Management Plan includes an Action Plan (attached at **Appendix A**), which is a dynamic document, in that items will be added / amended and shown as completed. Tasks within the Action Plan will predominantly be allocated to the permanent workforce and friends' group.
- 1.15. The following page identifies a schematic diagram showing the development of the Mesnes Park Management plan





Part 1 General Information

2 GENERAL INFORMATION

2.1 This section provides a general overview of the management structure of the park, in context with the vision and objectives of Wigan Council and any policies that it aims towards.

Wigan Council Vision & Objectives

2.2 The current parks strategy dates to 2008. It includes a thorough assessment of the parks then managed by WLCT. It also involved stakeholder consultation. It linked the benefits of parks to wider health and social benefits, linked to national policy developments and concluded that Wigan parks, while heavily used, had low customer satisfaction which correlated with low levels of spend per head of population. It responded to this with a prioritised action plan which, to deliver in full, would have required £20m-£26m of investment over 12 years (some of it from external sources). It advocated the adoption of Green Flag as the key standard to drive improvement; and underpinned the Lottery-funded regeneration of Mesnes Park. Further investment, however, was curtailed by the council's changed financial situation after 2010.

The Council now recognises that a new approach to its land management is needed and it recently begun work on a new vision – Greenheart: Parks and Natural Capital.

The project's vision is that “

Together, we will create an environment that we are proud of, where our greenspaces are safe, accessible, and attractive, promoting the health and wellbeing of our residents. Where habitats and biodiversity are protected and

enhanced, and where our natural environment helps safeguard us from the impacts of climate change”.

The Council will integrate all open spaces into Greenheart, consolidating both the borough’s assets and the customer experience. In doing so, it will also address the need to preserve the borough’s ‘natural capital. Collectively all these areas are now to be given the brand name ‘Greenheart’ – to recognise it as one of the borough’s key assets in terms of its contribution to making the borough an attractive place to invest and live in; its potential to promote health and wellbeing; and its environmental and unique biodiversity value. The Greenheart broad objectives are below:

| | |
|--|--|
| 1. Parks strategy & Mgt Plans | Develop overarching parks strategy (see also Play Strategy and Bowling Greens Strategy – separate work) Develop management plans for priority parks as per the parks strategy. Use and manage land sustainably to ensure conservation of biodiversity |
| 2. Better outcomes | Improved <i>health and wellbeing</i> outcomes Support urban regeneration and housing growth Maintain and improve parks and greenheart incl. Green Flag Protect and improve biodiversity Improve the borough’s image Make Wigan a <i>bio-town</i> (“people & nature form mutual alliances”) |
| 3. Better customer experience | Improve <i>health and wellbeing</i> as part of the visitor experience Improve the customer journey Develop policies to clarify and manage expectations |
| 4. Selfsustainability | Increase footfall and visitor numbers Increase % of visits from deprivation areas Maximise commercial income and external grant revenue Maximise community involvement Develop & implement a CAT and disposal strategy for Greenheart Link income and expenditure—business model |
| 5. Efficiency | Define roles and responsibilities Remove duplication and silos Introduce lean working principles Fresh look at maintenance practices in line with new strategies |
| 6. Natural capital | Help Wigan tap into GM / regional / national opportunities regarding: Air quality; Water quality; Climate change and emissions; Soils and geology; Green infrastructure. Develop new and innovative funding mechanisms towards the achievement of biodiversity outcomes |

2.3 The Wigan Deal

The Deal is an informal agreement between the council and everyone who lives or works in the borough to work together to create a better borough. Wigan council has committed to a series of pledges and in return need residents and businesses to play their part too. So far through working together the council

has saved £115m. The council now has the second lowest Council Tax rates in the whole of Greater Manchester, and we believe we can continue to balance our books if residents help by doing things like recycling more, volunteering in their communities and using online services. Thanks to the hard work and commitment of residents and communities The Deal has been a huge success.

2.4 The Deal 2030

Formed from the views of thousands of our residents, the Deal 2030 is an exciting and ambitious strategy for Wigan Borough. The Deal 2030 provides a unifying strategy for the whole of the borough to make it the best possible place to live and work over the coming decade. It was created after the biggest ever consultation undertaken by Wigan Council called The Big Listening Project, which visited 83 locations across the borough, spoke to 6,000 people directly and collated 10,000 brilliant ideas, from the future of town centers and opportunities for young people, to being part of a caring community and living in a clean and green place. One of the things that came out loud and clear was how proud people are of the borough - but they are also passionate about making change for the better. They said they want to move at pace towards a better future for everyone. This plan sets out how we can work together to bring about this change and to make sure that this borough, which matters so much to everyone who lives and works here, is a place we can continue to be proud of. All the views and comments have been read and analysed and collated into ten key priorities, which the council and its partners will focus their efforts on in the coming decade.

The 10 priorities for the Deal 2030 are:

- Best start in life for children and young people
- Happy healthy people

- Communities that care
- Vibrant town centres
- An environment to be proud of
- Embracing culture, heritage, and sport
- Economic growth that benefits everyone
- A well-connected place
- Confidently digital
- A home for all.

The Deal 2030 is a plan which aims to make Wigan Borough the best place it can be over the coming decade. From improving the borough's town centres and making sure people are healthy, to getting children the best start in life and ensuring a litter-free environment, the strategy sets out 10 ambitious goals for the borough.

<https://www.wigan.gov.uk/Council/Strategies-Plans-and-Policies/Deal2030.aspx>

National and Regional Context

2.5 The national debate about the future of parks has its origins in the late 1980's / early 1990's. "*Parks in Crisis*" was a frequent headline, first in the horticultural and technical press, but eventually picked up by a wider audience. A combination of long-term revenue cuts, lack of investment, and competition from other leisure offers had brought about this "crisis".

2.6 This situation continues, decades later. A report by Nesta "Rethinking Parks" published in November 2013, has identified that a 60% fall in public sector funding for non-statutory services, like parks, will take place over the next decade. Reductions in parks staff, rangers, gardeners, and other green space professionals has been taking place nationally. Regionally, in the North West,

many local authorities have now disbanded the formerly traditional park ranger service which has also taken place in Wigan.

2.7 Despite the risk to future public funding, parks and open spaces remain the most heavily used part of the leisure offer – national surveys show 46% use / visit them more than once a week. Municipal parks are free to visit, and this promotes their accessibility to all. They provide a huge opportunity for local authorities and their associated organisations, to lay on events and activities that considerably enhance the quality of life and health in communities. Within the Wigan Borough 80% of residents say they have visited a park or open space within the past 12 months and satisfaction is also high - we plan to tap into this enthusiasm to develop and promote our services.

2.8 The Nesta report adds that *“we need new visions of how parks can be managed and maintained, how they can generate income and use resources differently, how they can empower communities and drive social action”*

2.9 In 2016 the Communities and Local Government Committee launched an inquiry into public parks to examine the impact of reduced local authority budgets on these open spaces and consider concerns that their existence is under threat. The Committee will look at how parks should be supported now and in the future. This includes studying alternative management and funding models, such as a mutual or a trust.

2.10 There is a growing deficit between the rising use of parks and the declining resources that are available to manage them. This gap does not bode well for the future condition and health of the nation’s public parks – State of the Parks Report. Heritage Lottery Fund (2016).

Local Context

- 2.11 The Metropolitan Borough of Wigan stretches over 77 square miles and its current boundaries date back to the reorganisation of local government in 1974. Across the borough a dispersed settlement pattern of small market towns and villages situated in rural settings subsequently developed. Industrialisation built on and blurred these settlement patterns but did not obliterate them. These historical developments have left a legacy of urban townships and villages that have retained their unique character and local pride.
- 2.12 Within Wigan Borough the shape of the built-up areas has been very much influenced by the history of coal mining and related heavy industries, overlaying the earlier agricultural settlements. Each local community has its own park/recreation site that is typically small in scale. Local communities in Wigan feel proud of their parks and this can be evidenced by the increasing number of 'Friends of Groups'.
- 2.13 A further main driver in the local context is the gap in health disparities that exist between the most affluent and deprived communities in the Wigan Borough. Parks and open spaces remain a valuable resource in encouraging access to exercise and activities for all age groups. The Action Plan reflects this critical requirement.

Other Policies and reports

2.14 The following policies have been taken into consideration when preparing this management plan.

| Strategy / Policy Document |
|-----------------------------------|
| Parks Strategy 2008 |
| Mesnes Park Revisioning |
| Soft Landscaping Report |
| Conservation Management Plan |
| Mesnes Park HLF Documents |



Part 2 Where are we now?

3 WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Introduction

3.1 This section of the plan describes the current position at Mesnes Park. It provides an audit of the site from the perspective of the Green Flag criteria

3.2 The operational maintenance of Mesnes Park is undertaken by Streetscene while the overall strategic management is the responsibility of Corporate Land Management which looks at the strategic management of all corporate land under one umbrella (parks, playing fields, allotments, reclaimed land etc). The CLM team manages the land strategically and develops new relevant policies relating to the management of land across the borough.

Site Description

3.3 Mesnes Park occupies a 12-hectare site immediately to the north-west of Wigan town centre. Its boundaries are formed by a railway line to the west, Parsons Walk and Mesnes Park Terrace to the south, to the east Wigan and Leigh College and the former Gidlow cotton works and Bridgeman Terrace with its row of good quality houses of similar date to the Park. It has a good range of recreational facilities, opportunities for children's play and for experiencing excellent vistas and good quality soft landscaping.

3.4 Mesnes Park considerably enhances the urban townscape and has an important visual impact on the Mesnes Park Conservation Area.

3.5 The park has an active, constituted Friends of Mesnes Park (FOMP) group which has been in existence for over 20 years, consisting of members of the local voluntary community and residents. The "Friends" have helped in the future development and management of the park. Wigan Council now needs to

work closely with this group to refocus resources, build local capacity within the group and promote the park.

3.6 Park facilities consist of three informal kick about areas, bowling pavilion, informal grass pitch, children's play areas, outdoor gym, and bandstand. The park provides toilet facilities within the Café Pavilion. There are areas of formal lawn, annual bedding displays, community allotment and informal wooded areas. The park also houses a Streetscene operational depot.

3.7 As mentioned previously, Mesnes Park has seven Grade II listed features. It has a lake, formal gardens, and areas for play. The main features that have been restored now include interpretation panels to enable visitors to learn about the heritage of the park. The Wigan Council Heritage Section and the Marketing section actively promote the facilities. A diverse programme of events will also be able to highlight the attractions of Mesnes and increase visitor numbers.

3.8 The Base Plan below shows the current layout of the park, post renovation works.



Mesnes Park- Base Plan

Park History and development

3.9 Mesnes Park is Wigan’s first municipal park, opened on the 6th of August 1878. It safeguarded open recreational space from development and provided a ‘green lung’ in an otherwise industrial town. It occupies 12 hectares of former manorial demesnes land known as the ‘Mesnes’ adjoining the town centre. The design of the park was the result of a competition won by John McClean of Castle Donnington.

3.10 McClean’s design utilised the sloping site to create terraces surmounted by a pavilion, overlooking a formal garden. An ornamental lake was created from former marl pits and provision was made for recreational areas. Sport and play

facilities were added to the park later within the design framework and the garden areas were renowned for their bedding displays and horticultural excellence.

3.11 To date the park retains the framework and features of the original design by John McClean. These include the entrance gates and lodge, Dalton steps, pavilion, ornamental gardens, walks, lake and rockwork and subsequent features such as the bandstand. Further details can be found in the Conservation Management Plan which was included in the original HLF application.

Location

Address: Mesnes Park, Mesnes Park Terrace, Wigan, WN1 1TU
Ward: Wigan Central
Township: Wigan North
Ordnance Survey: SJ65299
Size: 12 hectares

3.12 Access to Mesnes Park is as follows:

- By Car: At J6 M61, turn right on Dicconson Rd, follow signs to the Town Centre and Wigan Pier at Wigan Market take a right onto Mesnes Street and take the first left into Mesnes Park Terrace and the main entrance can be seen.
- From the M6, Junction 23, follow A49 Warrington Road. At the roundabout take the right-hand lane into Poolstock road. Follow this road until the end and then take a left onto Riverway. At the end of the road take a left hand turn onto Powell Street which continues onto Northway. At Wigan Market take a left onto Mesnes Street and take the first left into Mesnes Park Terrace and the main entrance will be in view.

- By public transport: Most buses stop at Wigan Town Centre and the Park is a 5- 10-minute walk from the bus station.
- Train: Wigan Wallgate and Wigan Western (approx. 0.6 miles From Station to Park).
- Parking: The perimeter around Mesnes Park operates pay and display and the main Wigan town centre car park is a 10-minute walk on foot.

Ownership

3.13 The park is owned by Wigan Council.

3.14 The red site boundary indicates the land that is owned by Wigan Council. The park forms part of the Mesnes Park Conservation Area, marked by a bluehashed line on the plan.



By-Laws

3.15 The existing by-laws for Mesnes Park were introduced in 1922. A copy can be viewed on request.

Covenant

3.16 The Entrance Lodge has a covenant set upon the building usage from the Diocese of Liverpool which specifies 'acceptable' uses for the building. The covenant stipulates that the future use of the lodge should complement park activities. To comply with the covenant conditions. The building is currently used for community activities, office space, police drop in and weddings.

Restrictions

3.17 Mesnes Park is situated within a Conservation area. Any development or change in the conservation area requires consent from Wigan Council's Planning Department.

3.18 The Mesnes Park Conservation Area was designated in December 2006. As in all conservation areas, the trees are protected by a blanket tree preservation order.

Character zones

3.19 Mesnes Park has been split into the Character Zones listed below; these are represented on the plan below.



Formal Landscape

3.20 The Formal Landscape consist of several intricate patterns of bedding situated at each side of the main drive (some of them known as ‘Fleur de Lis’ beds). The wide main driveway that leads to Dalton’s steps and elevated pavilion building dissects this area. The lodge building is located at the main entrance of the park, at the junction of Bridgeman Terrace and Mesnes Park Terrace. The building, after being sensitively restored is now currently used by various community groups, registrars, GMP and is available for hire

3.21 The formal lawns (known as the ‘flats’) and beds provide seasonal colour and the rhododendrons still exhibit the remains of the scroll design of the original planting. The design is reminiscent of a parterre, which perhaps was intended

to be viewed from the pavilion. The bronze statue of Sir Francis Powell punctuates the landscape, and you often find visitors rubbing his now shiny shoe for good luck. The shelter has been restored and acts a shelter for events and an interpretation point. Within the formal area of the Park a soft landscaping scheme was implemented which saw the recreation of bigger beds within the main heritage core of the park to recreate the original intention of the designer John McClean.

3.22 Beyond the pavilion, which is the focal point of the formal gardens, the bandstand is set within a circular promenade and surrounded by vegetation. The soft landscaping layout presents the vision of the 1878 park designer John McClean. His intention to produce a 'picturesque' landscape with limited internal views, inspired by the poor quality of the surrounding scenery. The design strived to create a rugged and irregular natural landscape of largely native trees and plants. The landscape of Mesnes Park although embodying the picturesque principles as its core-planting made use of a decorative or 'gardenesque' margins by using many exotic imported plants and flowers of the day. The park has a rare example of McClean's formal bedding treatment of the flats and terraces that viewed from the pavilion embrace the picturesque principles of viewing a high main object from a low vantage point with enclosing lateral screens and selected high screens.

3.23 Bridgeman terrace boundary – A phased thinning of the trees and shrubs along Bridgeman Terrace will commence in February 2021, this is to remove several trees identified as a risk, this is based on their condition / health. The thinning of the trees and rhododendron also improves the site lines into the park, improving personal security within the park.

3.24 The vegetation management along Bridgeman Terrace will improve the connectivity between the park and the handsome buildings along the Terrace.

Sports zone

3.25 This linear zone runs parallel to the railway embankment and previously comprised 3 bowling greens, a grassed events area, 8 Tarmac tennis courts, and 1 basketball court. This area needs investment and redevelopment. The Bowling Greens have been decommissioned due to declining demand and unauthorised use by dog walkers and informal football. These three greens have been re-instated as in-formal lawned areas which have had a positive impact and provided additional play space. The whole of the Sports zone area is identified as a priority area for improvement / development. A working group has been set up within the Council to look strategically how this can be developed to provide visitor attractions.

Playing field

3.26 This is a grassed area, edged with mature trees and shrubs between the central path and the former Wigan & Leigh College - Pagefield Campus which has relocated to a new building some 200m along the park boundary. A drainage scheme implemented in 2000 has enabled the area to be used for sports and events. There are the remains of a tarmac surface of a former play area by the north entrance of the park. 5 a side posts are used frequently and park staff direct users to this site when informal football is being played on the formal lawns. The disused Pagefield campus is now derelict and provides an unwelcome backdrop to the park.

Woodland

3.27 This area which is adjacent to the Bridgeman Terrace entrance is home to the Holocaust Memorial and the Workers Memorial trees, it is also the location of a green 'heart' installation which is being used by a local artist to paint inspiring messages.

3.28 Within the woodland area is the remains of a heather garden, records of this area are not clear. The members of the Friends group recall the garden and there is an aspiration within the Friends group to reinstate the garden. Conversations took place with the group in early 2020 to progress with the reinstatement, CLM would fund the plants whilst FOMP would plant and maintain the garden. Sadly covid-19 paused this work, it is hoped to re-visit this project later in 2021.

3.29 There is a plan to establish a pinetum in this area, this will complement the aspirations of the friends' group (heather garden) and some of the existing trees. The establishment of a pinetum will result in the removal of several trees (mainly Leylandii and Cherry) whose height and condition have been identified as posing a risk. The planting of the pinetum, once complete will result in a net increase in tree numbers in the park.

Play Area

3.30 This area includes the 0-5's and 6-11's play area and the play shack. The play areas were completely refurbished in 2012 and re-landscaped to provide brand new play facilities and a flexible facility in terms of the Play shack.

3.31 The total area which can now be used for play has expanded. It includes open green space to be used as informal picnic area.

3.32 The outdoor gym equipment was installed in 2014 and has proved to be very popular; the success of this equipment has led similar equipment installed in other parks within the borough. The Friends of Mesnes Park with support from the Council successfully submitted a funding bid to provide exercise sessions for the local community, although this has now come to an end the participants who attended the sessions have continued to use the equipment on a regular basis.

Lake area

3.33 The lake area is ornamental and is very popular with visitors. The lake has three islands and supports a variety of wildfowl. As per the lake management plan, two islands have been replanted to provide both shelter and evergreen colour. An incomplete low privet hedge separates the grass verges surrounding the lake. The lake has a Pulham & Sons rock feature, which has been restored and planted up as part of the HLF restoration. Trees and vegetation overhang the lake in some areas and obscure views. A grass verge and footpath separate the lake with Park Road/Parsons Walk. Inclined beds have been constructed at the entrance of Parsons Walk entrance which provides improved but limited visual impact to visitors as they enter the park.

3.34 The lake has a lake management plan and this needs to be implemented as part of the day-to-day management or volunteer plan or a combination of both.

3.35 The existing path at the rear of the lake has been fully resurfaced. All the main paths in the park have been fully reinstated as part of the restoration scheme.

Rose garden

3.36 One half of the rose garden was restored in February 2016 with Wigan Council (staff volunteer days, Friends of Mesnes Park and Wigan College) and offers a quiet area for relaxation within the park. Trees and rhododendrons surround the garden but have been reduced in height to improve the security and to improve natural surveillance from the Health Trust's Thomas Linacre Outpatients building. The historical rose varieties have been removed to plant newer more hardy varieties which are very similar to species and colour of the originals. The Friends Group aspire to create a replica of the missing central feature, a stone sundial plinth and dial for the garden and are looking to plan a Phase 2 restoration which will take in the back of the rose garden.

3.37 During the rose garden project one member of the Wigan College team took a keen interest in the horticulture element and ended up being employed as a temporary gardener in the summer. He then applied for the Wigan Council apprenticeship programme and has been successfully employed.

Depot

3.38 The maintenance depot historically housed the facilities for servicing the park and the surrounding town centre green spaces. Facilities included glasshouses, potting shed, storage, vehicle garaging, parks head gardener office, staff welfare facilities and small nursery area containing cold frames. The depot supported, at its peak around 22 staff and contributed to the park's sustainability by growing its own annual bedding. The decline of the depot began with the commencement of the Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) era, where staffing levels were reduced and externally grown annual bedding became more cost effective than locally grown provision. The glass houses and cold frames were demolished to remove the maintenance liability as no effective use was available.

3.39 Within the depot there is the Mesnes Park Community Allotment, there is an established group that have successfully applied for funding on several occasions to develop and expand the allotment area. The group have a porta cabin, several polytunnels and raised beds. The allotment group have now outgrown their current accommodation (which was also coming to the end of its lifespan), in 2018 work began on converting rooms in the depot building into a flexible space that could accommodate both the park gardeners and the allotment / community group, this was completed in 2020.

Park Assets and Main Features The Pavilion

3.40 The Pavilion is the most iconic feature within the Park and is Italianate in design. Designed by W H Fletcher the pavilion was opened in 1880. Octagonal in plan and approximately 14 metres across, the building has two storeys with a central glazed lantern. Polygonal single storey wings project on northern, eastern, and western axis. Its south eastern elevation features a lofty 5-sided open porch supported on twisted cast iron columns with foliated open work brackets forming decorative spandrels. The porch and terrace offer an elevated prospect over the formal gardens.

3.41 The Pavilion (Grade II listed) was completely restored (April 2012) both internally and externally. The building is used as a café and contains toilet provision for 4 people plus a disabled toilet. The building has the concession Fredrick's Ice Cream downstairs and overspill seating and exhibition space upstairs behind a glass balustrade. The hard standing area outside the building has new terracing for park users to enjoy the historic vistas while being able to be served quality refreshments.

Bandstand

3.42 The bandstand is listed Grade II listed. It is an open-sided structure, octagonal in plan, with tall in-swept roof. Located at a lower level 70 metres to the northwest of the pavilion. Set on a slightly raised plinth, the bandstand is enclosed by a low hedge following the octagonal plan, surrounded by a circular paved area of about 55 metres overall diameter.

3.43 The Bandstand has been completely restored to its former glory (2012). It now stands between the Play shack and the Pavilion and new additions to the Grade II listed feature includes lighting and electricity. This allows performances to

take place without the need of a generator big events take place with smaller community events interspersed between these times.

3.44 The bandstand is also licensed and is used to hold weddings and other formal ceremonies.

Shelter

3.45 An open sided 'Tudor style' shelter is located on the loop path approximately 30 metres to the east of the ornamental pond. Originally housing toilets this structure dates from around 1936. Constructed in brick with half-timbered twin gables with fascia boards and plain tiled roof. Prior to the restoration project, the building was in a state of disrepair and had been boarded up for some time.

3.46 The Shelter structure as you approach the main drive has been completely restored with a new roof installed. It now contains roller shutters which are opened and shut each day and contains an exhibition space where people can see the Friends of Mesnes Park, A People's History Exhibition. **Entrance Lodge**

3.47 Adjacent to the main entrance gateway, the Swiss Chalet style lodge, listed grade II, was constructed in 1878. In 1928 the building was extended by the addition of a two-storey wing.

3.48 The Entrance Lodge is at the main entrance of the Park and is the hub of the Park, used by Park staff, community groups, GMP, and is also used as a training centre.

3.49 The Lodge is also licensed to host weddings and other ceremonies, Wigan Council's registrars carry out over 150 ceremonies a year (this has significantly reduced from March 2020 due to the covid-19 pandemic). Since the restoration was completed, this figure is increasing year on year.

3.50 The Friends group also hold a set of keys for the lodge, this allows the group to use the lodge for meetings, history walks etc. The group can use the Lodge without council supervision.

Play shack

3.51 The existing play shack is orientated on an axis with the bandstand and pavilion. All paths have been laid to gradients within DDA guidelines. Additional access from the sports arena footpath to the play shack provides further ease of access for disabled visitors.

3.52 The Play shack was restored in 2010. Following a short-term catering lease in 2019 / 2020, A tender process to appoint a leaseholder for the asset is commencing in February 2021, this tender process will seek a leaseholder who will provide a catering / activity hub.

Bowling Pavilion

3.53 The original bowls pavilion (Number 1) was situated adjacent to the southernmost bowling green, but this fell into disrepair and eventually this timber structure collapsed and was removed. The site is now vacant. Bowling pavilion Number 2 was constructed in the 1920's.

3.54 The Bowling Pavilion was restored in 2012 to create a more flexible space that can accommodate a variety of groups. Since 2018, the building has been used by Wigan Council's Start Well service who meet twice weekly during term time and more frequently during school holidays, it is used for activities aimed at supporting young parents and families.

Dalton Steps

3.55 The Dalton steps were erected in 1880 and constructed of sandstone ashlar and originally had terra cotta ornamental urns placed at the landing pedestals. The Dalton Steps were restored in 2012.

The Powell Monument

3.56 The Powell Monument is located mid-way along the formal axis. The bronze life size statue is of Sir Francis Sharp Powell, one of the town's long serving MP's, in the late 19th century and early 20th centuries. Generations of Wiganers rub his foot for good luck, a tradition which has gone on for years. The statue was restored in 2013.

Pulham Feature

3.57 At the northern edge of the lake is a substantial rockery originally incorporating a waterfall, which was designed and installed at a cost of £500 by Messrs Pulham and Sons, in association with the construction of the lake. The waterfall is now fully operational with rock formations, channels and basins remain. The waterfall was restored in 2013.

The Coalbrookdale Fountain

3.58 The fountain, which stood at the northernmost point of the formal axis, was an original feature of the park which was removed in 1914. It was a large ornamental cast iron fountain supplied by Coalbrookdale Company and stood 4.26 metres and had a diameter of 7.6 metres. It was replaced in 2014.

3.59 The fountain, having been replaced in 2014, is now showing signs of weathering. Within the next 18 months the fountain will need re-painting.

The Boer War Memorial

3.60 The Boer War Memorial was unveiled in Mesnes Park to honour the Wigan soldiers that fell during the South African War. The memorial originally comprised of a detailed stone figure of an officer in Boer War campaign uniform and slouch hat holding a banner and pistol, on the inscribed stone plinth. Sadly, the original marble statue of the soldier was removed in 1965 due to deterioration and vandalism and was subsequently lost. The granite has been cleaned as part of the Heritage Lottery funded restoration work in the park and a replacement statue, funded through multiple partners including the Friends of the Boer War was unveiled in 2013.

4 ASSESSMENT OF MESNES PARK FOLLOWING THE GREEN FLAG CRITERIA

A WELCOMING PLACE

Welcome

- 4.1 At present Mesnes Park has five entrances: Walkden Avenue, Bridgeman Terrace, Mesnes Park Terrace, Parson's Walk and Park Avenue. Mesnes Park Terrace is used as the main entrance for visitors. The restoration project has seen enhancements to all entrances to the park which has improved them aesthetically and be consistent in design throughout. The main entrance has been fully restored with new iron and stonework.
- 4.2 Whilst looking at improving entrances to the park, design and future maintenance has been considered. As the gates of the park are not locked, one gate from each entranceway is left open, which provides easy access for disabled users and park users with prams but halts vehicles from entering the park.
- 4.3 The visibility into the park has been improved significantly. Selected trees on the boundary of the park were removed (this was informed though a tree survey) and other vegetation in the park was also removed to open historic vistas into the park.
- 4.4 Most of the perimeter boundaries within Mesnes Park are fronted by hedges. In recent years to ensure there are clear sight lines into the Park, the hedges are regularly pruned.
- 4.5 Work has been carried out to lift the horticultural standard of the bedding on the 'flats' to ensure the visual quality of bedding as the visitor enters the Park. Recycled green waste is regularly added to lift the fertility and standard of planting.

4.6 The presence of on-site Streetscene staff at Mesnes Park, makes for a welcoming environment for park users. The presence of on-site staff ensures that inspections and defects are picked up more easily. In addition, the maintenance in the park is generally clean and with the presence of site-based staff, it ensures that any unexpected untidiness can be easily cleaned up.

Signage

4.7 The Parks signage and interpretation was reviewed as part of the restoration scheme. All signage has now been installed.

4.8 The design and quality of information provided at present has been greatly improved. The noticeboard at the lodge entrance is used for regular and frequent notices such as events, tree removal notices etc. The Friends group have a set of keys for the notice board; this allows the group to advertise their events.

4.9 The restoration scheme looked at the design and location of street furniture and looked at an appropriate management regime. An internal audit was carried out to ensure that there was a requirement for seating where new benches were installed.

4.10 There is directional signage within Wigan town centre.

Good and Safe Access

4.11 The Master Plan was been developed to consider not just physical but, all other access barriers. The Access Plan looks at sensory, intellectual, social, cultural, and financial barriers. To create a welcoming environment, each entrance now includes information about the Park's history and the park event programme and 4 out of the 5 entrances are DDA accessible and provide good and safe access.

4.12 Due to its location in relation to the train and bus station Mesnes Park can be easily accessed on foot, by train and bus. Pay and display car parking is available on three of the four boundaries of the park. Two large town centre car parks are found within a ten-minute walk of the park.

4.13 A new cycle route has been proposed which goes from the town centre to a new link path through the park. The route could be used to aid connectivity between the town centre and local communities.

4.14 The park has a vehicle policy which was implemented to reduce vehicle movement within the park. Vehicle access is restricted to Streetscene operational staff and a small number of Frederick's staff (who park in designated areas).

Equal Access for All

4.15 Access to the park for people with mobility problems is good due to many footpaths within the Park being resurfaced. Most of the entrances are level, making it easy to enter and exit the park environment. Consultation was carried out with the Access Group to ensure that disabled access has been fully considered throughout the design process. Many developments regarding equal access within the project have been considered. A gold standard hygiene suite and an adult hoist in the lodge has full DDA accessible changing facilities. Also, a new footpath provides an easier circular route through the park for people with mobility problems. All these measures contribute to a park that provides a welcoming place for users to relax.

HEALTHY, SAFE AND SECURE

- 4.16 The entrance gates at Mesnes Park are not locked (closed halfway to prevent vehicles entering the park). Facilities which are open for the public include the Pavilion (daily) which includes a café and toilets and the bowling pavilion (which is open for educational sessions and for community use when required).
- 4.17 There is lighting at various points within the park and the depot is operational during the working day
- 4.18 During 2018 a defibrillator was installed within the pavilion; this was funded by the family of a gentleman who sadly passed away during an event in a nearby park. Training has been made available to the café staff, the gardeners, and the friends group
- 4.19 There is CCTV coverage throughout the Park. This has had a positive impact on the incidents of anti-social behaviour in the Park. This is a most welcomed outcome, and we will continue to monitor the situation.
- 4.20 Wigan Council maintains a successful positive and pro-active working relationship with Greater Manchester Police, who have an operational base in the Entrance Lodge. This serves as an additional police presence within the Park.

Appropriate provision of quality facilities and activities

Mesnes Park is excellently equipped with a broad provision of quality facilities. The offer within the park is varied and diverse that appeals to the public across a broad spectrum.

The range of facilities and activities is influenced by the park's heritage but also from previous consultation with residents, friends' group etc. This led to the introduction of new facilities such as the outdoor gym, community allotment etc whilst retaining and improving facilities such as the rose garden, Coalbrookdale

fountain and the Pulham feature. The park contains a combination of both formal and in-formal facilities; there are expansive play facilities, sports, horticulture, and wildlife attractions as well as more formal, traditional attractions such as the heritage features. The park also has the rose garden and many benches which offer quiet areas.

4.21 Under normal circumstances, Mesnes Park has a varied and interesting events programme that runs throughout the year attracting a wide range of people. This is publicised through the channels highlighted in the marketing section. Events are organised in the park by various groups and organisations, Wigan Council actively encourages the use of its parks as venues for suitable events.

4.22 During 2020, Wigan Council established a corporate events team, whose remit was to plan and deliver a wide range of events across the borough and Mesnes Park. The impact of covid-19 paused their event programme, it is hoped an event programme will take place towards the end of summer 2021.

4.23 Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles have access to a bequest from a local businessman known as William Higham who had several florists in the North West. On his death, IHL were bequeathed a significant amount of money to set up a Trust to put on military bands in the park.

4.24 Prior to 2020 and the impact of covid-19, a typical event programme for Mesnes Park would consist of:

| Date | Event |
|-------|-------------------------|
| March | Wigan Run Festival |
| May | Wigan Athletic party |
| May | Breastfeeding Awareness |
| June | Picnic in the Park |

| | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| June | RAF band concert |
| July | NATO band concert |
| August | Hitchens Food Event |
| August | Wigan Pride |
| September | Brass band concert |
| September | Proms in the Park |
| September | Family Fun day x 2 |
| December | Santa dash |
| December | Winter Wonderland |
| Throughout | Litter picks |
| Throughout | History Walks |

4.25 It is Wigan Council's objective is to get Wigan Active through the Leisure and Cultural services they provide (primarily Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles). The Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles programme for all the key sites aims to support the philosophy of getting people of Wigan more active and healthier.

Safe equipment and facilities

4.1 External organisations and other sections of Wigan Council can use the park as a venue for their events and activities. The Council has an events pack which gives guidance to organisers in event planning. The Corporate Land Management team offers support and guidance to the group to ensure that health and safety and insurance documentation is appropriate and valid.

4.2 The park is visually checked daily for litter, detritus, and visual defects by the Streetscene staff. Any necessary remedial work is carried out immediately or referred to the relevant department for prompt attention.

4.3 The park buildings and infrastructure are inspected by tree and asset inspectors (Streetscene). Maintenance requests are forwarded to the council's property maintenance team.

- 4.4 The maintenance request system has two levels of priority for repairs, P1 and P2. P1 repairs are carried out within one working day, P2 repairs with 5 working days. However larger repairs are costed and included in the planned maintenance programme
- 4.26 The Playground Maintenance Team carries out weekly checks of the play equipment. Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA) conducts a full independent annual check of all play equipment. Health and Safety Policy – The service is accredited to OHSAS 18001. All work and operations within the park are carried out in accordance with Wigan Council’s Health and Safety Policy. Streetscene have full regard for the safety of all persons, services, and members of the public, always working in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and all regulations and codes of practice, which supplement the Act, e.g. COSHH, RIDDOR, PPC, and EC Directives. The Wigan Council Health and Safety manual is held at the Streetscene Services depot.
- 4.27 Risk assessments for all operations undertaken within parks are in place, and these are reviewed at least every two years. All staff are aware of the risk assessments and play an active role in their production. Streetscene regularly reviews its health and safety procedures, and takes account of new corporate directives, government guidelines and manufacturers (and suppliers) recommendations.
- 4.28 In addition, regular joint inspections are carried out by the Council’s CLM and Streetscene teams to identify improvement work. Examples of this work include small alterations to the soft landscape; removal of low branches to allow safe passage by pedestrians

Personal Security

- 4.29 The presence of Streetscene staff and a maintenance depot in Mesnes Park makes for a welcoming environment for park users. The site-based staff provides a visible presence and point of contact for park users creating a safe feel to the area. Outside of office hours, Park Keepers also visit the site. This staff presence provides reassurance to park users, and ensures that any issues or problems can be dealt with promptly.
- 4.30 As well as the Council staff, the concession within the Pavilion is open 7 days a week and contains a defibrillator and first aid kit.
- 4.31 The neighbourhood policing team have a satellite office within the entrance lodge; they use this office as part of their regular patrols which offers reassurances to the wider public.
- 4.32 Programmed soft landscape maintenance is regularly reviewed in terms of ensuring a safe and secure environment for park users; the perimeter hedges along Bridgeman Terrace and Parsons Walk are regularly pruned to improve sightlines.
- 4.33 There are lighting columns along the main path network and CCTV located at strategic points within the park.
- 4.34 The signage within the park contains contact details for the Council (office and out of office numbers) as well as the emergency services.

Control of dogs / dog fouling

- 4.35 Wigan Council welcomes responsible dog owners in parks, except for children's play areas, where dogs are strictly excluded. Dog owners are actively encouraged to take dog mess taken home to be disposed of responsibly. Dog Fouling signs are displayed around the park.
- 4.36 Public Space Protection Order – A proposal to introduce a PSPO using the legislation below was approved by cabinet in 2020. The PSPO will be introduced in 2021

**Wigan Borough Council
Public Spaces Protection Order 2020
Dog Control
Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, Part 4**

WELL MAINTAINED AND CLEAN Litter and Waste Management

- 4.37 Mesnes Park is litter picked daily and inspected weekly by Streetscene. Ample litter bins are provided and emptied daily as part of the duty gardener's role.
- 4.38 The site-based staff have developed a sense of ownership of the park, they take personal responsibility for litter within the park and will not ignore incidents of litter.
- 4.39 The park is located between two college campuses and a busy town centre, the litter picking by the staff is structured around the high footfall times and honey pot areas.
- 4.40 Graffiti with offensive or abusive content is removed as a matter of priority; other graffiti is removed when possible to do so. Incidents of vandalism are also dealt promptly, both by rectifying the damage and reporting to the police. Standards

of cleanliness and incidents of vandalism are continually monitored to identify emerging patterns of misuse.

4.41 The park is well equipped with a network of litter bins whose locations have been carefully considered, they are emptied on a regular basis to ensure they do not overflow.

4.42 The Council has adopted a litter strategy, which seeks to eliminate litter by 2025.

4.43 The boroughs waste refuse centres are operated by FCC, the company have donated several benches constructed from recycled materials. The bins will be installed across the borough's Green Flag parks as part of the litter strategy / educational awareness programme.

Horticultural Maintenance

4.44 Mesnes Park, following its extensive and sympathetic restoration contains a fine display of formal beds, lawns and horticultural detail that echoes the values of the original park as designed by John McClean. The picturesque design with 'gardenesque' margins is further complemented by the intricate Fleur de Lis beds and vibrant seasonal colour.

4.45 The introduction of features such as play, and sporting facilities are more typical of a modern urban park. Subtle changes have been made regarding the soft landscaping compared with the original designs; orchard planting, differential mowing and naturalised planting have been introduced, albeit still maintained to a high horticultural standard.

4.46 Grounds maintenance within the park is carried out by Streetscene, the commitment to its role allows for an efficient and coherent approach to service provision improving responsiveness, prioritisation and better use of staff and

resources. The service is committed to the training and development of the skills of its staff required to carry out the ground's maintenance tasks. As part of the on-going objective to provide a clean and well-maintained park, the maintenance requirements of the park are regularly reviewed and challenged.

4.47 Appendix B details the frequency-based specification that exists for all maintenance operations carried out in the park.

4.48 Gardeners carry out the routine maintenance work (as per the schedules contained in the specification) and additional works are specified and monitored by the Parks and Streetscene Area Manager responsible for the grounds maintenance on site in addition to the actions on the action plan.

4.27 The routine maintenance of the park is mainly carried out by the site-based staff, who have been based in the park for several years and have a wealth of experience that they use to keep the presentation standards within the park at a high standard.

4.49 Other Streetscene operatives are used to support the workloads in the park. The number of operatives fluctuates to match the peaks and troughs of changing workloads, Specialist operations such as occasional herbicide application and arboriculture works are undertaken via the Streetscene specialist teams that work Borough wide.

4.28 Streetscene have an apprenticeship scheme in operation. There are several apprentices learning traditional horticultural techniques at several parks including Mesnes Park; they receive several projects to fulfil within the park where both the apprentices and the park will benefit from these new skills.

4.29 Whilst, in the main we have a frequency-based approach to maintenance, the gardeners are empowered and trusted to embrace and take responsibility for the park's presentation standards whilst taking a flexible, responsive, and less

rigid approach within the park that will give a year-round high standard of horticultural quality.

4.50 Maintenance operations are currently triggered by a frequency profile which tells Streetscene when to carry out operations; this is supplemented by regular meetings with the frontline staff but also between the Parks and Streetscene Officers and CLM officers to vary operations for the best horticultural impact. Front line staff are trained in the quality standard they are being asked and trusted to deliver - they had, in previous years relied on 'inspectors' to identify failings in quality. Having an increased presence within the park, the leading hand will adopt a flexible response within the park to enable a prompt rectification of problems such as seasonal changes, litter etc as they arise.

Arboricultural and Woodland Maintenance

4.51 The condition of the tree stock in Mesnes Park is generally good. This is because of regular inspections by the Council's Trees and Assets officer, who identifies and commissions any remedial work that is needed.

4.52 Replacement trees are identified by CLM and Streetscene officers and consider criteria such as, provenance, suitability to the local climate, climate change etc.

Building and Infrastructure Maintenance

4.5 The park buildings and associated infrastructure is inspected and assessed regularly by Wigan Council's Streetscene team. Any defects or repairs identified are forwarded to the Council's property maintenance team, who then arrange for the repairs to be carried out (subject to available budget)

4.6 In terms of repairs and maintenance all liabilities for building and infrastructure are funded through the Council's Corporate Property Maintenance Fund.

4.7 The Corporate Property Maintenance Fund (CPMF) is a budget charged with maintaining the Council's operational property portfolio across the Leisure, Adult Services, Children and Young People's Services, Engineering and Chief Executives committees. The CPMF is split into 3 main funds:

4.8 Fund 1: Reactive Maintenance – for small scale “running” repairs including emergency repairs and health and safety requirements. The fund is oversubscribed.

4.9 Fund 2: Planned Maintenance Fund – for larger scale repairs that can be planned. Bids can be made to this fund for work to be carried out in the following financial year. The fund is oversubscribed.

4.10 Fund 3: Pre Planned Maintenance/Serviceing - covers electrical, plant and heating servicing and maintenance

4.11 The CPMF is managed by Wigan Council's Corporate Contracts and Assets who implement the planned and reactive maintenance.

Reactive Maintenance

4.53 The Reactive Maintenance Fund is for minor repairs and emergency repairs, primarily costing under a £1500. This budget is effective in addressing minor repairs, vandalism damage and minor building defects effecting the buildings safety and water tightness. Repairs are identified via the inspection procedure and reported to the property maintenance team who operate a 24 hour, 7 days a week service.

Planned Maintenance Fund

4.54 This is for larger repair schemes of a planned nature. Within this fund, a 5-year external repairs and maintenance programme, 5-year remedial electrical test programme, intruder alarm programme, bridge repairs programme and fire risk remedial programme exist. Annual spending plans are produced in cooperation

with the Corporate Contracts and Assets team. Spending plans are produced using information from the Condition Survey programme, identified repair programmes/cycles and repair priorities identified in previous years. The planned maintenance budget covers Wigan Council properties. Active prioritisation takes place to target key buildings and facilities where long term occupation is strategically important to Wigan Council.

Pre-Planned Maintenance/Serviceing

4.55 This element of the CPMF ensures that all parts of Wigan Council buildings are regularly serviced in line with statutory and best practice guidelines. Preplanned maintenance and inspections currently cover the following building elements:

- Lifts
- Lifting equipment
- Legionella testing
- Gas installations
- Ventilation systems
- Kitchen equipment
- Automatic doors
- Roller shutters
- Firefighting equipment
- Fire alarm systems
- Emergency lighting
- Intruder alarm systems
- Boilers
- Pool plant

4.56 The CPMF is managed by Corporate Contracts and Assets team containing Architects, QS, Project Managers, Building Surveyors, Access Auditors, Legionella Surveyors, Mechanical Engineers, Electrical Engineers, Structural Engineers, Health and Safety Co-ordinators and Technical Clerks. This

resource is responsible for the management of individual planned, reactive, and pre-planned repairs.

- 4.57 Outside of office hours, emergency repairs and maintenance are managed by Wigan Council's Central watch, who as part of their 24 hours, 7 days a week, 365 days per year monitoring role act as intermediate between the reporting building representative and the relevant Council approved contractor. The Council utilise an approved list of contractors to action building, mechanical and electrical repairs. The approved list ensures all contractors working on Wigan Council buildings have been vetted for financial, health and safety and technical competency. The Council approved list includes general building, electrical and mechanical contractors with specialist surveying, asbestos, dry rot, and restoration contractors.
- 4.58 The existing arrangements for the repair and maintenance of the buildings and hard landscape within Mesnes Park are affected by the limited resources within the Corporate Property Maintenance Fund; a priority list at the beginning of the year is drawn up. Historically, maintenance has been reactive in nature but, this has now changed, regular walk arounds, site meetings and 'staff ownership' has seen a proactive maintenance regime implemented. The Senior Greenspace Officer works closely with the CPMF Officer to identify and programme significant building and landscaping projects.
- 4.59 Tree and Asset Inspectors carry out regular inspections using handheld devices, arranging for minor repairs to be carried out.
- 4.60 Toilets are cleaned and inspected daily by the on-site staff or contract cleaner, depending on the building.

Equipment Maintenance

- 4.61 All grounds maintenance equipment is subject to daily safety checks by a competent operator when in use. Streetscene ensure that machinery that is faulty or has defects will not be used. Machinery is tested in accordance with all Health & Safety polices.
- 4.62 Play equipment maintenance sits in the Streetscene team, their inspections cover the structural integrity of equipment, cleanliness, vandalism and minor wear and tear. The gardeners have also been trained to undertake play area inspections and report any issues to the play maintenance team to resolve as per Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) recommendations. Additionally, an independent inspection is carried out once a year by RoSPA .
- 4.63 The Play Area Maintenance Supervisor is informed of any defects, who implements further action if necessary. On discovering a hazard that cannot be rectified immediately, action is taken to immobilise or remove the equipment. If that is not possible then the equipment is fenced off with appropriate signage and displayed. The play maintenance team has access to fencing and signage to prevent access by the public in such circumstances. All records are archived and filed in individual site files and retained as per GDPR / Retention guidelines

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Managing Environmental Impact

- 4.64 Wigan Council recognises the importance of environmental management and is committed to operating its business responsibly and in compliance with all relevant environmental regulations, legislation and approved codes of practice relating to its activities and operations.

4.65 Wigan Council's Streetscene has retained the ISO14001 accreditation again for this year. This ensures that the service continues to be provided to the very highest environmental standards. They have also been accredited with the following ISO9001 ISO1801 (health and safety) and ISO1401 for several years.

Waste Minimisation

4.30 Wigan Council is an organisation who works to minimise waste. Green waste, leaf mulch and chipped arisings from tree and shrub pruning are reused on site –around the borders, community allotment etc. These materials are also given away to local allotment groups free of charge.

4.31 The Streetscene team is continually looking at monitoring and reviewing and reducing the amount of waste which the park generates. Some recycled materials are stored and used elsewhere but, Wigan Council recycles most of the green waste on site

4.32 Where material has been chipped, we will make an assessment to establish whether these can be left in situ within the park. However, as the park is typically formal in design, in some areas this is not appropriate.

4.66 Working with Officers in Corporate Contracts and Assets, areas of the park have been assessed to see if there are any suitable locations to put recycling bins. There are dry recycling bins in the lodge.

4.67 Across the borough we are constantly reviewing the location and provision of bins and strategically place them around the park to try and make better use of the bin stock. As part of this process, we will continually monitor and review the situation of waste minimisation.

Chemical Use

4.68 Chemical use will only be considered if all other mechanical methods have been explored. In addition, where a chemical must be used, the most effective, and if possible specific, treatment will be used for maximum efficiency. Persistent use of chemicals will be avoided.

Peat Use

4.69 Plants are only ever sourced from peat free suppliers. The contract for the supply of bedding plants will soon be tendered, as one of the social values / outcomes, we will again require the plants to be grown in peat free conditions

Climate Change Adaption Priorities

4.70 To demonstrate its commitment to sound environmental practices the fleet vehicles will be fully air quality compliant by the end of 2021.

4.71 Energy consumption in buildings is regularly monitored to prevent wastage and to identify costs. Inefficient energy systems will be replaced as and when is possible. Wigan Council has invested in a new software system to improve monitoring of energy usage and assessing patterns of usage.

4.72 Park buildings which have been newly restored have been fitted with Smart Meters. Smart Metering Technology. This can provide suppliers with readings directly and eliminate the need for estimated billing as part of the new build considerations and improving facilities, energy efficiencies are being considered.

4.73 Some of the buildings which have been recently restored have LED lights installed at the footings of buildings which will reduce energy consumption by 95%.

4.74 Wigan Council is part of the Greater Manchester Climate Change Strategy, which sets out how Wigan will become a cleaner, sustainable borough.

4.75 A new work strand for the Council is to look at how we can mitigate the effects of climate change corporately and whether we need to look at adapting our maintenance regimes accordingly. As temperatures change, we see great opportunities to manage our portfolio of land differently, review maintenance regimes, plant appropriate tree species, increase wildflower areas, utilising land as part of a wider flood defence etc, the work strand is called Naturalising the Borough.

4.76 The entrance lodge has had a 'green' roof since 2012 which reduces heating costs, water run off etc

BIODIVERSITY LANDSCAPE AND HERITAGE

4.77 Since the park opened in 1878, there has been the loss of some entrance gates, boundary railings and some minor features, there has been relatively little alteration to the park. The restoration scheme has in the main, focused upon the restoration of the original features. In terms of access and safety, only modest changes have been implemented.

4.78 At present there is no indication that the park's original design drawings and plans survived. However, a comprehensive collection of photographic illustrations, remnant features and artefacts, and the published editions of the ordnance survey, provides clear indication of the layout, distribution of features, spatial arrangements, and design themes of the original layout. This has provided

sufficient information to enable a comprehensive programme of restoration proposals to be identified and implemented.

4.79 The Conservation Management Plan addresses the need to safeguard and interpret the heritage and make the park fully accessible by:

- i. Conserving the fabric of the park
- ii. The repair and restoration of original structures and features
- iii. The re-structuring of the park vegetation to recreate intended views, to improve the appearance and setting of specimen trees and to reintroduce areas of formal ornamental bedding and herbaceous planting.
- iv. Improving the use and appearance of the park by the reinstatement of footpaths, the repair and replacement of boundary railings and entrance gates, the re-use of buildings and structures and the upgrading and where necessary relocation of amenities for play, recreation, and sport.
- v. The re-use of buildings focuses on the refurbishment and enhancement of the pavilion and its cafe to provide improved facilities for all year round use and the restoration of the disused Entrance Lodge to benefit the more tranquil areas of the park.

4.80 Through the restoration scheme Mesnes Park has tried to reduce barriers to physical access for all. As a destination it is well served by public transport and is easily accessible from its catchment through each of its five entrances. Within the park, the principal barriers to physical access are the routes to the pavilion and internal access to the café. Solutions have been sought for problems.

4.81 Current maintenance and inspection regimes. - The current maintenance and management regimes are mentioned above. However, materials which have been used in the restoration process for buildings have different maintenance

requirements now particular features are restored; this includes the Pulham feature, Coalbrookdale Fountain, and the Boer War. O & M manuals are stored at Mesnes Park to help the street scene ensure that the right materials are used to repair a defect.

Management of Natural Features, Wild Fauna and Flora

4.82 The Mesnes Park Biodiversity Enhancement Plan identifies the main habitats as woodland, hedgerows and shrubs, aquatic habitats, lawns and grasslands, annual beds, buildings, and other structures.

4.83 As part of the enhancement plan, a biodiversity audit has been carried out to protect and enhance the biodiversity in Mesnes Park and to increase awareness, understanding and appreciation of local wildlife through an education programme that explains the importance of urban biodiversity. Wigan Council would like to look for a third party to deliver environmental education in this respect.

4.84 The Friends group undertake annual survey of the bird population within Mesnes Park; this is part of the RSPB's Birdwatch scheme.

4.85 Mesnes Park, including the Friends group and the community allotments has received several awards for taking part in the Britain in Bloom (NW) campaign, in recent years, the community allotments received a Level 5 (outstanding award), and the park received a Level 4 (thriving) award. This is due to the new planting schemes replicating much of what was there historically.

4.86 Mesnes Park is now considered to be a modern urban park that whilst it contains many heritage features you would expect to find in a Victorian park, it also contains more modern features and attractions, we have amended the maintenance of the land to the rear of the lodge to a less intensive mowing

frequency, this allows the grasses to flower, providing a welcome habitat for pollinators.

4.87 Towards the depot area, we have several fruit trees, these have been chosen to provide increased variety within the park and pollinating opportunities.

4.88 The community allotment is one of the jewels of the park, the allotment area has developed over several years and is a real success, and there are several raised beds, poly tunnels, and landscaped areas. This area grows a wide range of produce along with flowers and perennial plants. This area links in with the Council's commitment to Incredible Edible and providing green corridors for pollinating species.

Conservation of Landscape Features

4.89 As previously described throughout the management plan, the park was restored and now maintained to carefully represent and retain the park as originally laid out by John McClean.

4.90 Permanent landscape features are managed to preserve their overall aesthetics and balance to the park. Planting is regularly assessed for its overall quality and impact and added to, or replaced, to improve the overall appearance of the park. New horticultural features are developed using traditional practices, these skills are shared with the apprentice gardeners, who are involved in the maintenance and development of the park. This will ensure future sustainability.

4.91 The Friends of Mesnes Park have a successful relationship with Wigan Council and Wigan College which helped restore one half of the historic rose garden. The work retained the roses which are still thriving and those which are not, were replaced with newer varieties of roses which have been colour matched with the old varieties. The original soil was excavated and replaced with new soil, manure, and fertiliser

4.92 Tree planting is carefully considered to preserve the parkland landscape. The wider aim is to broaden the range of species and age groups in the park.

4.93 As part of McClean's original design, the park featured several Holly trees, in 2018, the Council re-introduced hollies into the formal lawns to complement the Fleur de Lis beds.

Conservation of Buildings and Structures

4.94 The following buildings and structures within the park have been fully restored: The Pavilion, Bandstand, Shelter, Dalton Steps, Entrance Lodge, and the Bowls Pavilion. New features such as the Coalbrookdale Fountain (new feature installed), Pulham features, Sir Francis Sharpe Powell, and the Boer War memorial. These buildings and structures within the park that are worthy of conservation because of their contribution to the landscape and will be maintained and repaired in a sympathetic manner.

4.95 The historic structures featured above are all important for varying reasons and to different groups. The Powell and Boer war memorials have local significance, whilst the Pulham feature is nationally significant as a fine example of pulhamanite work.

4.96 The property maintenance team who manages the repairs and maintenance of the park's assets are very aware of their significance and the need for careful and sympathetic repairs, which may require the involvement of specialist contractors. The council continue to use Lost Art to service and repair the Coalbrookdale Fountain.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Community Involvement in Management and Development

4.97 Mesnes Park is situated close to the town centre and large residential estates and is enjoyed by a variety of audiences, who the Council involve when developing and managing the park.

4.98 The park is significant to the local community. This can be demonstrated through the Friends of Mesnes Park who are excellent advocates for the Park and keen to develop its usage among a wider community. They are actively involved with the development and interpretation of the Park. An example of this can be evidenced by the restoration of the rose garden, as well as their support in funding applications (outdoor gym, Boer war stature, Coalbrookdale fountain) as well as their continued support at events held in the park -proms, run festival etc.

4.99 The Friends of Mesnes Park was formed in 1998 as a lobbying group to clean up the lake which was in a very unclean state at the time. This expanded and a formal group was both formed and constituted. The Friends of Mesnes Park meet on a regular basis and carry out events within the Park and support the park in a productive way. They are also good advocates for the heritage of the site. They have produced annual calendars using old historical photos of the park and carry out regular history walks in the Park.

- 4.100 The Friends group aspire to reinstate the heather garden, which is in the woodland area, the Council fully support this project and will contribute funding and officer time to the project. It is hoped the project will resume later in 2021 (subject to covid-19)
- 4.101 Consultation – As part of the Deal 2030 Big Listening project, we consulted with over 10,000 people, the results of which, help shape the built and green environment at Mesnes Park.
- 4.102 Wigan Youth Voice is a local youth group who attend the Friends meetings and use the meetings to raise any issues young people have in the Park.
- 4.103 Partners of Mesnes Park are as follows: Wigan Council, Just B U CIC, GMP, Registrars and Fredericks Café. In addition, Wigan and Leigh College are extremely supportive of the project and are working with Wigan Council to look at potential projects both students can help within the park.

Appropriate Provision for the Community

- 4.104 There are several volunteer opportunities within Mesnes Park. These generally consist of Friends of Mesnes Park who do workdays, litter picks and history walks. We have a good working relationship with Wigan and Leigh College, we also have employee volunteer days where Council staff can volunteer for 3 days per year within the community. There are other ad-hoc opportunities which we advertise in the park or on the volunteer website of the Council.
- 4.105 There is a community led group which uses the depot area of the Park known as 'Mesnes Community Allotments'. They have installed a large poly tunnel and raised beds in which to grow vegetables and plants. They regularly enter northwest in Bloom competition – securing a gold award. In recent years, the group have secured funding through the Council's Community Investment Fund

and Better Neighbourhood Fund to expand and improve the facilities within the allotment. The allotment is open regularly for new members to join.

- 4.106 The Friends group also arranged the 'Mesnes Park – 'A People's History' exhibition'. The group gave the opportunity for local people to contribute their memories and photographs of the park. There was a huge response! The group was supported by Wigan Council's Heritage Services and produced the 16panel exhibition. A new version is on view in the shelter and will generate continued interest from visitors. The interpretation plan should continue to generate interest for regular visitors.
- 4.107 Within the park the friends group arrange to annual events, Holocaust Memorial Day, and Workers Memorial Day, both events take place near memorial trees that the friends group funded
- 4.108 Wigan Council through its leisure provider (IHL) offers a programme of events at several the key parks across Borough. Events that are held within parks - are aimed at a wide target audience and include (predominantly) outdoor type activities, such as bat walks, sports activities, and health walks. Through partnership working with other sections, a more diverse events programme is evolving.
- 4.109 IHL are responsible for the annual Last Night of the Proms event which has taken place in the park for several years. Prior to COVID-19, the event hosted over 750 people with tickets in high demand.
- 4.110 The friends group hold a set of keys for the entrance lodge, this enables the group to hold regular meetings, AGM's events etc within the park without Council supervision. The group also have keys and a roller shutter fob for the shelter; this allows the group to hold exhibitions within the shelter.

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION Marketing and Promotion

4.111 The marketing for all Parks is carried out by the Council's media and communication department. This includes event and activity promotion through Council social media channels. The council website contains information on the borough's parks as well as volunteer opportunities available through the community groups

4.112 The aim of marketing the borough's Parks is to promote the park and its attractions, increase visitor numbers and encourage visitors to extend the length of stay and frequency of visits. Outside of onsite information signage and boards, advertisements for events are publicised through targeted marketing campaign and via the Wigan Council website and social media. Press releases will be issued as appropriate to increase awareness of both events and park development milestones.

Appropriate Information Channels

4.113 Through the change in the public consumption and access of information we are looking at methods of providing more information digitally – Digital First. We are releasing more information online (website/Facebook/Twitter) and getting volunteers involved to promote the park through various on-site activities

4.114 Events are promoted through the Council website, Council Twitter, and Council Social Media

4.115 As most of the population have access to a camera enabled smart phone, Council staff are encouraged to take and post photos of the park and borough via the public facing social media channels – twitter, Instagram etc but also through the staff only Facebook page

Appropriate Educational and Interpretational Information

4.116 The Park is used by several local nurseries who bring their children for a daily mile activity.

4.117 There is extensive educational and interpretational signage throughout the park, this covers the significant history of the park, its features and the individuals featured in the park's heritage – Sir Frances Sharpe Powell, Sir Ian McKellen etc

4.118 Aside from the traditional information channels – signage, leaflets etc, the park is increasingly used by Council teams to promote their services, the Clinical Commissioning Group have signage that promote healthy hearts / walking, the adoption team use the park for their events and the Shared Lives regularly use the park.

4.119 A local artist, is also using the park to promote positive, healthy, and creative lifestyles. He has used calligraphy to paint inspiring messages on a feature in the park.

4.120 Wigan Council is committed to improving the working lives of our employees and promoting health and wellbeing in the workplace, part of this is promoting the use of Mesnes Park for meetings, in particular walking meetings. The park is a short walk from the town centre campus, home to 800+ employees; colleagues are encouraged to hold meetings whilst walking around the park.

This promotes both mental and physical wellbeing whilst promoting the park.

4.121 The allotment provision within the park is an excellent tool to promote healthy and sustainable living.

MANAGEMENT

Implementation of the Management Plan

4.122 The strategic management of Mesnes Park is carried out by Wigan Council's Corporate Land Management Team (CLM) within the Corporate Contracts and Assets Section. This division is responsible for determining the strategic direction and overall management of the service and the parks and green spaces it maintains. The operational maintenance is carried out by Wigan Council's Streetscene service (SS)

4.123 Both teams work closely together to ensure that the management plan is implemented, reviewed, and kept live and relevant. We do this through regular communication between the teams.

4.124 Over the last 12 months, although limited and reduced because of covid-19, 'Green Flag' walk arounds have been carried out and to identify and progress development works and observing general management and maintenance of the site. This will continue to improve the standards within Mesnes Park. The walk arounds are attended by the Senior Greenspace Officer, Parks and Streetscene officer plus the supervisor and leading hand.

4.125 Wigan Council will also carry out a mock judging around April to ensure the Park remains on track and to continually improve the site.

- 4.126 The friends group also contribute to the management of the park by acting as the park's critical friend and reporting any defects or issues, either directly to the gardeners or to the CLM team.
- 4.127 Senior Greenspace Officer (CLM) - The Senior Greenspace Officer specifically deals with the development of key sites, develop site management in conjunction with Friends groups, capacity building within volunteer base to develop a complementary resource, support community groups, develop partnerships, secure external funding, and support new business opportunities. Part of the Corporate Land Management Team (CLM).
- 4.128 Parks and Streetscene Area Manager (SS) – Is responsible for managing all operational staff on site including the arboriculture teams.
- 4.129 Parks and Streetscene Supervisor (SS) – Assists the Parks and Streetscene Area Manager
- 4.130 Tree and Asset Inspector (SS) - This member of staff is responsible for tree, site, and buildings inspections on the West of the Borough.
- 4.131 Technical Section is part of the Streetscene team. The team provides a range of operational and management support functions, including leading on divisional performance management, running the Council's GIS mapping system, green space asset management/financial information and undertaking policy and performance reviews
- 4.132 There are currently 4 site-based members of staff (leading hand plus 3 gardeners) in Mesnes Park, this team are responsible for the routine and reactive maintenance. If tree work is needed, a separate arboriculture team is drafted in.
- 4.133 Streetscene Leading Hand – (SS) -The role covers the overall grounds care and maintenance of grounds in accordance with agreed specification. Providing a

flexible and responsible service. Supervising individuals or teams and ensuring compliance with agreed quality standards. This role also carries out Play inspections and anything which is damaged or needs replacing is forwarded to the Play Maintenance Team.

4.134 Gardener – (SS) - The 3 gardeners carry out a visual daily inspection of the park, they also carry out general maintenance of grounds including sweeping, hoeing, raking, mowing, strimming, edging, forking, digging, hedge cutting, minor pruning and clearing leaves and litter. Basic horticultural duties including laying turf under supervision and planting e.g. Bulbs. Constructional and manual work e.g. Barrowing, ditch clearance etc. Assisting with erecting and dismantling of sports posts and other equipment. General cleaning duties e.g. Toilets, canteens, storerooms etc. Patrol and attendance duties e.g. Opening and locking gates and patrolling. Assisting more highly skilled and experienced gardeners in their work. Instruct the public to comply with regulations and byelaws. To undertake any other duties in accordance with the grade and job title of the post as required by the Streetscene Services Management Team.

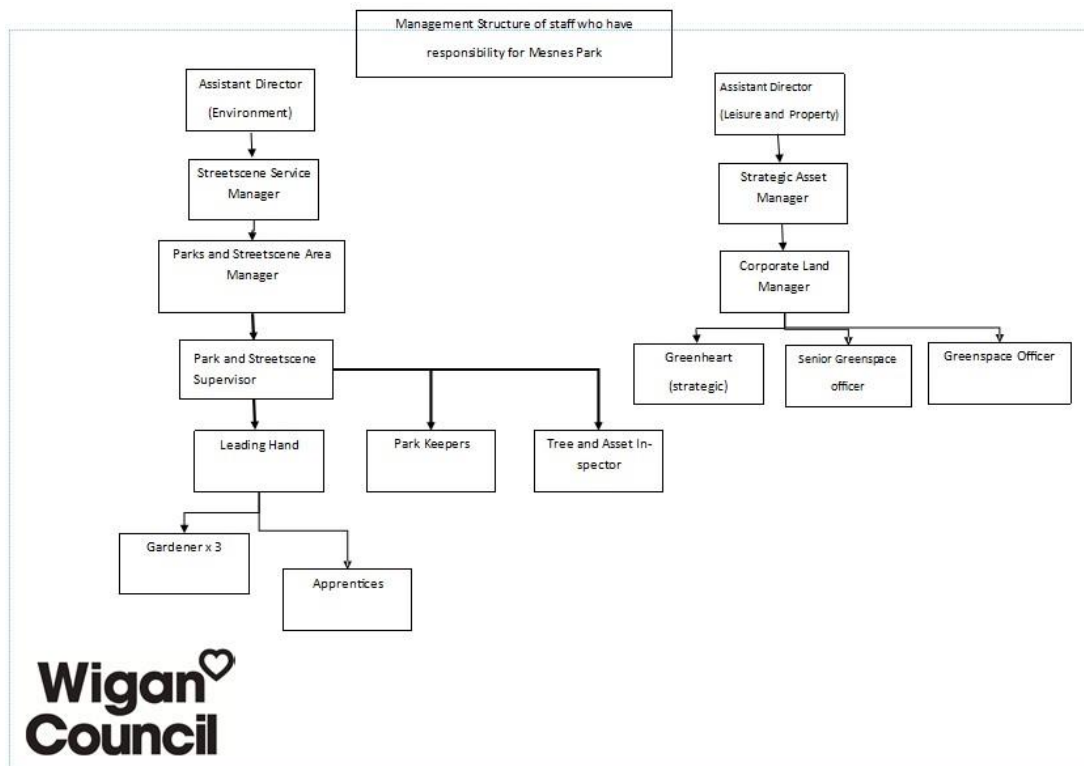
4.135 Park Keeper – (SS) General litter collection, meeting contractors, opening, and closing buildings, cemeteries etc. The park keepers operate borough wide.

4.136 Streetscene Service Manager – (SS) The Manager is responsible for the operational management and maintenance of Council managed green spaces within the Borough.

4.137 Corporate Land Manager (CLM): Strategic Manager for Corporate Land Section/

4.138 Management of Contractors - The Council's Code of Practice for managing Contractors on site provides a framework for the system which currently operates in Mesnes Park.

4.139 The following diagram show the most relevant posts closely related to the delivery of management, operational and support to Mesnes Park.





Part 3 Where do we want to get to?

4 WHERE DO WE WANT TO GET TO?

5.1 This section of the plan explains outlines our vision for Mesnes Park

5.2 Wigan Council commissioned a re-visioning of Parks in 2019 by the Corporate Land Management team – Greenheart: Parks and Natural Capital.

5.3 The primary vision of the project is to:

Together, we will create an environment that we are proud of, where our greenspaces are safe, accessible, and attractive, promoting the health and wellbeing of our residents. Where habitats and biodiversity are protected and enhanced, and where our natural environment helps safeguard us from the impacts of climate change.

5.4 Whilst the re-visioning continues, the emerging outcomes are:

- Develop a new Parks Strategy to reflect the current local authority landscape
- Embed the principles and outcomes of The Deal 2030 within the management of Parks.
- Encourage people to use and enjoy their local green spaces and participate in activities promoted at key sites within the borough by providing attractive and accessible facilities suitable for all
- Provide a key amenity to local communities, promote healthy and active lifestyles, draw visitor expenditure unto the local community, reflect and celebrate the heritage and history of the local area.
- Build upon the key features and assets of each site and improve connections between locations.
- Support employment opportunities and skills training, particularly in leisure and recreational sectors, create opportunities for

residents and volunteers looking to help manage and maintain key sites.

- Support habitats and biodiversity of regional and national importance, including parklands, wetlands, waterways, and woodlands.
- **Retain the Green Flag Award for Mesnes Park**



Part 4 How are we going to get there?

6 HOW ARE WE GOING TO GET THERE?

6.1 This section identifies how the vision and the aims and objectives outlined in the previous section will be achieved.

6.2 The key strategic developments will be to:

- Develop, at pace the park strategy
- Embed the Deal 2030 principles into park management and community engagement
- Build additional local capabilities in both vocational & non-vocational skills by harnessing and developing the talents and skills of the local community through defined training programmes and self-development initiatives
- Expand the range of support activities that volunteers, and friends' group can provide within the park
- Deliver a business model which is sustainable and self-funding
- Seek external funding opportunities and commercial opportunities
- Use the Green Flag Criteria to manage the borough's parks

6.3 The above strategic developments will be achieved through the ongoing management approach. Funding opportunities to support this programme will be sought and investment will be targeted at our volunteer workforce.

6.4 The key infrastructure developments will be to:

- Take a fresh look at the usage of the Lodge and Play Shack, with a view to increasing usage.
- Develop a tree management plan focusing on succession planting.
- Commence the phased thinning and re-planting along Bridgeman Terrace and in the woodland area.

-
-
- Establish a pinetum in the woodland area.
- Improve horticultural features and standards.
- Look for development opportunities to maximise the potential of the Sports Zone.
- Continue to improve the landscape through improvements and increase visibility outside the park.
- Develop a lake management plan.
- Seek funding to re-paint the Coalbrookdale fountain
- Reinststate the heater garden

6.5 The key event developments (subject to covid-19) will be to:

- Work in partnership with the Council's event team to develop a varied programme of events utilising the park's assets.
- Develop the utilisation of the Mesnes Park Lodge / training centre. This will provide both a training venue and provide an indoor base for youth work and family learning activities.
- Develop a varied volunteer work programme to assist in providing participatory activities and events.

6.6 The following priorities have been determined from the Greenheart: Parks and Natural Capital vision.

1. Improve the standards of care, horticultural quality, and diversity
- Implement the 5-year management plan.

-
- Use the park as an educational resource and to develop horticultural skills for the Streetscene through the apprenticeship scheme.

Reduce the issues that have a negative effect on the appearance of the park, e.g. Antisocial behaviour and vandalism.

- Review the use of annual bedding and seek alternatives (where appropriate) – perennial planting, naturalised & wildflower areas.

2. Improve the health and safety for the benefit of visitors

- Maintain the welcoming aspect of the park.
- Decrease the amount of dog fouling.
- Undertake regular risk assessments.
- Continue with regular site inspections and undertake repairs when necessary and in a timely manner.
- Ensure all employees, suppliers and contractors meet national, Wigan Council and agreed standards and procedures.
- Ensure covid-19 signage is in-place and visible.

3. Improve security for park visitors

- Selective vegetation removal to reduce opportunities for anti-social behaviour and increase visitor perception of safety – such as Bridgeman Terrace.
- Build on good relationships with Police and the Council's Safer Neighbourhood Section.
- Develop a programme of activities to encourage evening use of the park.

4. Heritage and conservation merit of the park

-
-
- Increase the information available to park visitors to place the park in its historical context in Wigan.
- Involve appropriate professionals in all aspects of the development of the park.
Use high quality materials where new facilities are proposed.
Use traditional horticultural techniques to increase the sustainability of new and existing planting.
- Introduce recycling and composting processes in the park.
 - 5. Improve the accessibility of the park
- Consider inclusive options in all park refurbishment.
- Develop and enhance physical and sensory opportunities in line with local and national policies.
- Physical access will be guided by principles of conservation and inclusive visitor management
- Support and facilitate sustainable forms of transport to and from the park.
 - 6. Development of people – The Deal
- Increase opportunities for volunteering through the Friends of Mesnes Park.
- Expand the range of functions and areas of involvement for volunteers.
- Continue to train and develop staff in line with the Council's employee policies
 - 7. Maintain and develop the gardens and landscape character of the park.
- Rationalise the landscape design of the park.

- - Improve the horticultural quality of annual bedding, shrub, and tree planting.
 - Develop vistas in the park.
 - Develop part of a borough wide tree trail in the park.
 - Diversify and enhance ecological value.
8. Maintain relationships to other parks

-
-
- Develop the new parks strategy
- Seek national accreditation via the Green Flag process.
- Maintain good relationships with other Local authorities in relation to parks and open spaces.
 - 9. Maintain relationships to the surrounding neighbourhood
- Continue to engage and develop further links with strategic partners, e.g. Wigan & Leigh College, Wigan Youth Zone, local schools, and local voluntary sector organisations.
- Continue to be involved with Conservation Area planning.
- Develop better links with the town centre management.
 - 10. Education and Interpretation
- Develop the Park as a base for organised groups and activities and informal educational sessions and lifelong learning for the community.
- Establish the park as resource for education.
- Develop and implement interpretation through marketing.
 - 11. Generate revenue for the park
- Develop a park income plan.
- Promote weddings.
- Progress with the sports zone options.
- Fulfil the potential of the play shack.
- Offer a diverse event programme

12. Offer a diverse programme of events for visitors

Support the Council's Event team to deliver a varied event programme.

Promote the Bandstand performance area.

- Sustain a Premises Licence to allow events and activities •
Encourage Community groups, schools, and amateur performances
- Link with town centre activities.

13. Achieve 'Green Flag'

- Implement the Action plan (Appendix A).
- Promote and secure political support for the benefits of the Green Flag scheme.
- Utilise Green Flag success to market the park and to encourage new investment and volunteering

14. Continue to involve stakeholders and the local community in the development of Mesnes Park

- Continue to support the Friends of Mesnes Park
- Assist the Friends to seek funding opportunities in line with the Action plan

7 GREEN FLAG ACTION PLAN

7.1 The Action Plan (**Appendix A**) summarises the issues and action to address them, together with responsibility and timescales for action. Implementing the action

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plan will achieve the aims and objectives of this management plan in line with the Green Flag assessment criteria. It prioritises actions that need to be taken in terms of their impact on the park.

7.2 The Action Plan will be reviewed on a quarterly basis to ensure development is on target for completion.

7.3 As the Friends of Mesnes Park and community involvement expands and increases its capacity, it is envisaged that they will contribute further tasks to the action plan as well as assisting with the implementation of difficult to achieve actions. The Action plan will become a rolling programme of work to sustain the improved standards in the park.

7.4 The Green Flag Action Plan Summary is attached at Appendix A.

9 FINANCIAL PLAN

Finance and Resources

9.1 The staffing resource on the ground for Mesnes Park consists of 1 leading hand, and 3 gardeners who spend 100% of their time on site. The Park Keeper resource attends mainly out of normal working hours. The Park and Streetscene Area Manager spends approximately 15% of the working week on issues relating to Mesnes Park.

9.2 The Senior Greenspace Officer spends 20% of their time on Mesnes Park, this includes management plan development, implementation, review, community engagement, site development etc.

Bill of Quantities

9.3 The core maintenance work is identified in the Bill of Quantities. This itemises the value of routine work associated with the park. The Bill of Quantities will be reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure that the work schedules are optimal, given budget constraints and opportunities to introduce more environmentally sustainable maintenance routines.

Revenue Expenditure

9.4 There is additional revenue expenditure in Mesnes Park that is spent on events, repairs, and reactive maintenance. From Jan 2020 - Jan 2021 additional revenue expenditure for the various elements was:



Part 5 How will we know when we have got

there?

10 HOW WILL WE KNOW WHEN WE'VE GOT THERE?

Review

10.1 A Park Management Plan Review Group has been formed by CLM and

Streetscene. The aim of the group will be to review all the information that relates to the development of the park. The group will determine a variety of issues relating to the park e.g. If Grounds maintenance standards have been achieved and are appropriate, progress on the action plan, projects, event programme etc. Officers from other areas e.g. Planning, Events, Conservation will be invited to meet with the group and input specific information, along with additional staff from CPMF etc.

10.2 Consultation – new ways of consultation will take place that include utilising social media, the results will help inform decisions on the management of the park and help make positive changes. The information will be used to review the improvements that have occurred over the previous 12 months and plan for the following year.

10.3 Events – over the course of the management plan and post covid-19 the event programme will evolve with event numbers and visitors increasing. We will be encouraging community groups to take a greater role in the managing and delivery of events. There will be an increase in commercial events that are held at the park.

10.4 Participation – levels of participation will be increased by delivering the above events programme plus ongoing and increased community interest in the community allotment, outdoor gym etc

10.5 Friends of Group – the group will be supported by officers from Wigan Council to become a self-sustaining group that contributes to the future of the park by seeking funding for projects that are beyond current budget capacity. The Council has a partnership with a community funding manager whose role is to work with community groups to seek and secure external funding.

10.6 Green Flag – Achieving the nationally recognised accreditation for Mesnes Park, and retaining the award, will be the most significant marker of having achieved the aims and objectives of the management plan. Feedback from the judging process will be incorporated into the information that the management plan review group uses each year to continue the improvement process and create a rolling plan of improvements.

Appendix A – Action Plan

A Welcoming Place

| Welcome | Location | Action | Responsible Officer | Resource available | Priority | Completion date | Progress |
|----------------------|---|---|---------------------|----------------------|----------|--|--|
| | Main entrances | Ensure all entrances are clean, tidy, and free from litter, graffiti. Planting around lodge entrance, weed free | Gardeners | Yes, sitebased staff | High | Part of daily inspection and monthly officer walk around | Ongoing |
| Good and Safe Access | Location | Action | Responsible Officer | Resource available | Priority | Completion date | Progress |
| | Perimeter vegetation (hedges and trees) | Ensure perimeter hedges are pruned on a regular basis to provide clear sightlines in / out of the park | Gardeners | Yes, sitebased staff | High | Autumn / Winter each year | Ongoing, Bridgeman terrace estimated completion March 2021 |
| | Mesnes Park Terrace | Install perimeter railings to deter access through formal hedge | CLM / CPMF | Funding t | | | |
| Signage | Location | Action | Responsible Officer | Resource available | Priority | Completion date | Progress |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------|---|----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|--|-----------------------------|
| | Main entrances | Ensure all signage is clean, contains up to date notices and accurate contact details | Gardeners | Yes, sitebased staff | High | Part of daily inspection and monthly officer walk around | Ongoing |
| | Throughout the park | Monitor vandalism | Gardeners / CLM | Yes, sitebased staff | High | | Ongoing |
| | Depot entrance | Repair notice board | CLM | Seek repair through CPMF | High | Aug 2021 | Seeking prices for a repair |
| Equal Access for All | Location | Action | Responsible Officer | Resource available | Priority | Completion date | Progress |
| | Throughout park | Ensure staff are identifiable | All council officers | Yes, council officers | Med | Part of daily / routine approach | Ongoing |
| Healthy Safe and Secure | | | | | | | |
| Appropriate Provision of Quality facilities and Activities | Location | Action | Responsible Officer | Resource available | Priority | Completion date | Progress |
| | Lake | Ensure safety / advisory signage is clean and readable | Gardeners | Yes, sitebased staff | High | Part of daily inspection and monthly officer walk around | Complete |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|------|--------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|------|-----------------------------------|--|
| | Lake | Pest control | CLM / Environmental Enforcement | Yes, maintenance budget | High | Risk assessment complete. Baiting | Complete, subject to review in spring 2021 |
|--|------|--------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|------|-----------------------------------|--|

| | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|--|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | | | | | | when needed | |
| | Throughout the park | As part of the Borough's cycle strategy, promote a cycle route from the lodge entrance to the depot / college entrance | CLM / Major Projects team | Yes, officer time and TFGM funding | Low / Med | 2022 | Initial conversations held. |
| | Sports Zone | Develop a masterplan for this area | CLM / Streetscene / Event team | Officer time only | High | Initial scope / brief July 2021 | |
| Safe Equipment and Facilities | Location | Action | Responsible Officer | Resource available | Priority | Completion date | Progress |
| | Throughout Park | Make the Park Events Pack / Process available digitally | CLM / Events team | Yes, Officer time | Low | August 2021 | Work has commenced |
| Personal Security | Location | Action | Responsible Officer | Resource available | Priority | Completion date | Progress |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|----------|--|-------------------|--------------|------------|-------------|--|
| | Pavilion | Review CCTV arrangements to help reduce drug taking in the toilets and vandalism to the pavilion | CLM / CCTV suite. | Officer time | Med / High | August 2019 | Met with pavilion concession holder to discuss. complete |
|--|----------|--|-------------------|--------------|------------|-------------|--|

| Control of Dogs / Dog Fouling | Location | Action | Responsible Officer | Resource available | Priority | Completion date | Progress |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|--|--|--------------------|----------|-----------------|--|
| | Throughout park | Progress and implement Public Space Protection Order to control dogs / dog fouling | Environmental education and enforcement team with support from CLM | Officer time | Med | 2021 | PSPO approved, notices with Legal for issuing. |

Well Maintained and Clean

| Horticultural Maintenance | Location | Action | Responsible Officer | Resource available | Priority | Completion date | Progress |
|---------------------------|----------|--------|---------------------|--------------------|----------|-----------------|----------|
|---------------------------|----------|--------|---------------------|--------------------|----------|-----------------|----------|

| | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|------|----------------------------|---|
| | Lake | Control Japanese Knotweed | Parks and Streetscene area manager | Yes, Streetscene spray team | High | Ongoing | Record the knotweed on the Council's invasive weeds register to ensure twice yearly control |
| | Area to the rear of the lodge | Review maintenance regime – registrars have asked for an uplift in presentation when weddings take place | Streetscene / CLM | Awaiting S106 | Med | Ongoing | Scheme in place to landscape area behind the lodge. Giving an uplift in presentation |
| | Throughout | Review use of annual bedding, | Streetscene / CLM | Yes, officer time, | Med | Ongoing as part of a wider | |

| | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|--|----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| | | opportunities to introduce perennial planting. | | maintenance budget | | Council plant procurement exercise. | |
| Arboricultural Maintenance | Location | Action | Responsible Officer | Resource available | Priority | Completion date | Progress |

| | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|---|--|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|---|
| | Lake | Remove 4 trees around the lake that have been identified as problematic. | Trees and Asset inspector | Yes, Arboriculture team | Med | March 2019 | complete |
| | Woodland area and along Bridgeman terrace | Remove trees identified following inspections · Implement phased thinning and replanting programme · | CLM, Streetscene | Yes, Arboriculture and officer time | High | November 2022 | Dead / dangerous trees removed February / March 2021. Thinning / Replanting in line with planting season and avoiding bird nesting season |
| | Woodland area | Establish pinetum | CLM, Streetscene | Yes, Arboriculture and officer time | Med | November 2022 | Trees for phase 1 ordered February 2021 |
| Building and Infrastructure | Location | Action | Responsible Officer | Resource available | Priority | Completion date | Progress |

| | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Maintenance | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

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|--|------------------------|---|------------|---------------|------|----------------|--|
| | Lake | Seek alternative fencing for the Pulham feature | CLM | Not currently | Med | Dec 2019 | Discussions underway with NPS on costings for more robust fencing (within the context of a conservation area) On hold |
| | Depot | Building transformation into a flexible community / staff space | CLM / CPMF | Yes, £43k | High | March 2019 | complete |
| | Coalbrookdale Fountain | Re-paint | CLM / CPMF | No | Med | September 2022 | |

Environmental Management

| Waste Minimisation | Location | Action | Responsible Officer | Resource available | Priority | Completion date | Progress |
|--------------------|-----------------|---|----------------------------------|--------------------|----------|-----------------|--|
| | Throughout park | Increase the use of 'green' waste throughout the park | Trees and Asset supervisor / CLM | Officer time | Low | Ongoing | The community allotment now receives green waste – wood chip, manure etc. The fleur de lis beds are mulched up |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------|---|----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|--|
| | | | | | | | using wood chip. |
| | TBC | Install bin made from recycled plastic | Streetscene / CLM | Yes, bench donated by FCC | Med | Aug 2021 | FCC have donated a bench constructed from recycled plastic, need to confirm the location. |
| | Borough wide | Implement litter strategy | All Council officers | Yes | High | 2025 | External consultants have drafted a strategy with Council officers tasked with implementing the action plan. |
| Climate Change Adaption Strategies | Location | Action | Responsible Officer | Resource available | Priority | Completion date | Progress |
| | Throughout park | Appropriate tree and plant selection in response to climate change. | CLM / Streetscene | Officer time | Med | Ongoing | Succession planting plan and tree selection underway as part of Naturalising the Borough. |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|--------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------|-----|------|------|---------------------------------------|
| | Borough wide | Implement the Climate Change strategy | All Council officers | Yes | High | 2038 | Climate change strategy adopted 2020. |
|--|--------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------|-----|------|------|---------------------------------------|

| Biodiversity, Landscape and Heritage | | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|--|---------------------|--------------------|----------|--------------------------------------|--|
| Management of Natural Features, Wild Fauna and Flora | Location | Action | Responsible Officer | Resource available | Priority | Completion date | Progress |
| | Area behind the lodge | Continue with differential mowing and naturalised planting, opportunities for pollinator friendly planting, habitat improvements | Streetscene and CLM | Officer time | Med | Initially May 2019 and then ongoing. | Ongoing work as part of Naturalising the Borough |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|--|
| | Heather garden (Bridgeman Terrace entrance) | Reinstate the Heather Garden | CLM / Friends of Mesnes Park | Yes | Med | Aug 2021 | Project led by Friends of Mesnes Park to reinstate the heather garden, plants chosen and maintained by FOMP and funded by CLM. On hold in 2020, will resume in 2021. |
| Conservation of Landscape Features | Location | Action | Responsible Officer | Resource available | Priority | Completion date | Progress |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|----------------|--|---------------------|-----------------------------------|------|----------|--|
| | Pulham feature | Review planting / maintenance plan, there are gaps appearing in the feature that need planting up. This is within the context of the conservation area / HLF | Streetscene and CLM | Officer time / maintenance budget | High | May 2021 | HLF soft landscaping plan is providing the plant list. On hold throughout 2020 |
|--|----------------|--|---------------------|-----------------------------------|------|----------|--|

| Conservation of Buildings and Structures | Location | Action | Responsible Officer | Resource available | Priority | Completion date | Progress |
|--|------------|--|---------------------|--------------------|----------|-----------------|--|
| | Play Shack | Conclude lettings process to appoint a new concession. | CLM | Officer time | High | March 2021 | Short term contract awarded in 2019, long term contract on hold during 2020. |

Community Involvement

| Community Involvement in Management and Development | Location | Action | Responsible Officer | Resource available | Priority | Completion date | Progress |
|---|-----------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|----------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|
| | Throughout park | Support Friends of Mesnes Park in | Streetscene and CLM | Officer time | High | Ongoing | Regular communication with the group |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | activity / event planning and delivery | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

| | | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------|---|----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|---|
| | Sports Zone | As part of the emerging masterplan , consider the inclusion of a BMX pump track | CLM | Initially officer time only | High | Unknown, initial options 2021 | Meetings have taken place with a BMX group / national champion regarding the installation of a pump track in Mesnes Park. Will be picked up by the wider sports zone development work |
| Appropriate Provision for Community | Location | Action | Responsible Officer | Resource available | Priority | Completion date | Progress |
| | Throughout park | Develop and adopt new parks strategy | CLM | Initially officer time. | High | End 2021 | Scope of strategy underway and site assessments commenced. |
| Marketing and Communication | | | | | | | |
| Marketing and Promotion | Location | Action | Responsible Officer | Resource available | Priority | Completion date | Progress |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------|---|----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|---|
| | Throughout park | Develop an alternative memorialisation offer other than benches | CLM / Bereavement Services | Officer time | Low | Dec 2021 | The park has a finite amount of space for benches and locations are carefully considered. An alternative memorialisation offer is needed. On hold during 2020 |
| Appropriate Information Channels | Location | Action | Responsible Officer | Resource available | Priority | Completion date | Progress |
| | Throughout park | Improve website content | CLM / Web team | Officer time | Med | October 2021 | Limited |
| Management | | | | | | | |
| Implementation of the Management Plan | Location | Action | Responsible Officer | Resource available | Priority | Completion date | Progress |
| | Throughout park | Retain Green Flag accreditation | CLM / Streetscene | Yes | High | July 2021 | Application submitted February 2021 |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|---------------------|--|-----|-----------------|------|---------|--|
| | Througho ut park | Seek additional funding through s106 payments | CLM | Officer time | High | Ongoing | Feb 2021 - Currently £22,000 has been allocated for soft landscaping improvements around |
| | | | | | | | the lodge and £20,000 allocated for play improvements within the park. We have not yet received these funds. |

MESNES PARK, WIGAN
RESTORATION PROJECT

Conservation Management Plan

March 2006

Prepared by
Wigan Leisure and Cultural Trust

Contact :

In association with

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- The Friends of Mesnes Park & contributors to the stakeholder consultation process.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Mesnes Park was Wigan's first municipal park, created in 1878 to safeguard open recreation space from development. It occupies 12 hectares of former manorial demesnes land known as the Mesnes adjoining the town centre. The design was the result of a competition won by John McClean of Castle Donnington. His layout utilised the sloping site to create terraces surmounted by a pavilion and overlooking a formal garden. An ornamental lake was created from former marl pits and provision was made for recreational areas. Sport and play facilities were added to the park within the design framework and the garden areas were renowned for their bedding displays and horticultural excellence.

Mesnes Park lies immediately north of Wigan town centre separated from the market and central commercial area by a square of open space known as Mesnes Field. The park is roughly pentagonal in shape. Mesnes Park Terrace forms the south east boundary and separates the park from Mesnes Field. Bridgeman Terrace forms the north east boundary. It follows the line of the Roman road between Preston and Wigan and has nineteenth century terraced houses facing the park, properties now mostly used as offices. Parsons Walk with early twentieth century housing forms the south west boundary and is crossed by the main west coast railway line which forms the west park boundary. The railway is on embankment. The north boundary is with Gidlow Mill now occupied by some departments of Wigan and Leigh College. The main college campus is off Parsons Walk beside Mesnes Field. The former grammar school sited adjacent to the south-west corner of the park was converted by the local Health Trust into the Thomas Linacre outpatients facility in 2002.

The following designations apply to the park: -

- a) The Park was listed as grade 2 on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens in 1996.
- b) There are seven Grade II listed buildings and structures within the park: -
 - Entrance Lodge*, 1878 (two storey extension added c 1928).
 - Entrance Gateway, 1878.
 - Pavilion, 1880.
 - Double flight of Steps to the South of the Pavilion, c 1880.
 - Double flight of Steps to the West of the Pavilion, c 1880.
 - Bandstand, c 1880.
 - Powell Monument, 1910.

*The Diocese of Liverpool imposes a covenant on the lodge which restricts its uses to those which relate to the park.

- c) The Mesnes Park Conservation Area was designated on 25th August 1980 and extended on the 21st November 1984. It occupies an area of some 18.48 hectares (46.66 acres) the bulk of which is occupied by Mesnes Park. In line with guidance published by English Heritage in 1997 (updated June 2005), given the time that had elapsed since Wigan's Conservation Areas were designated, in addition to the requirements of the Council's Best Value indicators for performance, Mesnes Park became the subject of a Conservation Area Appraisal.

Mesnes Park is located in the main Central Ward which, with the wards which form the immediate catchment area for the park, has a combined resident population of 74,000 and it is estimated that approximately 7,000 people live and work within 1Km of the park boundary.

The park is situated within an area of medium density residential properties, including many semi-detached and terraced houses with small private garden space. Neighbouring the park is the substantial campus of the Wigan and Leigh College, comprising the main buildings off Parson's Walk and Pagefield Annex located adjacent to the northern area of the park. The two sites together have some 6,600 enrolled students including full time, part time and evening lectures.

Apart from the loss of entrance gates, boundary railings and some minor features there has been relatively little alteration to the park since it was opened in 1878. The restoration scheme proposals can, in the main, focus upon the restoration of the original features. Only relatively modest changes to the original layout will be required to satisfy current standards for access and safety.

At present there is no indication that the original design drawings and plans have survived. However, a comprehensive collection of photographic illustrations, remnant features and artefacts, and the published editions of the ordnance survey, provide a clear indication of the layout, distribution of features, spatial arrangements and design themes of the original layout. This provides sufficient information to enable a comprehensive programme of restoration proposals to be identified.

The park is currently well maintained but has clearly suffered from a lack of investment in infrastructure repairs and whilst current maintenance initiatives are helping to transform and reinstate some of the degraded areas of landscape capital investment is required to restore the parks infrastructure and built features to make it attractive and accessible to visitors of all ages and abilities and to encourage correct, increased and sustainable usage.

Conservation Management Plan

This Conservation Management Plan has been prepared with reference to current Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) guidelines for Conservation Management Plans and the objectives of the Parks for People Initiative. The content of the Conservation Management Plan includes details of land ownership, the history of the park and the design changes that have occurred throughout the life of the park.

The Conservation Management Plan has established a baseline of information from a variety of sources which provides a detailed understanding of the resource.

The significance and value of the site is summarised overleaf.

| SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY | | | |
|--|---------------------|---|---------------------|
| QUALITIES & VALUES | Significance | KEY ELEMENTS & COMPONENTS | Significance |
| Aesthetic | HIGH | Buildings & Structures Pavilion Bandstand Lodge Dalton Steps Main Entrance Gates Powell Monument | HIGH |
| Historical | HIGH | | |
| Associational | MODERATE | None | MODERATE |
| Community / Social & Cultural | HIGH | Bowls pavilion Playshack Shelter | SLIGHT |
| Economic | SLIGHT / MODERATE | Depot | NEUTRAL |
| Educational / Interpretative / Research Potential | SLIGHT / MODERATE | None | NEGATIVE |
| Environmental | SLIGHT | Lake | MODERATE |
| Group Value | MODERATE | Footpaths | MODERATE |
| | | Vegetation | MODERATE |
| | | Activities | MODERATE |

The analysis and appraisal of the park and its role in the wider strategies for the borough has informed the preparation of the restoration proposals in the social context of the local wards catchment and the wider population of Wigan.

The proposals for the restoration also take account of opinions of users of the park and stakeholders who have attended consultation meetings. Stakeholder consultee's have included 'The Friends' Group, user groups (e.g. bowling club) and the operators of the café in the pavilion.

Proposals

Mesnes Park, being central and easily accessible, functions as a local park, a principal town centre venue and a borough-wide (and potentially regional) destination for larger events. It has considerable significance in terms of its heritage merit and community benefit.

It already performs a vital role in providing opportunities for cultural expression and social inclusion through a well-established programme of events, activities and community festivals such as the WOW Festival.

The overall aim of the project is to repair and restore the fabric of Mesnes Park to improve enjoyment of the park and access to and appreciation of the heritage. The Conservation Management Plan addresses the need to safeguard and interpret the heritage and make the park fully accessible by: -

- Conserving the fabric of the Park.
- The repair and restoration of original structures and features.
- The re-structuring of the park vegetation to re-create intended views, to improve the appearance and setting of specimen trees and to re-introduce areas of formal ornamental bedding and herbaceous planting.
- Improving the use and appearance of the park by the reinstatement of footpaths, the

repair and replacement of boundary railings and entrance gates, the re-use of buildings and structures and the upgrading and where necessary relocation of amenities for play, recreation and sport.

The re-use of buildings focuses on the refurbishment and enhancement of the pavilion and its café to provide improved facilities for all year round use and the restoration of the disused Entrance Lodge to benefit the more tranquil areas of the park.

Mesnes Park prevents some barriers to physical access for all. As a destination it is well served by public transport and is easily accessible from its catchment through each of its five entrances. Within the park the principal barriers to physical access are the routes to the pavilion and internal access to the café.

These issues have been addressed in an inclusive and non-discriminatory manner in the restoration proposals. There are no financial barriers to the enjoyment of the park and shortcomings in intellectual access, cultural understanding and social exclusion are addressed through interpretation and management strategies.

The park has always been well-used and audience development strategies focus upon expanding and encouraging all year round enjoyment of the restored park and its enhanced range of facilities, with opportunities for extended daily and seasonal usage.

Community groups are already active in the restoration projects and will continue to be involved in further design and implementation initiatives.

The park, by virtue of its location, history, community context and potential nature conservation interest provides an educational resource for all aspects of the national curriculum, local schools, colleges and opportunities for 'life- long' learning which are regarded as important contributors to the development of wider audiences. Teenagers, an often under-represented audience, are encouraged to enjoy the park through its sports facilities, young persons meeting place and programme of sporting and music events. For those attending the local college and working or shopping in the town centre the park offers opportunities for lunchtime recreation.

Management and Maintenance

The park is currently managed to a high standard in terms of maintenance of the soft landscape, vandalism response, litter collection and events programming.

Additional resources are needed to maintain the built fabric, enhance warden presence and re- introduce horticultural practices in order to sustain the capital investment.

Increased revenue contributions have been identified (subject to annual revue) for maintenance expenditure and an increase in site based staff.

Financial Strategy

The Conservation Management Plan proposals are supported by a financial strategy which embraces the restoration of the whole of the park and identifies allocated sources of matched funding.

Summary of Capital Costs

The report of masterplan costs, programme and funding analysis gives a detail breakdown of each of the capital works elements, identified sources of funding and the anticipated timing of implementation within the overall programme for the restoration of the whole park.

The estimates for the capital works costs which includes fee's contingencies and inflation, are summarised as: -

| | |
|---|----------------------|
| Whole park vision. | £3,518,127.06 |
| Elements of whole park vision identified for HLF support. | £1,795,098.81 |
| HLF contribution (75%) | £1,346,324.06 |
| WLCT contribution (25%) | £448,774.75 |

Management & Maintenance Costs

A ten year budget allocation has been prepared for the management of the restored park based upon a 3% increase in inflation for each year.

The identified maintenance costs are summarised as: -

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| Current management & maintenance costs (2004/05) | £184,957.00 |
| Maintenance & management costs year one of project (2008/09) | £299,170.73 |
| Maintenance & management costs at year 10 of project. | £390,349.95 |

Conclusion

WLCT is committed to the implementation of the Conservation Management Plan proposals which have received support from the Friends Group, stakeholders and Council Members.

The Trust and Council have committed substantial capital and increased revenue expenditure to match fund the restoration project and have established a dedicated project team of officers and advisors with formal structures for stakeholder involvement.

The restoration of Mesnes Park is one of the Council's priority development projects but the project cannot proceed without financial support from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

SECTION 1.0 : BACKGROUND TO THE PLAN

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 In June 2005 Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust invited tenders for the review and updating of its Audience Development, Access and Conservation Management Plans for Mesnes Park.

1.1.2 The Brief (reference Appendix I) sets out the Trust's requirements to produce a comprehensive and consistent sequence of key documents to support a Stage 1 application to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

1.1.3 Following a process of competitive tender the Practices of ABL Cultural Consulting and Bertram Hyde Limited, Chartered Landscape Architects and Historic Landscape Consultants, were awarded the commission and formally appointed in September 2005.

1.1.4 ABL has responsibility for the preparation of the Audience Development and Access Plan documents whilst Bertram Hyde has been specifically appointed to prepare a Conservation Management Plan (CMP).

1.1.5 The remit for the preparation of the CMP embraces the updating of a Restoration Plan previously prepared in May 2002 by Landscape Design Associates, into a comprehensive CMP which conforms to current HLF criteria and guidelines.

1.1.6 The WLCT Project Steering Group comprises:

Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust

Project Champion

1.1.7 The WLCT Project Team has had a continued involvement in the restoration project for Mesnes Park, since its inception.

1.1.8 At a meeting with the HLF in October 2005, convened the content of the scheme which would form the basis of the application, it was agreed that the application and all its supporting documentation should conform to the HLF's revised criteria as set down in its Parks for People initiative, launched in January 2006.

1.2 The Park and Its Setting

1.2.1 The Park is approximately 12 hectares (29.65 acres) in area. It is located within 200 metres of the Town Centre shopping area and is easily accessible on foot and by public transport. Reference Figure 1, Location Plan.

1.2.2 Laid out in Victorian times the park extends 0.5 km in a north-westerly direction from Mesnes Park Terrace. The main entrance is at its south eastern corner at the junction of Bridgeman Terrace and Mesnes Park Terrace.

1.2.3 The Borough of Wigan is the largest in Greater Manchester with a population of over 300,000. Mesnes Park is located in Wigan town centre in the main Central Ward. Due to its town centre location the park is accessible from the wards of Aspull, New Springs, Wigan West, Douglas, Ince, Pemberton and Worsley Mesnes. These wards which form the immediate catchment area for the park have a combined resident population of approximately 74,000 and it is estimated that approximately 7,000 people live and work within 1km of the Park boundary.

1.2.4 The park is situated within an area of medium density residential properties, including many semi-detached and terraced houses with small private garden space. Neighbouring the park is the substantial campus of the Wigan and Leigh College, comprising the main buildings off Parson's Walk and Pagefield Annex located adjacent to the northern area of the park. The two sites together have some 6,600 enrolled students including full time, part time and evening lectures.

1.2.5 Mesnes Park lies within, and forms a major part of, Mesnes Conservation Area, which was recently the subject of a Conservation Area Appraisal. In 1996 the Park was listed Grade II on the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens in England (reference Appendix II). Several of the parks buildings and features are also listed grade II, the most prominent of which are the pavilion, entrance lodge and bandstand.

1.2.6 The park is very popular with the people of Wigan who largely support its restoration and has a Friends Group which has been in existence for eight years and promote the protection and restoration of the park.

1.3 Historical Background

1.3.1 The Borough of Wigan lies on the North West boundary of the Greater Manchester conurbation and adjoins local authorities of Lancashire, Cheshire and Merseyside. It was formed from rural and industrial communities in 1974 as a result of Local Government reorganisation, covers an area of 73 square miles and has a population of 311,532 (Resident Population estimate mid 1999). Originally a market town, Wigan grew rapidly in the 19th century to become a thriving industrial centre whose prosperity was founded on coal.

1.3.2 Mesnes Park was Wigan's first municipal park, created in 1878 to safeguard open recreation space from development. It occupies 12 hectares of former manorial demesnes land known as the Mesnes adjoining the town centre. The design was the result of a competition won by John McClean of Castle Donnington. His layout utilised the sloping site to create terraces surmounted by a pavilion and overlooking a formal garden. An ornamental lake was created from former marl pits and provision was made for recreational areas. Sport and play facilities were added to the park within the design framework and the garden areas were renowned for their bedding displays and horticultural excellence.

1.3.3 With local industrial decline, Mesnes Park in common with many other municipal parks, suffered a period of lack of attention and investment resulting in the loss of features and deterioration of the historic fabric. A concerted effort to address issues and reverse the decline began in 1996 when the park's national importance was recognised and it was placed on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest.

1.3.4 The Friends of Mesnes Park were formed in 1998 and have worked together with Parks staff – The Green Spaces Team – to instigate and undertake urgent work, consult with the public and actively encourage public participation. Noticeable progress has been made since 1999, appreciated and supported by the large number of park users

1.3.5 The Council and Wigan Leisure Culture Trust recognises the importance and potential of its public open spaces as a recreation resource freely available to all and the opportunity for Mesnes Park to play a strategic role in the regeneration of the town. To ensure continued improvement of this resource, park management was reorganised in 1999, with a new park services manager and two community parks officers assigned to the area of the borough where Mesnes Park lies. Officers worked with the Friends of Mesnes Park to set up Mesnes Park Steering Group and, recognising the historic and strategic importance of the park, commissioned a user and non user survey to inform the development of a vision for the park and restoration proposals.

1.4 Purpose of the Conservation Management Plan

1.4.1 The aim of the brief was to commission the preparation of a Conservation Management Plan which would help the Trust to care for the heritage asset, explaining why the heritage is significant and how that significance will be maintained in any future development, use alteration, management or repair.

1.4.2 A plan led approach to the conservation and restoration of the park will: -

- i) Take an overall view of the heritage.

- ii) Ensure that the Trust can predict and provide for long-term management needs of the asset.
- iii) Plan for the long-term maintenance needs and costs of the park and of any new work.
- iv) Assess the impact the works will have on the heritage and predict the problems and opportunities that the project might face.
- v) Develop partnerships and negotiate with stakeholders or other organisations which might have an interest in the asset.

1.4.3 The plan will be used to support a Stage 1 application to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

1.5 Methodology

1.5.1 The Conservation Management Plan has been prepared with reference to the brief prepared by WLCT, the HLF 'Parks for People' initiative criteria (January 2006) application pack dated January 2003 and the HLF guidelines for the preparation of Conservation Management Plans.

1.5.2 The key steps in the Conservation Management Plan process are:

- **Understanding** the site.
- Determining the **Significance** of the park and its individual components in terms of cultural, historical, ecological or other special interest.
- Identifying **issues and threats** that could impact upon the park's significance.
- Devising **policies to protect** the park and its important aspects and

enable it to be better understood and appreciated.

1.5.3 The method of study has involved: -

- archive research.
- visits to the park with both the Client and other members of the consultancy team to gain an overall appreciation of the site and its main components, its general condition and intensity of use.
- Workshops, held with the project team and steering group members, throughout the preparation of the Plan
- Consultations with stakeholders and the Friends group have focused upon the ten year vision for the park and the inclusion of various elements in an application for support from the HLF. The main points to arise from the public consultation have been addressed in the preparation of the restoration scheme for the whole park.

1.6 Structure of the Plan

1.6.1 The structure of the Conservation Management Plan follows a generally accepted format but, in accordance with HLF guidelines and criteria, it goes beyond the stage of defining themes and / or policies to provide a fully costed restoration scheme proposal to support the submission of a Stage 1 application to the HLF. The costed proposal embraces a whole park restoration scheme and itemises a programme of restoration works funded from a variety of sources.

SECTION 2.0 : UNDERSTANDING THE RESOURCE

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 From its inception over 128 years ago Mesnes Park has provided the principal area of open space for the town of Wigan.

2.1.2 The development of the park is inextricably linked with the history and development of the town and particularly its period of rapid growth and expansion during the industrial revolution.

2.1.3 As a key component of the regeneration of the town centre of Wigan the restoration of Mesnes Park is one of Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust's strategic priorities and is being addressed as part of the Trust's strategy for Wigan's Parks and Open Spaces and its Heritage Strategy.

2.1.4 The Trust's aim is, with support from the Heritage Lottery Fund, to restore Mesnes Park to its former glory, whilst providing opportunities for all sections of the community to appreciate the heritage assets of the park and enjoy improved leisure and recreation facilities.

2.1.5 The main objectives are: -

- To find appropriate new and sustainable uses for the parks historic buildings.
- To introduce new activities and events which will be popular with visitors without detracting from the parks features and heritage.
- To foster appreciation and enjoyment of the heritage and realise the parks under-exploited potential as an educational resource.
- To provide a safer and more welcoming environment.

2.1.6 The successful regeneration of Mesnes Park is a primary aim of the Trust and the restoration project will address a range of key issues, set out in Community Plan 2005 – 2010 a document which is based upon the five principles of social inclusion, strong communities, partnership working, sustainable development and learning from experience.

2.1.7 As a major open space serving the population of Wigan, Mesnes Park, impacts upon the cultural, environmental and economic life of the town. A restoration and regeneration project would have an enormously beneficial impact on the perception of the town and the lives and well being of its inhabitants. It has an important role to play in community cohesion initiatives, education programmes and leisure initiatives to improve health.

2.2 Site Information

Site Name

2.2.1 Mesnes Park Wigan.

Site Ownership, Management Structure and Contact Details

2.2.2 The park lies within the ownership of Wigan Council. On the 28th March 2003, Mesnes Park was transferred by virtue of a Transfer agreement between Wigan Borough Council and Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust, for the provision of Mesnes Park to operate Charitable Activities and Services, as part of WLCT.

2.2.3 The Trust is a new organisation formed on the 1st April 2003. The current organization was formally Wigan Council's Leisure & Cultural Services Department. WLCT works in partnership with Wigan Council in providing a wide range of leisure and cultural opportunities. With a remit to

improve, develop and expand the range of opportunities provided for both residents and visitors.

2.2.4 Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust is a non-profit distributing organisation, which must reinvest its surplus to improve services. The Trust is a registered charity, which brings some financial advantages, and is maintained by external funding and income generation that includes an annual grant from Wigan Council. In addition, buildings and facilities are leased from the Council. There is a board of Trustees who have the responsibility for ensuring the Trust is managed appropriately.

2.2.5 Under the umbrella of the Trust there is also a trading company: Wigan Leisure and Culture Enterprises. The Enterprises part of the organisation has responsibility for the development and management of those services that are not deemed to be charitable (such as Leisure Halls).

2.2.6 The Trust brings about financial advantages that will help to address some of the issues caused by a lack of investment over a number of years. The Trust's priorities in line with Wigan Councils Community Plan are set out within the strategic document for 2005-2008.

2.2.7 The primary objective of Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust is - *"to improve, in partnership with others, the quality of life of everyone in the Borough"*

2.2.8 A Board of Trustees represents different service areas and meet regularly to review and determine the Trust's priorities. There are 11 Trustees, 2 Council nominees, Community representatives and specialists. The membership of the Board of Trustees is itemised in the Management and Maintenance Plan (MMP).

2.2.9 The park falls under the remit of the Wigan Central and Wigan West Ward Councillors and the Wigan North Township Manager. These are consulted regularly with in relation to park issues.

Site Location and Context

2.2.10 Mesnes Park lies immediately north of Wigan town centre separated from the market and central commercial area by a square of open space known as Mesnes Field. The park is roughly pentagonal in shape. Mesnes Park Terrace forms the south east boundary and separates the park from Mesnes Field. Bridgeman Terrace forms the north east boundary. It follows the line of the Roman road between Preston and Wigan and has nineteenth century terraced houses facing the park, properties now mostly used as offices. Parsons Walk with early twentieth century housing forms the south west boundary and is crossed by the main west coast railway line which forms the west park boundary. The railway is on embankment. The north boundary is with Gidlow Mill now occupied by some departments of Wigan and Leigh College. The main college campus is off Parsons Walk beside Mesnes Field. The former grammar school sited adjacent to the south-west corner of the park was converted by the local Health Trust into the Thomas Linacre outpatients facility in 2002.

2.2.11 Opposite the main park entrance at the junction of Mesnes Park Terrace with Bridgeman Terrace is a group of nineteenth century houses predominantly occupied by businesses. At the opposite end of Mesnes Park Terrace is the Drumcroon Arts Centre run by the local authority education department as an arts resource primarily for schools and the community. At the centre people can see exhibitions, meet artists at work, take part in workshops and use the arts resources and lending service. Wigan Planning and Engineering Services occupies the building on the third corner of the field, opposite the junction with Market Street.

Topography

2.2.12 The distinctive topography of the site is derived from its underlying geology, the earlier exploitation of its resources and subsequent initiatives to restore the land. The topography has played a major contribution in determining the layout of the park.

2.2.13 The highest area of the site is around the northern entrance (approximately 46 metres AOD) with a general fall of around 10 metres to the south west corner of the park, which is its lowest point. The most distinctive slopes fall from the eastern boundary to create a promontory from which sits the pavilion.

2.2.14 To the south and west of the pavilion the land is much less steeply sloping with the much flatter areas occupied by the formal gardens and the rose garden. The lake was also formed in this flatter area being created from former marl pit excavations.

2.2.15 The bowling greens and formal recreation areas are to occupy an artificially levelled area arising from the culverting of Barley Brook.

List of Existing Surveys Documentation relating to the Site

2.2.16 The following documents have been referred to during the preparation of the Conservation Management Plan.

- Mesnes Park Restoration Plan, Final Draft 2002, prepared by Landscape Design Associates.
- Mesnes Park Conservation Area Appraisal, January 2006, prepared by Wigan Council Planning and Regeneration Department (reference Appendix V).
- 10 Year Management and Maintenance Plan, prepared WLCT.
- Mesnes Park Audience Development Plan, prepared by ABL.
- Mesnes Park Access Plan, prepared by ABL.
- Community Plan, Wigan Borough 2005 – 2010.

Designations, Strategies and Policies

Reference Figure 2, Designations.

DESIGNATIONS

2.2.17 The following designations apply to the park: -

- a) English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens - The Park was listed as grade 2 on the register, by English Heritage, in 1996.
- b) There are seven Grade II listed buildings and structures within the park: -
 - Entrance Lodge*, 1878 (two storey extension added c 1928).
 - Entrance Gateway, 1878.
 - Pavilion, 1880.
 - Double flight of Steps to the South of the Pavilion, c 1880.
 - Double flight of Steps to the West of the Pavilion, c 1880.
 - Bandstand, c 1880.
 - Powell Monument, 1910.

*The Diocese of Liverpool imposes a covenant on the lodge which restricts its uses to those which relate to the park.

- c) The Mesnes Park Conservation Area was designated on 25th August 1980 and extended on the 21st November 1984. It occupies an area of some 18.48 hectares (46.66 acres) the bulk of which is occupied by Mesnes Park. In line with guidance published by English Heritage in 1997 (updated June 2005), given the time that had elapsed since Wigan's Conservation Areas were designated, in addition to the requirements of the Council's Best Value indicators for performance, Mesnes Park became the subject of a Conservation Area Appraisal.

STRATEGIES AND POLICIES

2.2.18 The main strategies and policies which have a bearing on the Mesnes Park Restoration Project are: -

- Wigan's Community Plan
- Wigan's Cultural Strategy
- Local Agenda 21
- Wigan Council Unitary Development Plan.(UDP)

- Wigan Council Corporate Plan
- WLCT's Strategic Priorities 2005 – 2008
- A Strategy for Wigan's Parks and Open Spaces 2001 – 2006
- WLCT's Heritage Strategy
- The Mesenes Conservation Area

Demographics

2.2.19 The Mesnes Park Audience Development Plan states that according to the mid-2003 population estimates there were 303,900 people residing in Wigan, of whom 49.2% were male and 50.8% were female. Children under 5 accounted for approximately 6% of the resident population of Wigan; this compares with almost 6% for England and Wales overall. In mid-2003, 17.4% of the resident population in Wigan were of retirement age (65 and over for males and 60 and over for females) compared with 18.5% in England and Wales.

2.2.20 Between 1982 and 2002 the population of Wigan declined by 1.2%, compared with a decrease of 2% for the North West region as a whole. Population density of Wigan averaged 1,603 people per square kilometre, compared with an average of 480 for the region and 380 per square kilometre for England overall.

Table 1 : Age Profile

| Age Group | Wigan % | North West % | England & Wales % |
|-------------|---------|--------------|-------------------|
| Under 16 | 20.51 | 20.69 | 20.16 |
| 16 - 19 | 4.89 | 5.12 | 4.91 |
| 20-44 | 34.78 | 34.05 | 35.15 |
| 45-64 | 25.42 | 24.15 | 23.82 |
| 65 and over | 14.41 | 15.99 | 15.97 |

Base : all people

Source : 2001 Census

2.2.21 The population of Wigan is reasonably consistent with the UK average for those under 4, but has a higher proportion aged 45 – 64 and a much lower proportion of over 65's than the region or the country average. The average age of the population in Wigan was 38.3 years. This compared with an average age for England and Wales of 38.6 years.

2.2.22 People from ethnic minorities consist of less than 1% of the population of Wigan. This is considerable lower than the proportion in the North West region as a whole, or the country average.

2.2.23 The 2001 census suggests that Wigan has average levels of affluence; unemployment is slightly lower than the national average.

2.2.24 Of the people in Wigan who were of working age (i.e. those aged 16 to 64 for men or 16 – 59 for women) the employment rate was 76% during the summer of 2004 (June – August) compared with an average for Great Britain of 75%.

2.2.25 The 2004 Indices of Deprivation gave Wigan an overall rank of 53 out of 354 local authority areas. The area ranks at 40 on the Rank of Income scale and 9 on the Rank of Employment scale.

Leaseholds/ Licenses/ Franchises and Agreements

2.2.26 The following provides a summary of agreements made by the Local Authority with external parties for land, property or activities within the park.

Leases and Covenants

Pavilion

2.2.27 The café within the pavilion has, since 2001, been leased to the current operator, Frederick's, and is managed through Wigan Council's Legal and Property services department. Negotiations are currently taking place to establish a long term lease for this operation.

2.2.28 Other lease arrangements, in relation to park facilities, e.g. crazy golf, are managed through the Park Services Team.

2.2.29 The Team has recently negotiated a park wide premises licence which will allow for an expansion of the current events programme.

2.2.30 The entrance lodge has covenants which exist through the Dioceses of Liverpool, which restrict its potential uses to those in relation to the park.

Live or existing planning permissions, development of adjoining sites, associated regeneration or civic improvement projects

2.2.31 There are no current permissions within the immediate locality.

2.3 Site Fabric and Condition

2.3.1 This section of the document describes and sets out the current condition of the Park, its features and existing management, as the baseline from which to assess the requirements for conservation, repair and refurbishment.

Character Areas

Reference Figure 3, Character Areas.

2.3.2 The park has been broken down into seven zones of distinct character which are applied to management practices and, being based upon the distinctive areas and characteristics of the original design, are referenced when discussing the restoration scheme proposals in this Conservation Management Plan and its associated documents.

The character areas are as follows: -

- 1) Historic gardens.
- 2) Lake area.
- 3) Rose garden.
- 4) Play zone.
- 5) Sports zone.
- 6) Formal recreation area.
- 7) Depot.

2.3.3 The historic gardens formed the bulk of the original park layout and incorporate the main gates and entrance lodge, the Dalton steps, pavilion and bandstand.

2.3.4 The lake and rose garden are also part of the designed landscape of the original park area and are essentially a subdivision of the historic gardens zone as they have been the focus for community restoration initiatives.

2.3.5 The sport, play and informal recreation zones, together with the depot, occupy the land which formed the subsequent extension of the park to create the landscape structure that is found today.

Landscape and Visual Characteristics

2.3.6 Mesnes is a typical Victorian town park comprising formal compositions of paths flanked by lawns and flower beds offering vistas to planned focal points together with areas of informal character, including an ornamental lake and perambulatory paths flanked by trees and shrubbery. The park also contains a range of recreational facilities, including bowling greens, tennis courts and children's play areas.

2.3.7 The principal components and features of the park are now described in terms of their appearance, condition, use and contribution to the park as a whole. Reference Figures 4, 10 and the illustrations in Appendix IX.

Water Features

Lake

2.3.8 The lake is an original component of the park and forms an irregularly shaped feature of approximately one acre (0.4040 hectares). It extends for approximately 150 metres along the south western edge of the park, abutting Parson's Walk and Park Road, from which it is visible. The lake contains three small islets (two in the original layout) which are managed as wildlife refuges.

2.3.9 Early illustrations show a set of cast iron railings to what is now the duck feeding area. Thought to be a pattern from the McFarlane Foundry these railings have now been lost and partly replaced by contemporary railings / privet hedging.

2.3.10 In 1998 and 2000 restoration work in the lake was undertaken to repair leakage, improve water supply and restore banks. This work was undertaken by WLCT in association with the 'Friends of Mesnes Park'.

Waterfall

2.3.11 At the northern edge of the lake is a substantial rockery originally incorporating a waterfall, which was designed and installed at a cost of £500 by Messrs Pulham and Sons, in association with the construction of the lake. The waterfall is no longer in operation but the rock formations, channels and basins remain. The rockwork has in recent years been partially renovated as a community project and research is currently being carried out to determine the requirements for reintroducing a flow of water to recreate the waterfall.

Coalbrookdale Fountain

2.3.12 The fountain, which stood at the northernmost point of the formal axis, was an original feature of the park which was removed in 1914. It was a large ornamental cast iron fountain supplied by Coalbrookdale Company and stood 4.26 metres (14 feet high) and had a diameter of 7.6 metres (25 feet). No evidence of this feature remains and the site is now occupied by a large flowerbed.

Buildings and Structures

2.3.13 The following buildings and structures are described in more detail in the Gazetteer, reference Appendix III. The descriptions in this section of the report serve to outline the status, appearance, condition and current use of each building and structure and indicate their role and relationship to each other in the context of the park as a whole.

Entrance Lodge

2.3.14 Adjacent to the main entrance gateway, the Swiss Chalet style lodge, listed grade II, was designed by W H Fletcher of Welbeck Street London and was constructed in 1878. In 1928 the building was extended by the addition of a two storey wing.

2.3.15 The lodge is described in the List Entry as one and a half and two storey, with irregular plan. The lower left portion next to the gateway has a projecting gabled porch with recessed doorway above, which is a plasterwork panel inscribed with the date 1878. The base is snecked sandstone with half timbering above. Elaborate tall Jacobean style chimneys in brick and stone, rise from a sweeping slated roof.

2.3.16 In 1928 an extension was constructed in similar materials but of two storeys, gabled and set back from the lodge.

2.3.17 Though the lodge is Grade II listed it has been disused since the mid 1980's and is identified as a building at risk. It is boarded up with roofs part felted and battened.

The Pavilion (Café)

2.3.18 Designed by W H Fletcher the pavilion was opened in 1880. Octagonal in plan and approximately 14 metres across the building has two storeys with a central glazed lantern. Polygonal single storey wings project on northern, eastern and western axes. Its south eastern elevation features a lofty 5 sided open porch supported on twisted cast iron columns with foliated open work brackets forming decorative spandrels. The porch and terrace offer an elevated prospect over the formal gardens.

2.3.19 Externally the lower elevations are constructed in buff brick, unusual in the area, surmounted by red brick at first floor level.

2.3.20 Round headed windows feature in the wings and at first floor level with yellow brick voussoirs and drip moulds, sandstone cills and springers. The grills are a recent addition. Terra cotta tiles with floral motif clad the spandrels. Rising above the first floor flat roof is the lofty fully glazed lantern also octagonal in plan supported on 8 cast iron columns.

2.3.21 Six tall round headed windows occupy each side above which are small ports glazed alternately in red and blue glass and above these are a row of star shaped ventilation openings. The structure is basically an external brick perimeter wall roofed towards the central lantern, which is supported by 8 cast iron columns rising in stacks of 3. The roof is two stage in-swept pagoda style clad in slate.

2.3.22 Internally the ground floor is an open space containing the 8 columns clad in timber. The first floor is decked over but would almost certainly have been an open gallery permitting light to enter the interior space from the lantern and facilitating ventilation.

2.3.23 The pavilion has been used as a cafeteria since 2001 and the operators, Frederick's, have established the cafeteria as a very popular venue,

albeit one which is restricted by the constraints of the building in its current layout and condition. Notwithstanding these limitations the café has re-established the pavilion as the principal visitor focus of the park.

2.3.24 In 2004 a comprehensive survey of the condition of the building was undertaken by Heritage Engineering of Glasgow. Their report identified the ironwork as almost certainly the product of the McFarlane Foundry. The report concluded that the building was basically in sound condition and some useful remedial work had been carried out over the years but this was not considered to be up to conservation standard and elements of the building were deteriorating. Externally there was some damage to brickwork erosion to stonework and missing terra cotta tiles. The yellow bricks in particular appear to show effects of past atmospheric pollution.

Bandstand

2.3.25 Located at a lower level 70 metres to the north-west of the pavilion the bandstand is listed Grade II. It is an open-sided structure, octagonal in plan, with tall inswept roof. Set on a slightly raised plinth, the bandstand is enclosed by a low hedge following the octagonal plan, surrounded by a circular paved area of about 55 metres overall diameter.

2.3.26 The listing describes the bandstand as '*c 1880, altered sandstone plinth. Cast iron columns at the angles with fluted bases, twisted shafts and crocket capitals; these are now linked by wooden tie beams; large pierced decorative brackets springing from the capitals both laterally and forwards carry the oversailing eaves of a strongly swept roof, which has a simple corona round a dome with renewed finial.*'

2.3.27 The bandstand design was approved in 1890 and was erected in 1892. In 1922, folding glazed screens were fitted and admission fees charged for bandstand seating. In 1923 the grass surround was replaced with concrete covered with

asphalt and a retaining wall built. These improvements allowed for dancing – but only for two hours per evening during the summer!

2.3.28 In 1926, new shutters were added, the floor concreted and the paved surround extended. In 1983, submissions by the Wigan Civic Trust to the Civic Trust Pride of Place competition resulted in an award of £500 for repairs to ironwork and restoration of the roof to its original profile. Refurbishment work was carried out in 1985 by the Leisure Department.

2.3.29 In 2004 the condition of the bandstand was also evaluated by Heritage Engineering of Glasgow. The consultants believe that it was a product of George Smith and Son's Sun Foundry Glasgow, who produced numbers of such structures involving the liberal use of cast iron.

2.3.30 A condition report for the bandstand (Appendix VIII) identified a number of defects and made recommendations for repairs and restoration to conservation standards.

Shelter

2.3.31 An open sided 'Tudor style' shelter is located on the loop path approximately 30 metres to the east of the ornamental pond. Originally housing toilets this structure dates from around 1936. Constructed in brick with half timbered twin gables with fascia boards and plain tiled roof. The building is in a state of disrepair and barricaded off. The toilets have been demolished.

Powell Monument

2.3.32 The Powell Monument is located mid way along the formal axis. The bronze life size statue is of Sir Francis Sharp Powell, one of the town's long serving MP's, in the late 19th century and early 20th centuries.

2.3.33 The statue is set upon a granite plinth and raised platform, with corner posts which once held chains. Designed by E G Gillick the monument was unveiled in 1910 and is listed Grade II. The statue

is a popular local feature and a tradition of rubbing the forward foot for good luck has developed from origins which are unknown.

Drinking Fountain

2.3.34 A drinking fountain was installed on the path adjacent to the informal recreation area to the north of the pavilion in 1880. It was provided by the Abstinence Society but was removed during 1920's. There is no longer any evidence of this structure other than its location is delineated in what is now part of the existing footpath.

South African War Memorial

2.3.35 Immediately to the south of the pavilion, at the top of the Dalton steps and on the line of the main axis, is a granite plinth. This plinth was once surmounted by a memorial statue in Carrera marble. Erected by public subscription to the memory of the men belonging to the Regular, Volunteer and Imperial Yeomanry forces of Wigan and District, who fell in the South African War 1899-1902. The memorial was unveiled in 1903 and was removed c 1968 because of its deteriorating condition.

Playshack

2.3.36 The playshack is less than 20 years old and is used occasionally for ranger events and as a base for play leaders but has inadequate facilities to accommodate play schemes and so remains closed for most of the time. Although of relatively recent construction the building has serious foul drainage problems and is constructed of poor quality materials. The surrounding surfaces and soft landscape are also in poor condition.

Bowls Pavilions

2.3.37 The original bowls pavilion (Number 1) was situated adjacent to the southernmost bowling green but this fell into disrepair and eventually this timber structure collapsed and was removed. The site is now vacant.

2.3.38 Bowling pavilion Number 2 was constructed in the 1920's and is currently used to service all three greens.

Access, Boundaries and Circulation

2.3.39 There are now six entrances to the park three of which are part of the original layout. Not all entrances are gated and there is a lack of a comprehensive informative signage. This coupled with overgrown vegetation around most of the entrance points combines to detract from a positive sense of arrival.

Main Entrance Gateway

2.3.40 The ornamental cast iron park driveway gates are supported by Pennine sandstone ashlar piers and flanked by narrower pedestrian gates with lower outer piers. The gates and piers are Grade II listed.

2.3.41 The gates are said to be the product of the renowned McFarlane Foundry of Glasgow and contain medallions showing the town's coat of arms. They were removed between 1941 and 1945. In 1950, they were restored and re-hung by Bridge and Sons (Wigan) Limited only to be damaged in a road accident in 1957.

2.3.42 The fragments were collected, repaired and reinstalled by Bridge and Company. One gate pier has since lost its ball finial. The town shield is a distinctive feature but the gates have been painted in a green paint which does not show the elaborate ironwork to its best advantage.

Other Entrances

2.3.43 The entrances from Walkden Avenue, Pagefield Building, Bridgeman Terrace and Parson's Walk (two entrances) are much less imposing than the main entrance and are in need of restoration of pillars, gates and surfaces.

Boundaries

2.3.44 A short length of original railings survives adjacent to the main entrance gate piers but the park's boundaries are now predominantly low privet hedges, but they do not form a continuous or secure perimeter.

Circulation

2.3.45 The footpath system is dominated by the main formal axis which links the main lodge entrance to the pavilion in the centre of the park. This 6.4 metre (21 foot) wide walkway is transected by two subsidiary footways which provide links to the perimeter footpath network. In the south of the park this perimeter network frames the formal gardens but in the less formal areas, to the west and north, the footpath network is increasingly perambulatory.

2.3.46 Originally surfaced in gravel or shale the paths were re-surfaced with tarmac in the 1920's. The main drive and some of the other paths are edged in stone setts.

2.3.47 The surface of the main formal axis and many of the subsidiary footpaths is in a poor state of repair showing signs of cracking. This is thought to be due to inadequate substructure resulting from the resurfacing of the original shale footpaths without provision suitable foundations.

2.3.48 Some paths have been resurfaced – for example in the vicinity of the Rose Garden – but this can only be regarded as a short to medium term solution and problems of structural instability are likely to reoccur.

Steps

2.3.49 From the lower southern half of the park the pavilion is approached from the south and the west by steps which interlink with the concentric footpath network which surrounds the pavilion. Each approach consists of two impressive flights of sixteen stone steps with an interval landing. Their location and appearance add grandeur to the setting of the pavilion.

2.3.50 Listed Grade II the steps were erected by Messrs Dalton and Co London c 1880. Constructed of sandstone ashlar the steps are 6.4 metres (21 foot) wide and have low side walls and stone copings. The terra cotta ornamental urns which were placed at the landing pedestals, supplied by

Coalbrookdale Ironworks, have been lost. The steps are heavily worn and in places laminated. Some joints have opened up.

Amenities and Facilities

Recreation Grounds

2.3.51 The 'recreation grounds' consist of three bowling greens with a pavilion, an 18-hole crazy golf and a pair of tennis courts arranged in a row alongside the railway embankment. One of the tennis courts has been amended to accommodate a basket court which is well-used, primarily by college students.

Play Area's

2.3.52 Play areas have been located in various spaces at the north end of the park but are now all grouped together in the space between the bandstand and the sports area. There are facilities for junior and under 5's play which are well-used despite their inadequacies. The under 5's play area contains the aforementioned playshack and the junior play area has recently been subject to improvements which include removal of vegetation to improve inter-visibility and the partial installation of railings to its perimeter.

Parking Facilities

2.3.53 Informal facilities for disabled parking have been provided in the vicinity of the Bridgeman Terrace entrance but the use is currently suspended due to misuse by none disabled users. The Bridgeman Terrace entrance is also exploited by motorists wishing to park closer to the pavilion and sports area.

2.3.54 There is a demand for disabled parking facilities to be sited in closer proximity to the various facilities and this provision is currently being investigated. Although on street parking is allowed around the perimeter of the park spaces tend to be occupied by visitors to the town centre, college and the Thomas Linacre Outpatients building.

Trees, Shrubs and Garden Areas

Structural Planting

2.3.55 Generally there is good spatial definition of the various zones and enclosure of the park. Limited management, plant growth and natural regeneration have led to the loss of plant layers and in some instances compromised intended views. Limited new tree planting has not always been sympathetic in location or species selection.

Ornamental Trees and Shrubs

2.3.56 Specimen trees and shrubs are not as abundant as would have originally been the case and over-planting within the park has tended to reduce the impact and amenity value of those species which remain.

Formal Gardens

2.3.57 The formal gardens comprise ornamental flower beds and herbaceous and heather beds. The layout of the flower beds has been amended and periodically reduced over time and as a result are smaller and less imposing than originally would have been the case.

Lake Vegetation

2.3.58 The lakeside vegetation has undergone changes over time. The islands have been recently replanted to provide both shelter and evergreen colour but the margins are defined by an incomplete low privet hedge and trees and vegetation overhang the lake in some areas, obscuring views of it. The restructuring of the lakeside vegetation has been identified as the next phase in the restoration of the lake area.

Rose Garden

2.3.59 The rose garden was laid out in 1949 on land north of the grammar school that had been a tennis court and was originally a simple space of trees and grass. In 2001 the rhododendrons separating the garden from the rest of the park were pruned to allow views into and out of the space and improve security.

2.3.60 The 'Friends of Mesnes Park' were successful in their bid to the Local Heritage Initiative fund to fully restore the garden and in August 2003 invited Sir Ian McKellen to re-open Pagett's Memorial Rose Garden. Sir Ian lived across the road from the park as a boy and his father was involved with the original garden in 1949. The floral interest has improved, the sundial plinth and dial reconstructed; standard, shrub and climbing roses replaced; seating and interpretation added. The garden remains popular with those seeking a visually peaceful place to enjoy lunch or read.

Site Services

Maintenance Depot

2.3.61 The depot, which is accessed from Walkden Avenue, is separated from the park by a metal fence. It was originally the nursery for the park and a series of original nursery buildings along the northern boundary have been converted for staff use and storage. The remaining compound area contains bays for the storage of materials but is under-utilised.

Utilities

2.3.62 The information pertaining to the supply and distribution of services within the park is inadequately documented but the supply of services to the key buildings is known to need upgrading.

2.4 Site History

Introduction

2.4.1 The sources of information which have been used as a basis for archival research into the origins and history of the park include: -

- Copies of all the 1:2500 scale published editions of the Ordnance Survey from 1893 to the present day digital survey.
- Photographs and postcard images from various era's.
- Records and other documentation from the History Shop and the archives at Leigh Town Hall.

2.4.2 Notwithstanding the absence of an original copy of the design which showed the layout of the park the historical evidence gathered to date is sufficiently detailed to inform authentic restoration of the park.

Land Acquisition and Park Design

2.4.3 In the nineteenth century Wigan's main industries, coal and textiles, were flourishing. The Leeds Liverpool canal allowed for the shipment of coal and the opening of the railway in 1831 enabled the establishment of iron foundries. There was pressure for development north of the tight network of streets encasing Standishgate, Millgate, Hallgate and Wallgate onto the manorial demesnes land known as the Mesnes. The land was mostly pasture, used for recreation by local people and belonged to the Rector, who was also Lord of the Manor and lived at nearby Wigan Hall. In 1837 there was an attempt to totally enclose the Mesnes by Act of Parliament so that it could be developed but the members for Wigan resisted the move arguing that the land was used by local people and crossed by footpaths. The bill was amended to allow a portion to be retained as open land for recreational use.

Pre Park Landscape

2.4.4 Pressure for development continued and in 1871 a private bill called the Wigan Glebe Act was introduced with the intention of revoking earlier legislation in order to allow further building and mining on the Mesnes. The first edition Ordnance Survey of 1848 indicates that there were already two collieries with tramroads on the land and there was clearly a danger that this open space would become totally subsumed by industry. In order to ensure that some land remained for recreational use an area of the Mesnes was sold to the Corporation for a park and grammar school. The Mayor and local mill owner Nathaniel Eckersley of Standish Hall purchased the 6.5 ha [16 acres] of land for the corporation at a cost of £2,000. A further 5.5 ha [14 acres] of land was purchased from Mr Hodges for park purposes under deed 226 signed 1st October 1879, although Turner's Colliery was situated on the site and continued in operation until 1880.

2.4.5 In 1877 Wigan Corporation held a competition for the design of the park. Twenty-one designs were submitted and put on display in the council chamber. According to the Wigan Observer and District Advertiser the designs displayed similarity in their treatment of the site but varied considerably in detail with costs ranging from £1,300 to £18,600. The newspaper account describes a number of the designs including that of John McClean, a landscape gardener from Castle Donnington, who ultimately won the competition.

2.4.6 *He [John McClean] had taken particular attention in making his design to have the roads suitable for their respective situations and had formed curves as gracefully and easily as possible. The park is attainable on all points and the planting has received his particular attention. Great care will be taken to select plants suitable for the atmosphere of the place. The ornamental water will be one acre in extent and is intended to be artistically laid out. A fountain is also shown, and the great feature in his design is the forming of two semi circular terraces, the same being placed at a most convenient aspect*

in the park. The pavilion in the park may be used for a band or shelter site. The flower gardens can be altered to suit the amount intended to be expended yearly in this section. Allowance has been made for saving the topsoil to the depth of one foot as the subsoil is nothing but sand in the lower part of the park.

2.4.7 The reasons the Park Committee selected John McClean's design as the winner was not recorded. From this account it would seem that his scheme incorporated many of the best features of a number of the competition entries. It made the most of site characteristics, using the sloping ground and elevation to advantage and creating an ornamental lake from former marl pits. It was designed with care having paths of appropriate scale and gradient for access and practical regard for soil, plants and expenditure. The scheme's winning appeal may have been its boldness and reflection of contemporary taste and fashion. John McClean was awarded the prize of £50 and instructed to supervise construction of the park. The cost was estimated to be £2,250 and this sum "included the necessary accommodation for archery, cricket, lawn tennis, bowling and recreation; also a fountain, a pavilion and a pretty sheet of ornamental water".

2.4.8 Nathaniel Eckersley, High Sheriff of Lancashire, ceremoniously opened the park on Monday August 6th 1878 although construction work was incomplete. The date was chosen to honour Nathaniel Eckersley as benefactor during his tenure as High Sheriff and also to enable a general holiday and celebration during the summer.

2.4.9 The transformation of the site was impressive, from fairly barren agricultural land blighted by mining to a park with trees, flowers, broad carriage drives, terraces, lake and fountain. The context and need for the park were graphically described : - *Wigan is a grim emporium of labour and industry; it is devoid of natural beauties and the atmosphere is polluted by the serpentine and cloud-like columns of smoke which are vomited from the huge chimneys by which we are surrounded. Hence*

it is all the more necessary that the town should be provided with a public place of resort.

2.4.10 The park was described in the following terms. Its location was regarded as having the advantage of being a few minutes walk from the very centre of the town and therefore accessible to all inhabitants. It was also of sufficient elevation to catch the prevailing westerly wind and sea breezes. It had three entrances, the principle entrance being marked by an imposing gateway leading to a carriage drive. The Swiss style park lodge adjacent to the main entrance was under construction when the park was opened. The carriage drive passed through the lower portion of the park, "treated as a geometrical garden, in the Italian style, and planted chiefly with rhododendrons and a variety of bedding plants." At the end of the garden was a circular space graced by a two-tier cast iron fountain made by the Coalbrookdale Company and then a flight of steps rising to a semi circular terrace with a second flight of steps leading to an upper terrace. The step copings terminated in pedestals ornamented by terra cotta vases filled with flowering plants. The terraces were still under construction when the park opened but visitors were able to enjoy views of the town from the upper terrace and anticipate the proposed pavilion for which designs had been prepared and tenders invited. A walk from the upper terrace led to the very highest point in the park where there was a flagpole given by Mr Smith.

2.4.11 The lake was described as being one of the most interesting features of the lower portion of the park, having two islands planted with shrubs and rhododendrons and a sheet of water presenting a serpentine appearance. Shrubs and rhododendrons were also planted at convenient intervals along the sloping banks and at one end of the lake Messrs Pulham and Sons were constructing a rockery at a cost of £500. "*The objective of the contractors is to give the work an air of artificial rudeness which will resemble a natural structure From the rockery there is a waterfall which is neat and ingenious.*"

Park Development

Reference the following editions of the Ordnance Survey:-

- Figure 5, 1847 (pre-park landscape)
- Figure 6, 1894
- Figure 7, 1908
- Figure 8, 1929

1878 - 1890

2.4.12 The clear contemporary account of the park layout correlates well with evidence provided by the Ordnance Survey of 1894. This shows the broad carriage drive from the main entrance turning to form the principle axis through a garden area to the fountain, steps, terraces and pavilion. The pavilion was opened in 1880, creating an elegant focus to the park. It was built as a place of shelter with the intention that it subsequently be equipped with seats and a refreshment bar. At its opening John McClean was toasted as the designer of the park and pavilion, but 'the Architect' was also toasted. This suggests that the conception was John McClean's but that W H Fletcher, designer of the lodge, probably undertook the detailed pavilion design. An early photograph of the pavilion shows the clear glass lantern with decorative roof trim, the veranda railings and the decorative metal finials of the pavilions. The roofs appear to be clad in a corrugated material.

2.4.13 At the pavilion's opening there was much talk of money well spent, sums exceeding the original estimate, but the builder Mr Preston said that the committee must be prepared for greater expenditure next year because while half the park is finished the other half is a wilderness. It seems that the formal garden, lake, terraces and pavilion formed virtually the extent of the park in 1880 and that the area north of the pavilion was intended for archery, cricket, lawn tennis and bowling and for the development of a second pond, as described at the park's opening. The 1894 OS shows the park boundaries well planted with evergreen and deciduous trees and shrubs but limited planting within the northern area where a series of paths,

some forming a circuit, have been laid out. A drinking fountain was installed on the main path north of the pavilion in 1880, donated by the Abstinence Society.

1890 – 1939

2.4.14 The bandstand is not shown on the 1894 OS although its design was approved, location chosen, structure completed and band performances invited by 1892. A memorial to the Volunteers and Yeomanry who fought in the Boer War was unveiled outside the pavilion in 1903, located above the steps from the fountain. In the same year the southernmost section of the Barley Brook was culverted allowing construction of the first bowling green and providing an area for recreation. An early photograph shows the popularity of rows of swings in the recreation area. Another photograph across the lake shows a low rail, probably metal, installed east of the lake at the edge of the path. A 'tennis ground' was created beside the lodge by 1908.

2.4.15 Further civic memorials followed in 1910 with a ceremony to unveil a statue to Sir Francis Sharp Powell MP, paid for by public subscription and in 1920 when two field guns and a tank were placed in the park. During the 1920's there was considerable development of recreation facilities with a second bowling green opened adjacent to the first in 1921 and an area north of the grammar school laid out with tennis courts. Most of the walks were resurfaced and the edges paved about this time. In 1922 the remainder of the Barley Brook was culverted and the ground levelled aided by financial assistance by the Government Unemployment Grants Committee, enabling plans for a further bowling green, putting green and tennis courts to be carried out in 1926. This work involved relocating the swings to a new site on the Gidlow Mill boundary.

2.4.16 The 1920's also saw an extension to the lodge, improvements to the bandstand, a change of use for the pavilion and increased provision for bowling and tennis. The construction of Mesnes House, an extension to the lodge, enabled increased accommodation for park staff. In 1923 the grass promenade around the bandstand was replaced with concrete, surfaced with asphalt and a retaining wall built. The addition of new shutters, a concrete floor and the extension of the area around the bandstand followed in 1927. The bandstand was a focus for regular performances in the park. The pavilion became a café in 1924 and shortly afterwards a balcony was constructed, presumably to accommodate more customers. There is no record of the fountain's removal but it seems likely that it was removed around 1921 when most of the walks were resurfaced and the edges neatly paved under Mr Barker's supervision. Evidence to support this view is that the bed replacing the fountain is edged with a double row of setts but is larger than the space occupied by the fountain. Also comparison of the path footprint at this point shows that the alignment has been altered on the outer side to accommodate the larger central feature and the outer edge of the path also has a sett edge. A shelter overlooking the formal gardens, with toilets to the rear, was added in 1936.

2.4.17 Although the development of recreation facilities resulted in major change in the park, the facilities had a limited impact on the historic layout and were consistent with original design intentions.

1939 – 1990

2.4.18 During the war railings and gates were removed, as part of the war effort and between 1941 and 1945 the park became a venue for 'holidays at home'. Two of the grass tennis courts, possibly those by the grammar school, were used for growing vegetables.

2.4.19 The post war period saw a renaissance in floral bedding, with over 200,000 plants raised annually in the greenhouses at the park, and the creation of three new garden areas. Up to 9,000

plants were used in a single bedding display of the town's coat of arms devised by Parks Superintendent Jack Ashton in 1948. The Pagett Memorial rose garden was laid out north of the grammar school in the 1950's with a sundial, removed in the 1970's, as the centrepiece of the design. In 1968 the assistant Park Superintendent created a rockery and heather garden between the pavilion and Bridgeman Terrace entrance. Blocks of limestone were used for the rockery and similar stones can be found set into the ground around the lake rockwork. It seems likely that these were also added in 1968 as outliers to the Pulham's original sandstone work of 1878. The 'Wigan Observer Garden of Fragrance' was laid out as a garden for the disabled on the formerly open grass area between the bandstand and bowling greens and opened in 1976.

2.4.20 The main gates were rescued from a scrap yard and reinstalled in 1950 but privet hedges replaced the boundary railings. The pavilion had electric lights installed in 1950 and underwent some renovation in 1972. The South African War Memorial statue was removed in 1968 due to its dilapidated condition. In 1985 the bandstand was refurbished following an initiative by the Civic Trust. The recreation field by Gidlow Mill was levelled in 1960 to facilitate holding of the summer show and in the 1980's a path was constructed across the field enabling direct access to the park for college students.

1990 – 2000

2.4.21 1990 marked the introduction of the play areas currently found in the park. The garden for the disabled was equipped with toddler play equipment and the disabled centre building became the play shack. North and east of the bandstand a large new play area was developed for older children, replacing the play area on the Gidlow Mill boundary. In 1994 a stone trail was developed as part of a summer play scheme.

2.4.22 The 1990's also saw the closure of public toilets, vandalism to the shelter and number 2 bowling pavilion, leakage from the lake leaving a muddy lake bed and growing concerns about personal security. Beginning in 1998 there has been an increasing programme of work to address issues of greatest public concern and to arrest and reverse the decline of the park. Initial work started with undertaking repairs to the lake. installing railings to limit erosion of the terrace slopes by the pavilion and pruning of the rhododendrons in the formal garden.

2.5 Mesnes Park Chronology

- 1837 Part of the Mesnes is set apart for recreation.
- 1871 The construction of a park is proposed and the land acquired on behalf of the corporation by Nathaniel Eckersley, Mayor of Wigan.
- 1877 The corporation hold a competition for the design of the park, a competition won by John McClean of Castle Donnington.
- 1878 The park is officially opened by Nathaniel Eckersley, then High Sheriff of Lancashire, the first municipal park in the borough, Park Superintendent Mr Joseph Pettitt.
- 1880 The Lodge is completed, the pavilion opened and a drinking fountain donated to the park by the Abstinence Society in memory of Mr Grant.
- 1887 A Mayoral Garden Party is held in the park to commemorate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee and four sycamore saplings planted by way of commemoration.
- 1890 A Bandstand design is approved and the Property, Market and Mesnes Park Committee meets in the park to decide upon a location. A mower is purchased because the park pony is fully occupied.
- 1892 A tender is received for painting the bandstand and the town clerk write to bands asking for gratuitous performances.
- 1892 Mr Cookson writes to the council to suggest that gymnastic apparatus is erected in the park.
- 1893 A urinal is provided near the grammar school entrance.
- 1894 The town clerk writes to other towns for particulars regarding swings and gymnasia in public parks. The gravel walks in the park are repaired.
- 1896 A peacock and hen are presented to the park.
- 1897 22nd June Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee celebrations include a procession of scholars, Friendly and Trade Societies to the park for a gala.
- 1898 The Wigan Corporation Act allows payment to be made to the bands.

- 1902 2nd July, the coronation of King Edward VII is marked by a civic celebration in the park and children receive a coronation medal from Mayor.
- 1903 A Memorial to the Volunteers and Yeomanry who fought in the Boer War is unveiled by Sir Francis Sharp Powell. It consists of a soldier made of Carrera marble holding a revolver and a Union Jack, both made of moulded copper, set on a plinth of rough-hewn red Aberdeen granite.
- 1903 A bowling green, bowling pavilion and recreational area are created alongside the railway following the culverting of a section of the Barley Brook.
- 1904 Swings are to be painted and railings erected to separate the sexes in the playground. The education committee agrees to use of the park by the school athletics association during afternoons and on Saturdays.
- 1907 A firework display is included in the annual Gala held in aid of Wigan Infirmary.
- 1910 The statue of Sir Francis Sharp Powell is unveiled. Walkden Avenue entrance is created at a cost of £10.
- 1911 Permission is given for the formation of a bowling club with no privileges beyond those of the general public.
- 1913 Mr Pettitt retires.
- 1914 The fountain basin is filled in, a rockery created around the outside and the whole surrounded by a grass border.
- 1915 Plants were placed in the pavilion and the Park Superintendent reports that curios from the shambles were placed on an island in the lake.
- 1916 The lake walls are repaired and the overflow raised. Ladies now use the bowling greens at the same time as the men. The park pony became lame and was put down.
- 1916-1918 Local elementary school children and grammar school boys helped cultivate vegetables on land near the Barley Brook.
- 1917 Estimate obtained for Tar McAdamising paths.
- 1918 Bandstand roof repaired in zinc.
- 1919 4 statues near the bowling greens donated by Mr Brown.

- 1920 Two German field guns captured by Lancashire troops are placed flanking the Boer War memorial and a first world war tank is placed on top of the hill near the flagpole facing towards the pavilion.
- 1921 The Mayor opens a second bowling green. The Parks Committee are congratulated on the provision of tennis courts. Improvements made under the direction of Mr Baker, Parks Superintendent include resurfacing most of the walks and neatly paving the edges.
- 1922 The remainder of the Barley Brook is culverted and the ground levelled with financial assistance from the Government Unemployment Grants Committee. Park by-laws are approved.
- 1922 Columbian pine sliding, folding, glazed screens are fitted to the bandstand and admission fees charged for bandstand seating.
- 1923 Plans for more tennis courts and a bowling green are proposed. These involve moving the swings from the proximity of the bowling greens to a location near the greenhouses. A large proportion of the cost of the work is to be made up by unemployment grants.
- 1923 The grass promenade around the bandstand is replaced by concrete covered with bitumen asphalt and a retaining wall is built. These improvements allow for dancing two hours per evening, July to September, on a trial basis.
- 1924 The pavilion is converted for use as a café. Mr Cassinelli is the tenant.
- 1925 A tender of £350 for constructing a balcony in the pavilion is accepted.
- 6 palms are donated to the pavilion.
 - A new greenhouse known as the chrysanthemum house is opened.
 - 8 cast iron vases are purchased for the steps.
- 1926 The lodge is extended, called Mesnes Park House. The Mayor opens the second pavilion, bowling greens and tennis courts and the swings are moved to a site near the depot area.
- 1926 New shutters are added to the Bandstand, the floor concreted and the area round the Bandstand to be extended.
- 1930 Mr Moyer of Bispham Brick and Terracotta Works offers 2 pairs of terracotta urns for the pavilion steps.

- 1932 The Chrysanthemum house is opened to the public.
- 1935 The tank and guns are removed for scrap because they were serving 'no ornamental or useful purpose'.
- 1936 A shelter with conveniences is erected near the lake.
- 1940 Two grass courts are to be used for growing vegetables.
- 1941 Gates and railings removed as part of the war effort and permission granted for Saturday night dancing.
- 1948 Mr John Ashton, Parks Superintendent uses 8-9000 plants in a bedding display of the town's coat of arms situated by the lodge.
- 1949 3rd August, a rose garden with sundial is opened in memory of Alderman James Pagett, Chairman of the Markets and Parks Committee for 37 years.
- 1950 The main gates are restored following their removal during the war and electric light is installed in the pavilion.
- 1951 Over 200,000 bedding plants are raised annually in the park.
- 1957 The main gates are damaged in a road accident and have to be removed for repair.
- 1960 The recreation field is levelled at a cost of £300 to facilitate the summer show.
- 1962 The original play ground on the recreation field is levelled to facilitate summer shows. Playground equipment is moved to hard surface adjoining the field and consists of a slide, roundabout, seesaw and swings.
- 1964 A local 'beat' group, the Avengers, plays in the park
- 1968 Decisions are taken to remove the Boer War statue and create a toddler play area on the single tennis court. The heather garden is laid out.
- 1972 The pavilion is renovated.
- 1976 Last carpet bedding.

- 1978 The Wigan Observer 'Garden of Fragrance' is opened.
Scheme to restore bandstand receives £500 prize in Pride of Place competition run by Civic Trust. Scheme to restore roof to original profile and undertake work to ironwork submitted by Wigan Civic Trust.
Plant a tree in '83 undertaken in park.
- 1985 Refurbishment of bandstand undertaken by Leisure department.
- 1990 Proposals to develop a new play area.
- 1994 Public toilets closed, dog waste bins installed and a stone trail developed during a summer play scheme.
- 1996 Mesnes Park included on the English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. The wetland feature between the bandstand and the lake is removed and re-turfed.
- 1998 Formation of Friends of Mesnes Park. £35,000 is spent on drainage improvements taking water to the lake, the pruning of rhododendrons and the installation of railings to the upper terrace.
- 1999 A community action day is held to repair a leak and restore water to the lake. Metro training undertake work to repair the lake edgings. A drainage scheme is carried out on the grass area north of the pavilion.
- 2000 Friends and rangers clear the rockwork.
- August - Mesnes Park Gala Day with exhibition on history of park by Friends of Mesnes Park.
 - Major user/non user surveys undertaken in park and surrounding area.
 - Lake Management group set up and 3-year plan developed.
 - First Jazz Event in Mesnes Park as part of Wigan International Jazz Festival.
 - Crazy golf re-opens after 10 year closure.
- 2001
- First free Music and Arts Festival for young people – Mesnes Power.
 - Winter bowling sessions start.
 - Café reopens with Frederick's as new tenants operating on a long term lease.
 - First Holocaust tree planting ceremony.
 - Park incorporated into Town Centre Christmas Parade.

- | | |
|------|---|
| 2002 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Toilet block demolished.• First phase of shelter restoration begins with ILM students.• Carpet bedding returns to Mesnes Park to commemorate the Queen's Jubilee extensive work to café roof completed. |
| 2003 | Restoration of Pagett's Memorial Rose Garden |
| 2004 | Carpet Bedding commemorating Samaritans. |
| 2004 | Relocation of the basketball court and Installation of the skate park. |
| 2005 | The second annual WOW festival attracted large numbers of visitors and became firmly established on the calendar of main events which take place each year. |
| 2006 | The Mesnes Conservation Area Appraisal completed. |

2.5.1 Reference figure 9, Historic Landscape
Change.

2.6 The Park as it is Used Today

Introduction

2.6.1 Information regarding the park as it is used today (reference Figure 10) has been derived from:

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- The findings of visitor user and non user surveys, consultations with members of the stakeholder group and ongoing involvement of the Friends group.
- The information contained in the Audience Development Plan for Mesnes Park.
- Discussions with officers and park staff who have knowledge of the day to day workings of the park.

2.6.2 With the exception of the lodge and the shelter, both of which are disused, the remaining features and facilities within the park continue to be enjoyed by its visitors most of whom are local to the area.

2.6.3 Passive informal recreation – simply walking in the park – and visits to the café appear to be most common reason for visiting the park. The bowling greens are well-used but the tennis courts are less popular. The play facilities are also well-used.

2.6.4 The intended use zoning inherent in the original layout, with passive recreation to the south and west of the pavilion and active recreation to the north, is still largely adhered to but there is a tendency for the formal gardens to be used by skateboarders and as a kick-about space which, when it occurs, is creating conflict with other users.

2.6.5 In terms of the facilities on offer there is a broad range of opportunities to suit all sectors of the population but opportunities for small children and those simply wishing to enjoy the open space

outweigh the opportunities those more interested in active recreation.

Existing Audience

2.6.6 The park receives just over 2 million visits per year based on the findings of the user and non-user survey carried out in 2000.

2.6.7 From this survey, broad estimates of total usage figures for the park have been calculated by the Marketing Section of WLCT.

2.6.8 Initial results from postal and on site questionnaires indicate that an estimated 1,718,464 visits are made to the park each year by the 22, 242 residents of Beech Hill and Swinley and that 91.4% of residents of these two wards use the park.

2.6.9 The 'Green Spaces to Enjoy' events programme, organised by the rangers, has been developed by the Park Services Team to encourage the public to be involved with the park. Events for families, older people, schools young people and special interest groups have recently included: -

- Natural history walks.
- Green spaces conservation volunteer programmes.
- Feed the birds and bird feeder making sessions.
- Health walks.
- Brass band performances
- Pumpkin carving session for families.
- Christmas decoration making session.
- Arts events.

2.6.10 The Trust and Festivals Team have worked in partnership with the Parks Team and other agencies to organise the WOW (Wigan One World) Festival, which has been held in Mesnes Park in August for the last two years. This Festival gives the local community the opportunity to express their culture through dance, music and food.

2.6.11 The layout of the park, the distribution of the entrances and the arrangement of the footpath network, which whilst exploiting the parks topography and providing access to all park facilities, does not readily permit ease of access between the various areas of the park for all users. Access to some facilities is further impeded by the need to negotiate steps.

2.6.12 Generally visitors appear to conclude that the park landscape is largely litter free and well maintained but that its buildings and features are becoming more and more shabby and uncared for.

Status of the Site

2.6.13 Notwithstanding these shortcomings Mesnes Park is still extremely popular and continues to live up to its reputation as Wigan's town park.

Barriers

2.6.14 Barriers which prevent, or deter, people visiting the park or taking part in its activities and programmes have been identified as: -

Organisational

- Lack of obvious staff presence and concerns of safety and vulnerability in some areas of the park.
- Lack of clearly defined areas for different users.
- Lack of publicity, information sources resulting in the Park only being used by those in the local vicinity.
- Confusion amongst the users regarding who delivers the services within the Park (Trust relatively new service).

Intellectual

- Little opportunity for engagement in educational programmes.
- Absence of stimulating information to raise awareness of the park and its history.

- Particular groups dominate areas of the Park at certain times of the day putting off other user groups.
- No particular facilities for young people.
- Nothing specific for older people.
- Family play areas in need of improvement.

Social and Cultural

- Low awareness of origin and heritage of the park.
- Lack of publicity and information material which reflects the wider community in terms of images and interpretation.

Physical

- No readily accessible parking bays adjacent to and within the park.
- Footpath surfaces in poor condition and the layout of the park raises issues for those with physical impairments.
- Access to buildings.
- Toilets are only accessible when the pavilion is open.
- Setting of the bandstand and lack of seating does not encourage audiences to stay for long period.
- Accessibility to the park from the town centre is poor with a dual carriageway forming a physical barrier.

Sensory

- No consideration of users with sensory impairments.
- Few ways for visitors to experience a visit or events through different senses.
- Little availability of different format information
- Hands-on opportunities are available in several of the spaces around the park but generally limited

to children – should be extended to adults.

Financial

- Not significant.

Under-represented Audiences

2.6.15 The park attracts a broad range of audiences with no single group being particularly under-represented. However, as well as the obvious difficulties the park presents for people with disabilities, facilities for children, families and young people need to be improved and the park has potential to attract greater numbers of people from all its user audiences but especially town centre workers, school groups and college students.

Access and Appreciation of the Heritage

2.6.16 The following summarises the access audit

Approach

- The lack of positive signage from the town centre to the park as well as at the main entrances inhibits ease of access from the surrounding area. There is a lack of visitor information, such as plan of the park and facilities and events programmed.
- The only car parking provided within the park is for disabled users and this has been temporarily closed due to misuse. Parking is difficult around the perimeter of the park because of demand for parking between park users, college students and visitors to the town centre.
- There is no designated drop off bay although it is possible for disabled visitors to be driven up to the entrance. Currently the Bridgeman Terrace layby is used as a drop off point but this presents hazards for pedestrians moving towards the entrance.

- The park is well served by public transport being within walking distance of the main town centre bus station.

Entrances

- At the main entrance to the park the wide sweeping kerbed carriageway crossing has no surface differentiation to denote a pedestrian crossing and in effect is a continuation of the junction carriageway. This inhibits access to the park both visually and physically as the tarmac surface is worn and reveals sections of the old stone thresholds. In addition this entrance has lost its original impact of view to the pavilion and the boarded up lodge all serve to deter visitors from entering the park.
- Other entrances do not offer views into the park due to the overgrown vegetation (no sense of arrival).

Steps

- Dalton steps to the south and west of the pavilion do not conform to current British Standards requirements in that there are no handrails or tactile warning strips at the top and bottom the steps.
- Other steps within the park prohibit / impede access to buildings / facilities such as the playshack, tennis / skatepark, café pavilion, bandstand, bowls pavilion and from the college.

Visitor Facilities

- Frederick's café – the current fit-out of the café in terms of its layout, furniture and décor does not cater for people with a variety of disabilities.
- The playshack cannot be used to anything like its full potential because of its poor condition.

- Toilets – toilets within the shelter have been removed and there is a lack of disabled toilet provision within pavilion. When the pavilion is closed there are no toilets accessible for park users.
- Bandstand – there is no provision for wheelchair usage.
- Tennis courts – poor pathways and no facilities for viewing sports.
- Bowls pavilion – door clearance not to standard.
- The lodge – not been audited due to it being boarded up but obvious access issues.
- Sir Francis Powell Statue – there is no historical information about the statue limiting understanding of its significance. It has become a tradition to rub the statues foot for luck. This requires visitors to step up onto the plinth which is a potential hazard (there has been an incident of someone slipping).

Circulation in general around the Park

- The current state of disrepair of footpaths presents problems for wheelchair users, pushchair users and ambulant disabled people. Some paths are too steep particularly in the vicinity of the pavilion – the area of greatest visitor use.
- The paths offer no suitable signage around the park, no support for people with visual or learning impairments and no interpretation.
- There are insufficient resting places throughout the park.
- Cycle routes – there is no provision for segregation of cycles and pedestrians in the park.

2.7 Existing Management and Maintenance

2.7.1 The park is currently managed by WLCT's Environmental Management and Sustainability, Parks Services and maintained by Grounds Maintenance Service Teams.

Grounds Maintenance Services

2.7.2 A detailed specification standard exists for all maintenance operations carried out in the park. (refer to Management and Maintenance Plan for full details). Gardeners carry out the routine maintenance work (as per the schedules contained in the specification) and additional works are specified and monitored by the Parks & Open Spaces Officer responsible for the site.

2.7.3 Currently, there are four full-time members of staff based in the park, which include one leading hand, two duty gardeners and one gardener. Their regular hours are 35.5 hours per week in winter and 43 hours in summer, Monday – Thursday 7.30am – 17.00pm and 7.30am – 15.00pm on Fridays. Hours are varied to accommodate events. During the months March- September, two additional full-time staff assist in maintaining the park. Staff are responsible for routine work including litter collection, grass cutting, edging, weeding and pruning. The duty gardeners are also responsible for carrying out a visual inspection of the park on a daily basis (7 days). They report and respond to any defects identified.

2.7.4 The site-based staff are supported by a mobile team of four men who undertake work such as herbicide applications, tree work and bedding out. The area manager is responsible for the staff in the park and he reports to The Grounds Maintenance Manager.

2.7.5 At the time of the preparation of this Conservation Management Plan the structure of the grounds maintenance services and parks and development service teams within the

Environmental Management and Sustainability division are under review. Details of the current and proposed structures will be incorporated into the Management and Maintenance Plan.

Parks Services Team

2.7.6 WLCT is committed to maintaining a high quality park with management that will ensure the establishment and long term success of the proposals for Mesnes Park. This service is delivered through the well-defined management structure. There have been recent changes with the Executive Management Team, with Environment & Sustainability appointing a new Executive Director (Jan 2004).

2.7.7 Currently the Parks Manager (acting) has overall responsibility for Mesnes Park along with the other parks and green spaces within the Borough, and is supported by a team of: -

- Two Parks and Open Space Officers
- Three Parks Community Liaison Officer
- One Mesnes Park Development Officer
- Five rangers

2.7.8 Officers are based in the Parks and Cemeteries offices approximately quarter of a mile from Mesnes Park, enabling good daily communication and interaction between staff. The rangers based in Mesnes Park provide ranger services for the west of the borough.

2.7.9 The Park Services Manager manages the capital and revenue budgets and is responsible for delivering the service plan.

2.7.10 The Parks Community Liaison Officers are responsible for day to day contact with user groups, community groups, panels and committees, co-ordinate the events programme and organise many of the events in liaison with others.

2.7.11 As the project has developed, the role of the Community Liaison Officers has grown in Mesnes Park, developing and maintaining links with the local community. In particular they liaise with the Friends group and attend their meetings and are members of Township Community Safety Group where they have regular contact with the police and youth services. Their relationship with other park staff, concessionaires and users is good and they are aware of issues and accessible and responsive to concerns of members of the public.

2.7.12 The Parks and Open Spaces Officer is responsible for service procurement and managing the maintenance contract. Their work includes monitoring, organising the purchase and installation of new park furniture, initiating and supervising minor works and managing day to day maintenance issues in addition to liaison with contractors on site.

2.7.13 Currently the rangers patrol the park as part of a broader role that covers approximately 60 other sites. Their hours are seasonably adjusted and are managed on a 4 day shift system. There is ranger cover from 08.20am throughout the year with finishing times seasonally adjusted from 4.30pm in winter to 10.00pm in summer.

2.7.14 Rangers carry out a building check on a daily basis and respond to any defects and minor repairs that are required in the park, as specified by The Parks Community Liaison Officer. Any issues that arise from the building check are processed through the Maintenance & Repair system.

Playground Maintenance Team

2.7.15 The playground maintenance team is managed under the remit of the Policy & Regeneration Executive Director. The team is responsible for inspecting the play equipment once a week and follow their inspection procedure. An independent inspection is carried out twice per year.

Repair arrangements

2.7.16 Since the establishment of Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust, Wigan Council is considered the Landlord and the Trust as the tenant.

2.7.17 Wigan Council has developed a Corporate Property Maintenance Fund (CPMF) to service and maintain its properties. Approximately £550,000 is allocated to Leisure Trust properties every year for planned works. A property management company, Norfolk Property Services, is an 'arms length' organisation which manages the funds on behalf of Wigan Council. The fund is divided into three principal areas: -

- Reactive maintenance fund.
- Planned maintenance spend.
- Servicing.

2.7.18 Further details can be found in the Management and Maintenance Plan.

2.7.19 The current budget annual maintenance budget for routine soft works maintenance is approximately £102,000. Each character zone within the park is maintained by reference to a specific inventory of maintenance operations which are reference in an inventory zone plan full details for which can be found in the Management and Maintenance Plan.

2.8 Consultation

2.8.1 A considerable programme of consultation has been carried out over recent years (from 1998 onwards) to establish community and stakeholder aspirations for the future of the park and to inform the preparation and prioritising of development projects. The consultations have included: -

- Consultations carried out by in respect of the draft restoration scheme proposals prepared by Landscape Design Associates in 2000.
- Stakeholder consultation through interviews and a staff/stakeholder workshop.
- User and non-user survey carried out by Wigan Council's Marketing Section in 2000.
- Consultation with young people
- Regular meetings with the Friends of Mesnes Park.
- Ongoing visitor surveys.
- Citizens Panel survey on a regular basis.
- Consultation with 'Youth In Action' in 2004.

2.8.2 There has been extensive consultation over the past five years about responses to and future priorities for Mesnes Park. There are some very clear themes and issues which appear consistently through consultation. The key conclusions to be drawn from the research are:

- Users of the Park are generally local and many are regular users. Visits tend to be of a short duration for recreation, social use (especially with children or grandchildren), relaxation or dog walking. Users express high levels of satisfaction overall with the Park, but highlight particular areas for attention.

- Security and safety improvements are a priority across all groups, whether old or young. This is particularly an issue at night.
- There are aspirations to make greater use of the existing facilities, including the café (e.g. through readings or parties) and other buildings (providing exhibition space or places to host events). In addition, there is potential scope to enhance use of facilities (such as the Stone Trail or wildlife features) for education purposes, trails, orienteering and similar.
- Whilst safety improvements and improved facilities are high on the list of improvements people would like to see in the Park, the level of interest in additional events indicates that people are ambitious about what the Park can stand for, and would like to use the space more often. Events people were interested in included music and drama events, fetes, funfairs and sports and fitness events.
- There is much potential for engaging more people through closer partnerships with Mesnes Park's immediate neighbours: Drumcroon Arts Centre, Thomas Linacre outpatients building and the college. There could be a range of courses at the college which could be supported by activities in Mesnes Park, as well as encouraging college students to use the space more for recreation.
- The potential for the Park to be used to support improvements to people's health is supported by users and stakeholders.

- Drives to engage a wider variety of people with activity in the town and to attract more people from outside could be linked to the Park, for instance, co-programming events which flow into the Park (e.g. multicultural events, along the lines of the WOW Festival, or links to the Jazz Festival). In addition, there could be potential to tie in visits to the Park with the anticipated increases in numbers of shoppers with improvements in central Wigan.

SECTION 3.0 : SIGNIFICANCE

3.1 Criteria for Assessment and Methodology

3.1.1 In order to establish policies for Mesnes Park it is first necessary to establish the significance and value of the site. This entails identifying all the different ways that visitors value the Park and assessing the importance of individual elements in their own right, in relationship with each other, and their relationship with the site as a whole.

3.1.2 The Gazetteer (reference Appendix III) identifies the key elements of the Park (buildings and structures) and provides a summary description and assessment of condition, any statutory protection and an indication of significance to the heritage and vulnerability.

3.1.3 Whilst this establishes the merit and relative importance of individual elements it does not address their overall significance to design of the Park as a whole and the benefits for Park users.

3.1.4 The Park and its various elements are therefore now assessed in terms of aesthetics and design; social and economic aspects; educational and environmental potential; and overall group value.

3.1.5 Each of these topic areas is considered in terms of the following five point scale: -

- i) **High Significance** – Demonstrates specific relevance at a National or uniquely Regional / Local level.
- ii) **Moderate Significance** – not Nationally relevant but demonstrating regional/local identity or fulfilling user criteria.

iii) **Slight Significance** – of limited value and or narrow relevance.

iv) **Neutral Significance** – neither contributes to nor detracts from the Park and its use.

v) **Negative or Intrusive** – Detracts from or adversely effects the value / appearance / use of the Park.

3.1.6 The above scale of significance has been applied to Mesnes Park and its key elements and components in terms of the following ways in which it has been identified that people value the asset. A particular value should not necessarily be regarded as being superior to another and a lower designation of significance does not necessarily imply that a particular feature or component is expendable.

a) **Aesthetic** – this relates to the visual appeal of the Park and the appearance of buildings structures and landscape features within it. Aesthetic value is linked to the character of the Park, its unique identity, all its component parts and the overall character in the context of Mesnes Park as a town centre park and a key asset of the Borough.

b) **Historical** – structures, features or components of the landscape which have relevance to the original design, the understanding of the past and / or are representative of an important historical event or tradition.

c) **Associational** – this refers to the manner in which events, living traditions, ideas, beliefs or cultural values have an influence on the fabric and use of the Park.

d) **Community / Social and Cultural** –

this addresses those elements that give value to the site as a community resource or visitor destination. It refers to the value placed on the Park by the various sections of the local community and people of differing age ranges. It is an expression of the Parks value as a recreational facility and leisure attraction.

e) **Economic** – the economic impact or benefits that have been, are, or maybe generated by the Park facilities.

f) **Educational / Interpretative / Research Potential** – those parts or aspects of the Park which have value in providing interpretative opportunities for education in its widest sense as well as relevance for schools and the National Curriculum. Increasing understanding and meeting the needs of local communities as well as visitors are particularly important in conveying an understanding of the Parks history and wider relevance.

g) **Environmental** – in terms of the physical environment this could include geological, ecological and hydrological values as expressed at a local or national level due to rarity, typicality or attractiveness. Less tangible attributes include a sense of open space, fresh air and tranquillity all of which are expressed as aspects of the landscape of the Park.

h) **Group Value** – where individual features, or components, of the Park combine to create a discernable tract of landscape or characteristic of the Park they may have added value over and above their individual merit. The relationship with other parks / open spaces, within the Borough, is also a consideration.

Comparator Sites

3.1.7 Mesnes Park is readily identifiable as the main town centre park of Wigan and the 'flagship' Park of the Borough. As part of the assessment of significance, a brief comparison has been made with a selection of other parks with similar status, in towns in the North of England, with a similar history to that of Wigan.

3.2 Assessment of Significance

Aesthetic

3.2.1 Aesthetic values are assessed as being of HIGH SIGNIFICANCE due to the visual and spatial qualities of the park and completeness of its distinctive original layout; the focal point of the pavilion, location and appearance of the key buildings and features, ornamental bedding displays and the rose garden. Reference Figure 11, Visual Analysis and Spatial Qualities.

Historical

3.2.2 The Park as a whole is assessed as being of HIGH SIGNIFICANCE by virtue of the strength of its design, its local uniqueness, its relevance to the history of Wigan and its listed status. The Pavilion is an iconic feature.

Associational

3.2.3 Associational values are assessed as being of MODERATE SIGNIFICANCE in respect of the Powell Statue, bandstand, pavilion and Pulham's rockwork.

Community / Social and Cultural

3.2.4 Community, Social and Cultural Values have been assessed as being of HIGH SIGNIFICANCE. Inherent in the original layout of the Park are opportunities for events and activities, passive recreation, sports and play. These have been utilised by a diverse range of visitors both in terms of age range and social/cultural background.

Economic

3.2.5 The economic benefits are currently assessed as being of SLIGHT / MODERATE SIGNIFICANCE due to the successful operation of the café facility within the pavilion. There is the opportunity to generate further economic benefits by the provision of additional facilities (potentially in association with the café operators) which will enhance the benefits to users without detracting from the inherent qualities of the Park. The potential economic benefit is therefore assessed as being of HIGH SIGNIFICANCE.

Educational / Interpretative / Research Potential

3.2.6 The Park is assessed as being of SLIGHT / MODERATE SIGNIFICANCE because of the under-use of the open space resource. However, due to the proximity of the adjacent college the educational significance has the potential to be HIGH. The Park demonstrates opportunities to embrace all aspects of the National Curriculum and provide opportunities for life-long learning. These need to be developed through programmes for training, interpretation and accessibility.

Environmental

3.2.7 Due to the lack of habitat diversity and insufficient pro-active measures for habitat diversity the current ecological value is assessed as being of SLIGHT SIGNIFICANCE. A programme of restoration, reintroduction of missing landscape features and proactive management, to diversify habitats, could upgrade the ecological benefit to HIGH SIGNIFICANCE.

Group Value

3.2.8 The group value of the park as a whole has been assessed as being of MODERATE SIGNIFICANCE due to the development of links with other open spaces and the proximity of the Park with the town centre. The park has the potential to be of HIGH SIGNIFICANCE if barriers to access, principally the ring road, can be addressed. Within the park the group value of the inter-related features, principally the pavilion, Dalton steps and

bandstand, is considered to be of HIGH SIGNIFICANCE.

3.3 Comparator Sites

3.3.1 The Park is of HIGH SIGNIFICANCE within the Borough because of its distinctive design, iconic features and location. Within the North West the Park is viewed as being of MODERATE SIGNIFICANCE containing many features typically found in urban parks. The Park has limited appeal as a borough wide facility and is not seen as a regional destination. The potential significance is viewed as being HIGH if the Park is made to be a more appealing visitor destination through improved 'offer' and a greater range of higher profile events.

3.4 Statement of Significance

Design and Layout of the Park

3.4.1 Although the designer of Mesnes Park is known to be John McClean, he is not a renowned to be an accredited park designer. However, as a result of quality of the Park design, which takes advantage of the landform and utilises commonplace design themes (e.g. formal avenue, focal points and lake) in a manner which maximises the potential of the site for active and passive recreation, the Park is assessed as being of HIGH SIGNIFICANCE in terms of its local uniqueness.

3.4.2 The area designated for events, sports and active recreation, which formed a second phase of works, was skilfully segregated from the more passive and tranquil area containing abundant horticultural displays by a raised area surmounted by the pavilion and adjacent bandstand.

3.4.3 Despite segregation in terms of activity the layout of the park exploits the local topography and uses perimeter structural planting to integrate the two phases of construction into a continuous sequence of open spaces linked by interconnected by a well considered footpath network. This underlying design structure of the original park provides abundant scope for meeting the needs of today's users.

3.4.4 The value of the Park, as a whole, to the National Heritage, is reflected in its Grade 2 Listed Status on the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens in England.

Key Elements and Components

3.4.5 This section explores the significance and merit of the various key elements and components which give expression to the overall design.

Buildings and Structures

3.4.6 The buildings and structures assessed as being of HIGH SIGNIFICANCE are the Lodge, entrance gateway, pavilion building, pavilion steps Powell Statue and the Bandstand, all of which are listed Grade 2 and are important components of the original park layout. Although not listed the rockwork at the northern end of the lake is an important original feature and is therefore also considered to be of HIGH SIGNIFICANCE.

3.4.7 None of the buildings and structures are assessed as being of MODERATE SIGNIFICANCE, however the shelter forms an important link between the lake and the pavilion and were it not for its condition and lack of positive use, compounded by the negative visual contribution it currently makes, it would have been assessed as moderate.

3.4.8 Buildings and structures assessed as being of SLIGHT SIGNIFICANCE are the playshack, shelter and bowls pavilion due their appearance and the fact that they are not original to the park.

3.4.9 Had the fountain on the main access not being removed it would have been assessed as being of HIGH SIGNIFICANCE due to the fact that, as well as being an important feature in its own right, it would have provided an intermediate focus between the pavilion and the main entrance at a point which is an important footpath intersection. Other missing structures / features would have been assessed being of SLIGHT SIGNIFICANCE.

Lake

3.4.10 The lake formed an important component of the original design of the park as a whole but it not a prominent visual feature in the wider scene and therefore is assessed as being of MODERATE SIGNIFICANCE.

3.4.11 As a local feature in the western part of the park, the lake together with Pulham's rockwork and waterfall, is considered to be of HIGH SIGNIFICANCE.

Entrances and Boundaries

3.4.12 The main gate is, despite its current condition, assessed as being of HIGH SIGNIFICANCE due to its prominence when viewed from, and its association with, the town centre.

3.4.13 The remaining entrances are considered to be of MODERATE SIGNIFICANCE in terms of location and SLIGHT SIGNIFICANCE due to their appearance.

3.4.14 The park boundary hedgerows are assessed as SLIGHT / NEUTRAL SIGNIFICANCE because, although they delineate the park boundary and are of reasonable appearance they do not replicate the imposing grandeur of the original boundary railings, not do they provide adequate security.

Footpaths

3.4.15 The hierarchy of formal and informal footways are an integral component of the original design and represent the structure of the original park layout. However, in terms of access for all / DDA they do not provide ease of access to all areas of the Park. This element has therefore been assessed as being of MODERATE SIGNIFICANCE.

Vegetation

3.4.16 The trees and shrubs are assessed as being of MODERATE SIGNIFICANCE because they play a key role in defining the perimeter of the park and the structure of its green spaces, whilst forming a backdrop to the pavilion. In terms of horticultural and ecological merit the significance of the parks trees and shrubs either individually or in groups is considered to be SLIGHT.

3.4.17 The ornamental bedding in the formal gardens is an important component of the gardens both in terms of layout of the design and the content of the individual beds. As the most prominent feature of the gardens their significance is assessed as HIGH. The restored rose garden is assessed as MODERATE.

Activities

3.4.18 The distribution and range of activities, both active and passive, and their relationship to the design of the park is assessed as being of MODERATE SIGNIFICANCE.

| SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY | | | | |
|--|-------------------|---|--|----------|
| QUALITIES & VALUES | Significance | KEY ELEMENTS & COMPONENTS | Significance | |
| Aesthetic | HIGH | Buildings & Structures Pavilion Bandstand Lodge Dalton Steps Main Entrance Gates Powell Monument | HIGH | |
| Historical | HIGH | | | |
| Associational | MODERATE | | None | MODERATE |
| Community / Social & Cultural | HIGH | | Bowls pavilion Playshack Shelter | SLIGHT |
| Economic | SLIGHT / MODERATE | | Depot | NEUTRAL |
| Educational / Interpretative / Research Potential | SLIGHT / MODERATE | | None | NEGATIVE |
| Environmental | SLIGHT | | Lake | MODERATE |
| Group Value | MODERATE | Footpaths | MODERATE | |
| | | Vegetation | MODERATE | |
| | | Activities | MODERATE | |

SECTION 4.0 : ISSUES OF VULNERABILITY AND CONFLICT

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 In order to formulate policies to conserve the historic fabric of the Park whilst addressing the needs of its users it is necessary to examine the threats and vulnerabilities to the Park and their potential impact on the significance of its attributes and key features.

4.2 Issues of Vulnerability and Conflict

4.2.1 Issues are identified which apply to: -

- a. The Park as a Whole.
- b. Specific features.

The Park as a Whole

The Age of the Park.

4.2.2 The fabric of the Park has, due to its age and continuous use, exceeded all reasonable expectations of the design-life of its components. The popularity of the Park as a town centre attraction and the wear and tear resulting from the high number of visitors is accelerating a process of decline.

Physical Access

4.2.3 The absence of a secure boundary creates problems of management and visitor control which also leads to problems of anti-social behaviour and vandalism.

4.2.4 There is a conflict between dividing access for all users and retaining the integrity and visual appeal of the parks historic features in the context of a design solution which deliberately exploits topography and the use of steps. Resolution of this conflict can only be achieved by a) defining accessible less direct routes to the various features

and facilities around the park and b) considering the use of interventions such as handrails, hazard warning paving, which in themselves may detract from the heritage asset.

4.2.5 Lack of facilities / restricted access for disabled users is particularly evident in the park where restrictions of varying degree apply to all the facilities, the extreme example of which is the complete lack of toilet facilities. Whilst this is currently being addressed other access issues cannot be resolved without affecting the historic fabric of the park.

4.2.6 Of particular concern is the conflict between provision for parking facilities in the park for disabled users, the resultant misuse by non- disabled users and conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians all of which has resulted in the withdrawal of the provision of any parking facility.

Intellectual Access

4.2.7 Intellectual access and interaction is currently very limited which is restricting opportunities for optimising the visitor enjoyment and economic potential of the Park.

4.2.8 There is a lack of signage information about the park and its history generally.

Inadvertent Damage and insensitive Repair and Alteration

4.2.9 A lack of understanding of the design layout and heritage value of the park, coupled with a lack of resources for infrastructure maintenance and repair has exacerbated the dilution of the design quality and visual variety of the park. Ultimately this has been expressed in the loss of features intrinsic to the original concept.

4.2.10 Inadvertent damage through misuse is relatively minor but the loss of building features and functions, for example the removal of the toilet facilities from the shelter and its subsequent closure, is detracting from the heritage asset.

4.2.11 There are also examples of the insensitive repair and restoration which is not to a conservation standard, in key buildings and features.

Inappropriate Development, Reconstruction or Restoration

4.2.12 No inappropriate development issues to consider.

Inappropriate Use / Re-use

4.2.13 Decline in the quality and appeal of the formal / active recreation facilities, in tandem with issues of antisocial behaviour, has blurred the distinction between the active and passive zones of the park, to the extent that there can be conflict between the tranquil enjoyment of the formal gardens and their misuse for ball games and skateboarding.

4.2.14 The current lack of use of the lodge is making this important building increasingly vulnerable. Considerations for its reuse must, in terms of the covenant, focus on uses that on in some way relevant to the park. Earlier considerations regarding the potential sale of the building, or its use for none park-related activities, for example commercial offices, must not be considered further until viable park related opportunities have been more fully explored.

Environment and Landscape

4.2.15 Lack of investment over the life of the park in the maintenance of the structural landscape – the trees and shrubs which define the structure and internal spaces and provide a backdrop for the most important buildings and features – has created a situation in which there could be a substantial loss of vegetation cover as the planting reaches maturity. Without adherence to a planned programme of tree and shrub removal and replacement to create

diversity of age and structure it will not be possible to sustain the intended landscape structure without wholesale replanting, which would then need time to mature to create the desired effect.

Context and Setting

4.2.16 The difficulties of access from the town centre and problems of on street parking by park users, college students and town centre visitors is an issue which will continue to affect levels of usage of the park unless these conflicts can be addressed.

Statutory and Non-statutory Protection

4.2.17 Despite the listing of the park and some of its key features and the fact that the park constitutes the greater park of the Mesnes Park Conservation Area, the further deterioration of key elements such as the lodge, pavilion and shelter, remains a possibility.

Key Features

The Lodge

4.2.18 In providing a positive end-use which would be complementary to the park there will be conflicts between accessibility (both to the building and within it) and the possibility of amendments to this visually important structure. The immediate setting of the building may also be detrimentally affected by improving access to it.

Dalton Steps

4.2.19 The visual importance and quality of the steps could be compromised by health and safety and access for all measures (such as hand rails and tactile paving) in a manner which would also compromise the integrity of the setting of the pavilion building. Alternative access arrangements utilising footpath routes of suitable gradients may have to be promoted.

Bandstand

4.2.20 In the case of the bandstand the provision of changes to meet the current health and safety access standards (hand rails, ramps, tactile paving) could have a negative impact on the visual quality of this structure to cater for what would be relatively intermittent usage.

Issues of Conflict.

4.2.21 The identified issues of conflict all relate to the manner in which the Park is used and can be summarised as: -

- a) The desire for unrestricted access around the perimeter of the Park and the need to regulate access and circulation to better manage events, improve security and monitor the effectiveness of the Park as a safe and welcoming environment.
- b) The amount of perimeter parking and the resulting conflict between the needs of visitors, residents, pedestrians and motorists.
- c) Legislation and best practice guidelines for measures to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act may result in solutions which are detrimental to the heritage asset.
- d) Conflicts between the various activities, uses and enjoyment of the Park when it is particularly busy and at specific major events.

4.2.16 The issues of vulnerability and conflict revolve around three fundamental considerations: -

- i) Physical condition.
- ii) Appreciation and use.
- iii) Management and upkeep.

4.2.17 The vision and policies for the conservation, restoration and reuse of the park, as described in the next section, address these considerations.

SECTION 5.0 : VISION AND POLICIES

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 The policies have been developed following an understanding of the Park and its significance and identifying its most vulnerable elements. The following policy aims have been identified as those needed to: -

- a) Inform the preparation of a capital works restoration scheme.
- b) To improve interpretation and access and identify and set aside appropriate levels of resources to achieve desired objectives.
- c) To identify resource needs and prescriptive management guidelines to sustain the fabric of the Park and enhance its day to day management and maintenance.

Vision Statement

5.1.2 Through listening to the views of others and a process of informed and thoughtful discussion, the project team have developed a vision for the Mesnes Park in the 21st century.

5.1.3 Their vision is for a town centre park with safe access for all, where the integrity of the historic landscape is conserved alongside the provision of good contemporary facilities, high standards of horticulture plus educational and training opportunities.

Themes

5.1.4 The main themes are to:

- Increase / improve use of the park.
- The conservation and appreciation of the historic landscape, buildings and structures.
- Community involvement.
- Create a safe, secure and welcoming environment.

- Sensitively integrate high quality contemporary facilities within the historic framework.
- Enable safe access for all, especially for the disadvantaged and people with disabilities
- Improve links with the town centre's commercial and civic areas
- Provide for educational use and training opportunities.
- Restore horticultural quality and promote ecological diversity.
- Increase use of the park for active and passive recreation, communication and events.

5.2 Primary Policy Aims

5.2.1 To obtain and communicate to key stakeholders, managers and staff, as full an understanding of the Park as possible in order to be better able to decide on appropriate courses of action.

5.2.2 To conserve, maintain and enhance the historical, cultural and environmental significance of the Park.

5.2.3 To improve public appreciation and understanding of the Park without diminishing its significance.

5.2.4 To enhance visitor access whilst effectively addressing the needs and concerns of local residents.

5.2.5 To ensure that any physical works are based on a full understanding of their potential impacts on the significance and historic character of the Park.

5.2.6 To ensure the appropriate use of all the areas of the Park and the buildings within it with minimal alteration to their fabric.

5.3 Policy Objectives - Physical Condition

5.3.1 To have a presumption in favour of retaining and conserving all buildings, structures and features of historical significance.

5.3.2 To repair and restore the fabric of the Park without detriment to the character of its buildings, structures, features and landscape.

5.3.3 To limit the degree of intervention to the minimum needed to properly satisfy requirements for the health and safety of park users and staff and the desire to provide appropriate facilities for the benefit of all of the park users.

5.3.4 To draw upon the skills and resources of appropriate professionals and crafts people to ensure a high quality of design and standard of work.

5.3.5 Where repairing and restoring existing structures to use high quality materials in the manner of the original construction. Where new facilities are proposed to deploy contemporary solutions utilising materials compatible with the character and fabric of the traditional materials used in the park.

5.3.6 There is a presumption against the introduction of features inappropriate to the designed layout and the removal of historically significant materials and features from the originally intended location.

5.3.7 To restructure and manage the landscape in a way that sustains its historic significance whilst enhancing the natural environment.

5.3.8 Where currently incomplete or unavailable establish a proper understanding of the nature conservation value and natural history of the site and prepare / commission a habitat management plan to explore ways of diversifying and enhancing its ecological value without detriment to its historic fabric.

5.4 Policy Objectives - Appreciation and Use

5.4.1 Initiate a programme of information and interpretation during any site works, events and activities to explain what is happening and increase awareness and understanding.

5.4.2 Visitor management techniques will be employed to combat current visitor access issues, wear and tear and fluctuations in the number of visitors.

5.4.3 To maintain and encourage community involvement and support.

5.4.4 To work with key stakeholders to deliver the restoration and effective management of the park.

5.4.5 All employees, suppliers, contractors and tenants will meet nationally agreed standards of awareness and performance.

5.4.6 To continue to develop an agreed strategic vision for the park between all Partners and Stakeholders.

5.4.7 To review the Local Plan in respect of planning and development initiatives to ensure the protection of the Park and safeguard its future use and to adopt this document as supplementary planning guidance.

5.4.8 Parties involved with site management will seek to include stakeholder and community representatives in the use, management and conservation of the Park.

5.4.9 Develop a range of mitigation strategies to combat issues relating to anti-social behaviour.

5.4.10 To develop and enhance physical, sensory and intellectual access opportunities in line with local and national policies.

5.4.11 Ensure compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act and establish an inclusive access strategy.

5.4.12 Support and facilitate sustainable forms of transport.

5.4.13 Enhance visitor satisfaction, perception of place and sense of arrival.

5.4.14 To ensure that the provision of any physical barriers e.g. gates, will be guided by principles of conservation and inclusive visitor management.

5.4.15 Develop initiatives to enable and encourage access for all and lifelong learning whilst ensuring that aspects relating to interpretation, outreach and education will not depend upon unduly intrusive interpretative media.

5.4.16 Develop a programme of community involvement and further strengthen links with the community to ensure that the value of the park and the benefits of its use and enjoyment are recognised and supported by local people.

5.4.17 Develop a programme of training for staff and local volunteers to learn and develop appropriate skills in order that they can assist with the management, maintenance and interpretation of the park.

5.5 Policy Objectives - Management and Upkeep

5.5.1 Identify and appoint an appropriately qualified and experienced Park Management Team to have responsibility for managing and developing the site, including all aspects of use, conservation, interpretation, development, consultation and community involvement to achieve a strategic vision for the park.

SECTION 6.0 : PROPOSALS

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 In developing the restoration scheme proposals the guiding principles have been to: -

- Afford a level of protection from alteration or removal to the landscape features, buildings and other heritage assets commensurate with the levels of 'significance' as identified in this Conservation Management Plan.

- Heritage assets identified as being of 'high' significance are to be protected and restored without recourse to any adverse changes.

- Heritage assets identified as being of 'moderate' significance will be protected against any changes which could adversely affect their essential character or important features. Some alteration to adapt to new uses will be considered acceptable providing that they support the objectives of the Conservation Management Plan.

- Heritage assets identified as being of 'slight' significance could be the subject of substantial alteration or removal / replacement providing the proposals were of sufficient design quality and supported the objective of the Conservation Management Plan.

- Comply with the objectives of the Conservation Management Plan by developing a strategic vision for the restoration of the Park which embraces the Trust's and Council's aspirations for the

restoration of Mesnes Park in recognition of its heritage, amenity, cultural and social assets, whilst addressing the issues of vulnerability and conflict identified in the Conservation Management Plan.

6.2 Strategic Vision

6.2.1 The Vision for the restoration of Mesnes Park finds expression in the physical protection, conservation and repair of its fabric but draws upon the findings of the Audience Development Plan (ADP), Access Plan (AP) and Training Plan (TP) to promote a better understanding of the assets of the Park and provide for a more coherent approach to its use and enjoyment in which the various components become more mutually supportive, contribute to the renaissance of the whole park and provide benefits to the communities which form the parks principal catchment area.

6.2.2 The strategic vision distils into the following key considerations: -

- Improve and more effectively manage access and circulation, repair the fabric of the Park and improve the physical condition of its landscape.
- Reinstate / replace the missing features that give cohesion to the original design.
- Investigate appropriate uses for the underused buildings.
- Reinforce the distinctive character of the active passive areas.
- Improve visitor involvement, awareness and appreciation.

6.3 Heritage Impact Assessment

6.3.1 The tables overleaf summarise the perceived impacts on the heritage asset of the works that have been identified as being required to conserve the park and improve its use.

6.3.2 The perceived impacts have been addressed when formulating the restoration proposals. However, it is recognised that further detailed work is required to satisfy some of the identified measures to avoid risk.

6.3.4 The following table summarises the impact on the heritage of the proposals identified as being required to restore Mesnes Park.

| | | Heritage Impact Assessment Table | | | |
|------------|---|---|--|--|---|
| Ref | Proposal | Significance | Possible Risks | Information Required | Measures to Avoid Risk |
| 1 | PAVILION BUILDING Repair & refurbish to conservation standard & provide improved usage of appropriate facilities. | HIGH | Access for all provision may impact on facades & internal layout. | Outline scheme for evaluation. | Agree required improvements with Conservation & Access Officers. |
| 2 | BANDSTAND Repair & refurbish to conservation standard & enhance PA facilities. | HIGH | Access for all provision (musicians / performers) may impact on appearance of structure. | Outline scheme for evaluation. | Agree required improvements with Conservation & Access Officers. Appoint ironwork specialist for restoration work. |
| 3 | DALTON STEPS Repair & refurbish to conservation standard & provide safe access. | HIGH | Access for all provision may impact upon appearance. | Detailed condition survey and outline scheme for evaluation. | Agree required improvements with Conservation & Access Officers. Appoint specialist stonework conservator for restoration work. |
| 4 | ENTRANCE LODGE Repair & refurbish to conservation standard & provide appropriate new use. | HIGH | Access for all provision may impact on facades & internal layout. Inappropriate use may detract from park. | Options appraisal and outline scheme for evaluation. | Agree required improvements with Conservation & Access Officers. Favour viable option which benefits park users. |

| | | Heritage Impact Assessment Table | | | |
|--------------|---|--|---|--|--|
| Ref | Proposal | Significance | Possible Risks | Information Required | Measures to Avoid Risk |
| 5 | PARK GATES/ ENTRANCES | | | | |
| 5a | Main Entrance Repair & refurbish to conservation standards. | HIGH | Inappropriate / poor quality restoration of key feature. Failure to provide adequate access & secure boundary. | Detailed inspection, archive research & measured drawing & schedule of the recommendations. Investigate access requirements at threshold. Management initiative for opening & closing times. | Appoint specialist conservators for stonework & ironwork. Agree required improvements with Conservation & Access Officers. Address management initiative in MMP. |
| 5 b-e | Other Entrances Upgrade to provide improved access & complement main gates. | MODERATE / SLIGHT | Failure to provide adequate access & secure boundary. | Outline scheme design proposals for threshold beyond park boundary. Management initiative for opening & closing times. | Agree required improvements with Conservation & Access Officers. Address management initiative in MMP. |
| 6 | Park Boundaries Provide secure & visually appealing perimeter. | Currently SLIGHT / NEUTRAL Potentially HIGH | Health & Safety issues associated with provision of secure boundary. | Measured surveys / drawings of remnants of original railings. Design proposals. | Ensure designs conform to EN Entrapment standards. |
| 7 | Path Network Repair & reinstate. | MODERATE | Potential disruption to use of park & disturbance to adjacent areas. Cost estimates provided without benefit of invasive condition survey. | Borehole tests. | Prioritise areas of greatest need. Carry out access audit and prioritise areas of greatest need. |
| 8 | Site Services Upgrade provision. | Not assessed. | More information required. | More information required. | More information required. |

| | | Heritage Impact Assessment Table | | | |
|------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ref | Proposal | Significance | Possible Risks | Information Required | Measures to Avoid Risk |
| 9 | SECURITY Improve security in response to community concerns. | Not assessed. | Over reliance on CCTV surveillance. | Strategy for appropriate range of measures to include staffing, lighting, CCTV & warden presence. | Tailor requirements to response times & seasonal variations address in MMP. |
| 10 | THE LAKE Upgrade lakeside environs providing discreetly sited secure boundary where required. | MODERATE | Inappropriate restoration if implemented as community project. | Outline scheme proposals & methodology for implementation. | Carry out works with support of professional advisors. |
| 11 | PULHAM ROCK FEATURE & WATERFALL Restore to conservation standards. | HIGH | Inappropriate restoration by inexperienced community team. Potentially inadequate water supply. | Hydrological investigations, restoration scheme proposals and methodology for implementation. | Community project supported by specialist advisors. |
| 12 | POWELL MONUMENT Restore to conservation standards. | HIGH | Inadvertent damage due to popularity as good luck emblem. | Detailed condition assessment. | Appoint specialist consultant. |
| 13 | FORMAL GARDENS Upgrade to original design quality. | HIGH | Inadequate horticultural skills. Misuse of the area. | Detailed proposals for seasonal displays. | Horticultural training schemes, warden presence. Address zonal use of the park through MMP initiatives. |
| 14 | CHILDREN'S PLAY AREA Improved cater for a wider range of ages and abilities. | SLIGHT | Use of inappropriate & intrusive play equipment. | Proposed scheme developed through consultation with users. | Agree proposals with Conservation, Play & Access Officers. |

| | | Heritage Impact Assessment Table | | | |
|------------|--|---|--|--|---|
| Ref | Proposal | Significance | Possible Risks | Information Required | Measures to Avoid Risk |
| 15 | SPORTS PROVISION Upgrade facilities to cater for wide range of park users. | SLIGHT | Provision of facilities which quickly date or are not popular & overprovision of one particular element. | Review of current provision & user consultation. | Adopt a flexible multipurpose where possible. |
| 16 | TOILET FACILITIES Improve provision. | NEUTRAL | Misuse, vandalism. | Scale of provision to serve all areas of the park. | Incorporate facilities into existing buildings where possible. |
| 17 | SHELTER Restore, refurbish & provide appropriate new use. | SLIGHT | Inappropriate new use, misuse. | Condition survey & outline scheme proposals. | Determine use in context of access requirements, security strategy & identifiable user group requirements. |
| 18 | MEETING PLACE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE Provide new facilities. | NEUTRAL | Provision of unpopular facilities, misuse, nuisance. | Consultations with users. | Adopt an incremental approach to provision taking on board user requirements. Monitor & review to keep up with user demand. |
| 19 | BOWLING SHELTER Upgrade existing provision. | SLIGHT | Inadequate provision. | User consultation. | Review provision requirements. |
| 20 | MAINTENANCE DEPOT Improve amenity & screen from view. | NEUTRAL | Compromises security. | Review of depot functions / requirements. | Implement appropriate mitigation through rationalisation & selective screening. |

| | | Heritage Impact Assessment Table | | | |
|------------|---|---|---|--|---|
| Ref | Proposal | Significance | Possible Risks | Information Required | Measures to Avoid Risk |
| 21 | COALBROOKDALE FOUNTAIN Replace lost feature. | Currently NEGATIVE Potentially HIGH | Inappropriate replacement. | Archive research to determine appropriate style. | Appoint specialist fountain contractor. |
| 22 | SOFT LANDSCAPE Manage and remodel planting & grassland areas to reinstate original amenity value, horticultural quality, species diversity, reinstate intended views & redefine spatial arrangements. | HIGH / MODERATE | Inadequate arboricultural / horticultural skills, lack of phased strategy & negative public reaction. | Detailed arboricultural condition surveys. | Management & Maintenance Strategy, staff training to improve skill base, public consultation to raise awareness. |
| 23 | PARK FURNITURE Provide co-ordinated range of lighting, park furniture & information signage. | MODERATE | Visual intrusion through inappropriate scale, design & siting. Targets for vandalism. | Evaluation of provision, required style(s), 'contemporary or traditional'. | Agree park furniture strategy & incorporate into MMP. |
| 24 | CAR PARKING Retain current disabled facility and provide discreet access / parking facilities for the entrance to the lodge and to a lesser extent the sports area. | Currently NEUTRAL Potentially NEGATIVE | Physical and visual intrusion and misuse. | Scheme proposals for accessible sites in unobtrusive perimeter locations. | Sensitive siting, avoidance of over provision, enforcement of strict penalties for misuse. Include in access audit. |

6.4 Capital Works Restoration Scheme

6.4.1 The following describes and justifies the specific proposals and measures which have been identified as necessary for the restoration of Mesnes Park and are illustrated on the Restoration Masterplan, reference Figure 12 and Appendix IV.

6.4.2 Reference numbers relate to those shown on the Masterplan and the schedule of itemised costs in Section 7 of this Conservation Management Plan.

6.4.3 Each item of work is addressed by defining the conservation / design objective, stating the reasons(s) for its inclusion in the proposed restoration scheme and describing the proposed works.

Pavilion (1)

Objective

6.4.4 To conserve and restore this iconic building and carry out internal refurbishment to permit more extensive usage.

Reason

6.4.5 The café in the pavilion is very popular and the building is a natural focus for visitors to the park. The current operator has a long term lease and is proactive in encouraging the use of the facilities by all age groups over extended visitor hours. The repair and refurbishment of this building is key to the regeneration of the park as a whole.

Proposal

6.4.6 Carry out sympathetic restoration works including exterior renovation, interior decoration and upper gallery refurbishment. Encourage as a venue for indoor events and activities i.e. seasonal and horticultural crafts, historic displays, musical performances. Provide facilities and sympathetic amendments to permit access for all without

detriment to the appearance and fabric of the building.

Bandstand (2)

Objective

6.4.7 To fully repair and authentically restore the bandstand and its setting to retain its eminence as a focal point and bring it into more active use through the introduction of appropriate lighting and p.a. system, in a manner consistent with its function.

Reason

6.4.8 The bandstand is a key focus for the development of an expanded events programme within the park.

Proposal

6.4.9 Sympathetically repair, decorate and reconstruct promenade as per the structural survey. Install lighting. Develop and utilise as a performance venue i.e. traditional, contemporary and world cultural performing arts.

Dalton Steps (3)

Objective

6.4.10 To restore steps in a manner consistent with their visual prominence and to permit safe usage.

Reason

6.4.11 The steps are a prominent visual feature which provide a setting for the pavilion and they are essential linkages between the pavilion and the historic core of the park.

Proposal

6.4.12 Restore treads, landings, walls and copings. Replace missing urns to historic detail taken from rescued broken cast urns.

Entrance Lodge (4)

Objective

6.4.13 Secure the future of the building as a prominent entrance feature with a positive use.

Reason

6.4.14 The building being currently disused and in a setting which has over the years been progressively downgraded detracts from the main entrance to the park and does not contribute to its use or enjoyment.

Proposal

6.4.15 Carry out repairs to existing fabric. Provide new staircase, lift, alarms, security locks and provision for parking in accordance with the access strategy and to accommodate office and community uses which permit access for all. Uses directly related to the park will be favoured.

Park Entrances (5)

Objective

6.4.16 To reaffirm the quality and status of Mesnes Park by restoring and refurbishing each of the entrances to a consistent standard and appearance.

Reason

6.4.17 Whilst the main entrance retains some of its former elegance and is in need of restoration the remaining entrances are disparate and degraded in appearance and do not contribute to the identity of the park or help to create a safe and welcoming environment.

Proposal

6.4.18 Restore the main entrance and upgrade the remaining entrances to improve access and to visually enhance the appearance in order to offer a more inviting approach into the park. Undertake paving works to the entrance threshold to include

external improvements (transition kerbs and tactile paving). Carry out restoration work to pillars and gates.

Park Boundaries (6)

Objective

6.4.19 Reaffirm the quality and status of the park by replacing the full extent of the boundary railings. To secure the perimeter as a means to more effective management of the use of the park.

Reason

6.4.20 The current boundary, predominantly defined by hedgerow, cannot be made secure and, is detrimental to the appearance of the park particularly where it merges with adjacent planted areas and fails to provide a distinctive boundary. The lack of a secure boundary could compromise the restoration works and would limit the effectiveness of the proposed management initiatives.

Proposal

6.4.21 Bridgeman Terrace – reinstate boundary railings to historic detail.

6.4.22 Parson's Walk – reinstate boundary railings to historic detail.

6.4.23 Note : detail to be taken from original railing panels along the park / college boundary.

Path Network (7)

Objective

6.4.24 To restore the eminence of the main footway to the pavilion and repair and resurface the remainder of the original footpath layout reinstating missing sections of original footpaths and removing non original sections which do not have a positive purpose.

Reason

6.4.25 The original shale paths have been replaced by tarmac surfacing which, due in part to inadequate sub-base construction, has deteriorated over time and routine maintenance cannot keep pace with the rate of deterioration. A comprehensive reconstruction programme is required to make footpaths and steps safe, conform to DDA access requirements and enhance the visual amenity of the park.

Proposal

6.4.26 Reinstate all tarmac footpaths in poor repair. Remove build up of existing surfacing, make good sub-base where necessary, replace damaged surfacing and provide a continuous footpath edging., improve drainage, repair, replace / restore edgings and realign and repair steps.

Site Services (8)

Objective

6.4.27 Improve the provision of services to key buildings in public use.

Reason

6.4.28 Improved services are fundamental to the reuse of the restored pavilion and bandstand.

Proposal

6.4.29 Pavilion – upgrade services, three phase electricity supply.

6.4.30 Bandstand – upgrade services, three phase electricity supply.

Security (9)

Objective

6.4.31 To respond to park user concerns regarding safety and security and introduce measures which would assist in creating a safe and welcoming environment.

Reason

6.4.32 Issues of safety were prominent in user consultations and the main footpath network is also

used as a through route between the town centre / colleges and the neighbouring residential areas.

Proposal

6.4.33 Lighting – install lighting to three principle routes identified as the major access routes and as part of security strategy.

6.4.34 CCTV – install monitored CCTV to Lodge and Pavilion as part of security strategy.

The Lake (10)

Objective

6.4.35 To continue to restore and refurbish the setting of the lake as a community led project.

Reason

6.4.36 The improvements made to date are as a result of the first initiative in which the Council, working with the Friends Group, achieved positive change. The subsequent phase will open up views to the lake, improve ecological diversity and improve the amenity use of the planted lakeside margins.

Proposal

6.4.37 Continue rejuvenation of perimeter shrub borders and establish a suitable planting scheme to the northern island in order to create strategic, unobstructed views. Planting scheme should contribute to the aspiration for a tranquil and serene ambience.

Pulham Rock Feature and Waterfall (11)

Objective

6.4.38 To continue the phased restoration of this feature as a community project to complement the initiatives to restore the lake.

Reason

6.4.39 The restoration of the rock work is an ideal task for a community project and will bring back into use a neglected water feature which previously made a substantial contribution to this part of the park.

Proposal

6.4.40 Carry out sensitive repairs to rock work and plunge pool in tradition of typical Pulham construction. Improve soil and implement planting scheme to typical Pulham design. Install safety grid on surface of plunge pool. Create paths and viewing area. Install safety railings to historic detail.

Powell Monument (12)

Objective

6.4.41 To conserve and restore this important local feature and improve its setting.

Reason

6.4.42 This statue is of special value to local people and is emblematic of the history of the town.

Proposal

6.4.43 Carry out sympathetic conservation works to statue, paving and pillar chains. Remove flower bed perimeter and replace with lawn to original detail.

Formal Gardens (13)

Objective

6.4.44 To recreate the visual intensity and prominence of the formal garden area and the features within it.

Reason

6.4.45 The formal garden area was designed to both complement and reinforce the main approach to the pavilion and to be looked down upon from the vantage point of the pavilion and its immediate surroundings.

Proposal

6.4.46 Restore historic planting features. To include formal flower beds, herbaceous borders, heather garden and shrub planting.

Children's Play Area (14)

Objective

6.4.47 To improve the current facilities commensurate with user demand for a wider age range of children.

Reason

6.4.48 The current facilities do not provide the required range of facilities and do not cater for children with varied abilities.

Proposal

6.4.49 Develop a joint play area for under 5's and 5 – 11's served by the play shack. Develop creative play with safety surfacing, seating and picnic areas. Complete installation of interlaced hoop-top railings.

Sports Provision (15)

Objective

6.4.50 Rejuvenate the existing sports provision to provide a balance of traditional and contemporary sporting activities within the context of the historic park layout.

Reason

6.4.51 The existing facilities are under-utilised and do not meet the needs of today's users, some of whom are under-represented.

Proposal

6.4.52 Re-evaluate and rationalise the use of existing facilities with a view to providing improved resources within the same allocated area. Develop a multi-focused space for a diversity of users, to include an extreme sports provision. Improve the landscape structure to improve visual amenity and create an appropriate setting for the sports provision.

Toilet Facilities (16)

Objective

6.4.53 To provide facilities to contemporary standards in a secure building to serve the visitors to the sports and play facilities.

Reason

6.4.54 The pavilion and possibly the refurbished lodge will provide toilet facilities for the users of the central and southern areas of the park. Due to the topography and number of visitors it is important to provide adequate facilities in the northern area of the park to ensure that people of all ages and abilities have convenient access to the facilities.

Proposal

6.4.55 Refurbish existing toilet facilities within bowling pavilion. Provide disabled facility.

Shelter (17)

Objective

6.4.56 To repair, restore and bring back into positive use.

Reason

6.4.57 This building is strategically sited to serve the lake area, formal gardens and the more informal open spaces around the bandstand and below the pavilion. In its present condition the building detracts from the amenity of the park and has the potential to make a much more positive contribution.

Proposal

6.4.58 Complete outstanding refurbishment, remove redundant paths, remove remains of old toilet building, restore shrub planting to perimeters. Develop as an outdoor sheltered events area for demonstrations, traditional and horticultural crafts.

Meeting Place for Young People (18)

Objective

6.4.59 To provide a facility for the young people who congregate in the park but are under-represented in terms of the facilities it provides.

Reason

6.4.60 Due to the lack of facilities young people have no focus for their involvement in the park and on occasion are misusing other areas of the park to the detriment of other visitors.

Proposal

6.4.61 Adapt former play area by playshack, bandstand and skate park for young people's use by responding to their needs. Improve surfaces, install shelter and seating to give a clearer focus and sense of ownership.

Bowling Shelter (19)

Objective

6.4.62 To provide an upgraded facility to meet the needs of bowlers and encourage greater usage of the facilities.

Reason

6.4.63 The present facilities are inadequate for their purpose.

Proposal

6.4.64 Install new bowling shelter for the first green in line with bowlers' forum to provide shelter during inclement weather.

Maintenance Depot (20)

Objective

6.4.65 To improve the amenity of the park by integrating the depot into the park landscape and reducing its visual prominence from the Walkden Avenue entrance. To rationalise the provision of facilities within the depot.

Reason

6.4.66 Given the proximity of the sports and play facilities and the location of the depot adjacent to the main pedestrian route through the park it is necessary to improve its appearance so that it isn't obtrusive.

Proposal

6.4.67 Carry out general improvements to facilities create storage areas for materials and green waste. Manage vegetation to create strategic screening without compromising security.

Coalbrookdale Fountain (21)

Objective

6.4.68 To recreate this lost feature.

Reason

6.4.69 The fountain was an important focal point on the main walk and was overlooked by the pavilion and Dalton steps. The pavilion, bandstand, Dalton steps and Coalbrookdale fountain had a

group value which defined the essence of the original Victorian Park.

Proposal

6.4.70 To fabricate and install a three tier cast iron fountain to historic detail as per report and recommendations by Heritage Engineering of Glasgow.

Soft Landscape

Objective

6.4.71 To re-establish the layout and appearance of the original planted areas and diversify their age range and structural composition to ensure continuity.

Reason

6.4.72 The tree and shrub areas are over-mature and over-stocked and there is an over-abundance of tree planting within the park to the extent that it masks originally intended views and spatial arrangements.

Proposal

6.4.73 Existing trees and shrubs – manage to maintain / replace structural groupings and individual species where they are prominent specimens. Selectively remove and prune trees to improve and reinstate views, enhance general appearance and improve security. Remodel shrub beds and supplement by proposed planting to reaffirm spatial arrangements, assist circulation and create strategic screening to improve amenity.

6.4.74 Rose Garden – maintain as restored but improve horticultural content.

Grassland Areas

Objective

6.4.75 To reinstate areas of managed grassland and develop a differential mowing regime in order to reflect and respond to the diversity of park uses and habitat opportunities.

Reason

6.4.76 The various zones of the park will be restored to reflect a range of active and passive uses and the open spaces should be managed to reflect the restored park facilities.

Proposal

6.4.77 To introduce different heights of grass to reflect formal and informal uses, introduce species rich grasslands amongst open tree stands and in perimeter woodland glades and introduce spring, summer and autumn displays of naturalised drifts of bulbs in selected locations.

Park Furniture

Objective

6.4.78 To ensure that all the details of the park furniture complement and reinforce the original design intentions and that items of signage etc, introduced to assist in the interpretation and understanding of the heritage of the park, do not in themselves appear intrusive or over-dominate the scene.

Reason

6.4.79 To avoid clutter and avoid the use of inappropriate styles and materials.

Proposal

6.4.80 Install additional seats and litter bins with the main concentration of seats being along the main walk and around the pavilion.

6.4.81 Install entrance signs and map location boards at the main entrances and key locations only.

6.4.82 Develop an interpretative strategy which minimises the need for, and use of, interpretative panels.

6.4.83 Lighting – install lighting as indicated on the masterplan to the three principal routes identified as major access routes through the park.

Car Parking

Objective

6.4.84 To provide limited facilities to serve identified legitimate needs.

Reason

6.4.85 The topography of the site and the arrangement of the footpath network and facilities, coupled with the difficulties in parking around the perimeter, have created a genuine demand particularly for people with disabilities for a limited amount of provision to serve each of the principal areas.

Proposal

6.4.86 As part of the access audit requirements provide limited facilities to cater for disabled visitors to the pavilion and sports area and provide suitable access / parking provision sufficient to underpin the viability of the intended use for the entrance lodge.

6.5 Capital Works Identified for Heritage Lottery Funding Support

6.5.1 The following have been identified for Heritage Lottery Funding support: -

- a. Pavilion
- b. Bandstand
- c. Dalton Steps
- d. Entrance Lodge
- e. Park entrances
- f. Park boundaries
- g. Footpath network
- h. Services to pavilion and bandstand
- i. Selected security measures (lighting to the three principal routes and CCTV monitoring to the lodge and pavilion).

6.5.2 The remainder of the works are to be implemented either through a range of identified funding sources, Friends Group / community initiatives, the WLCT maintenance budget and Wigan Council's maintenance fund.

6.5.3 The principal projects identified for HLF support have been developed in more detail which includes: -

- a) Scheme proposals to RIBA Stage C for the pavilion.
- b) Options studies and scheme proposals to RIBA Stage C for the entrance lodge.
- c) A conditions survey, assessment and restoration proposals for the bandstand.

6.5.4 These proposals are appended to this Conservation Management Plan.

6.5.5 Further requirements for detail design work at Stage 2 include: -

- the provision of facilities to conform to access for all / DDA requirements throughout the park,
- facilities for play provision, the young people's meeting place and sports facilities,
- the restoration of the shelter and bowling shelter,
- the provision of toilet facilities,
- the replacement of Coalbrookdale fountain,
- the restoration of the Pulham rock feature and waterfall,
- the detailed design of the formal garden, bedding areas and tree and shrub planting areas,
- the footpath network and provision of lighting, signage and park furniture to a themed design.

6.5.6 It is intended that design proposals for these elements would be developed in consultation with the access officer, conservation officer and members of the Friends Group and JUMP project.

6.6 Management and Maintenance Objectives

6.6.1 In recognition of the need to upgrade current management and maintenance practices and to create a management and maintenance regime to sustain the restored park and enhance recreational opportunities for its visitors WLCT has developed a Management and Maintenance Plan to address the requirements of the restored park.

6.6.2 Details of the proposed management structure, management procedures and prescriptive maintenance objectives can be found in the first issue of the Management and Maintenance Plan.

SECTION 7.0 : COST PLAN SUMMARY

7.1 Summary of Capital Costs

7.1.1 The report of masterplan costs, programme and funding analysis gives a detail breakdown of each of the capital works elements, identified sources of funding and the anticipated timing of implementation within the overall programme for the restoration of the whole park.

7.1.2 The estimates for the capital works costs which includes fee's contingencies and inflation, are summarised as: -

| | |
|---|----------------------|
| Whole park vision. | £3,518,127.06 |
| Elements of whole park vision identified for HLF support. | £1,795,098.81 |
| HLF contribution (75%) | £1,346,324.06 |
| WLCT contribution (25%) | £448,774.75 |

7.2 Summary of Management & Maintenance Costs

7.2.1 A ten year budget allocation has been prepared for the management of the restored park based upon a 3% increase in inflation for each year.

7.2.2 The identified maintenance costs are summarised as: -

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| Current management & maintenance costs (2004/05) | £184,957.00 |
| Maintenance & management costs year one of project (2008/09) | £299,170.73 |
| Maintenance & management costs at year 10 of project. | £390,349.95 |

SECTION 8.0 : IMPLEMENTATION MONITORING AND REVIEW

8.1 Implementation

8.1.1 WLCT will consolidate the project team (augmented by additional expertise as required) to develop and implement the restoration scheme proposals in accordance with Conservation Management Plan policies.

8.2 Monitoring and Review

8.2.1 The monitoring of the work carried out by the project team and reviews of the Conservation Management Plan will be carried out by staff from WLCT, supported if necessary by external consultants.

FIGURES

Appendix I

THE BRIEF

Prepared by WLCT

Appendix II

**ENGLISH HERITAGE
REGISTER OF PARKS & GARDENS
OF SPECIAL HISTORIC INTEREST**

Entry for Mesnes Park

Appendix III

**GAZETTEER
OF BUILDINGS & STRUCTURES**

Appendix IV

**RESTORATION MASTERPLAN
A1 @ 1.1000 Scale**

Appendix V

CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

Appendix VI

OUTLINE PROPOSALS FOR RESTORATION PAVILION

Appendix VII

OPTIONS APPRAISAL & OUTLINE PROPOSALS FOR THE ENTRANCE LODGE

Appendix VIII

CONDITION & BUDGET SUMMARY FOR THE BANDSTAND & ENVIRONMENTAL IRONWORK

Appendix IX

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE PARK & ITS FEATURES

Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust

**MESNES PARK RESTORATION SCHEME HLF
STAGE TWO APPLICATION
(PF-05-01784/1)**

VOLUME 1, SECTION 1C

Soft Landscape Report

19th September 2007

Prepared by

Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust
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1.1.1 The soft landscape restoration of Mesnes Park is an integral part of the complete restoration plan and accordingly has been developed as an element of the overall proposals and it is not intended to be considered in isolation. However the soft landscape itself is of paramount importance in that the historic buildings and monuments are individual components displayed within the framework of a designed green matrix.

1.1.2 Mesnes Park’s importance is apparent by its grade II listing which is a rare example of McLean’s work. Moreover research has revealed a unique example of his formal style abundantly incorporated into this design.

1.1.3 The proposals for restoration will re-establish the original design purposes that have been lost over the years through neglect and interventions.

2.0 SUMMARY OF SOFT LANDSCAPE PROPOSALS

2.1.1 The aim is to recreate and reinforce the structure of the original landscape through restoration to express the designer’s original intentions (views, vistas, settings of buildings/structures) and to accommodate user needs and aspirations within the restored landscape framework. Any amendments to the original planting layout to accommodate facilities have been addressed by means of reconfiguring to original design principles.

3.0 METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

3.1 Preparing the design proposals.

3.1.1 The WLCT have reviewed the proposals laid out in Stage One scheme contents and Conservation Management Plan that have informed and directed these design proposals. Particular consideration has been given to the re-structuring of the park vegetation to recreate intended views, to improve the appearance and setting of specimen trees and to re-introduce areas of formal ornamental bedding and planting in association with the historic importance of this grade II listed park. Importance has been given to the relationship of soft landscape settings to the seven grade II listed buildings within in their historic landscape surroundings.

3.2 Research into soft landscape design history.

3.2.1 The methods used in researching Mesnes Park have relied upon the rather scant written evidence of the period, ordnance survey maps, old photographs and postcards of the turn of the century to form a desk top study supplemented by comparisons with the styles and fashions taking place in parks' design of the period. Visits to Manchester and Lancaster parks have given some insights into the styles, influences and interests of the period likely to have played a part in McLean's formulation of design.

3.2.2 Newspaper articles of the period have provided information on some details of original planting design and layout whilst maps have played a large part in determining the disposition of blocks of planting and the development of those shapes. Historical maps particularly OS maps, have also provided data about style and design intentions.

3.2.3 A chronology of features and views within the park have been compiled that corroborate interpretations of original design intentions which in turn elucidates the evolution of changes that have taken place since their inception.

3.2.4 A chronology of features within the park used for dating postcards may found in Appendix 1

3.3 Investigation of current condition.

3.3.1 The condition of the vegetation within the park was undertaken in stage one and was modified and reinforced by visual appraisals of the soft landscape structure and analysis of their functions and relationships to historic significance. This information was recorded and mapped in an assessment of visual quality and used in the formulation of functional units and as a basis for quantifying likely inputs.

3.4 Assessment of visual quality and landscape characteristics.

3.4.1 A visual on site assessment of the visual quality was recorded in notes within the character zones and transferred to plan form. Elements of the landscape were identified on site and their functions determined before being compared with written accounts and text book descriptions of styles of the period.

3.5 Determination of Design objectives.

3.5.1 Findings of the landscape quality and characteristic were used to inform the determination of landscape objectives collectively for the park and for identified areas of specific historic significance within the whole park landscape.

3.6 Determination of Proposals.

3.6.1 The objectives relating to the proposed treatments were determined by the historical importance, the identified needs of the park users and creation of sustainable landscapes in the context of the historic design intention. Proposals were formulated using predetermined objectives and rationales.

4.0 HISTORY & HERTIGE MERIT

4.1.1 The examination of written material, knowledge of the designer, comparison of his known works and analysis of these components have provided information about planting details and design strategy and illuminated recognition of the importance of the park.

4.2 Archive Research

4.2.1 Archive research has looked at the newspaper reports and firsthand accounts but the Wigan Examiner August 9th 1878 on the opening of Mesnes Park provided the following points of significance that contribute to understanding the design and structure of the park:-

- i. *"The chief disadvantage of the site [of the park] is its unpretentious and somewhat sombre surroundings..."* borrowed views are absent and the paper stresses the pollution and industrial surroundings giving importance to health providing qualities of the park.
- ii. The Park Committee obtained permission from the Railway Company *"to plant shrubs etc...along that portion of the railway embankment.."* demonstrating a need to screen the boundary of the park from the railway and beyond.
- iii. *"...along the corner of the drive ...the beauty of the design on which the park as been laid out, is at once perceptible"* designed so that from the bend in the main drive the layout is revealed.
- iv. *"...lower portion of the park is treated as a geometrical design in the Italian style, and is planted chiefly with Rhododendrons and a variety of bedding plants."* The flats are formal and symmetrical contrasting with other parts. Lower parts planted chiefly with Rhododendrons and bedding.
- v. *"...Lavish display of shrubs, flowering plants, full and luxuriant blooms...air of cheerful brightness."*
- vi. Planted profusely with shrubs to left and right *"... judiciously varied in character."*
- vii. Two islands in the lake planted *"with parterre of shrubs and Rhododendrons"*.

viii. An ambiguous statement that is unlikely to mean formal patterns and bedding.

ix. Lake banks are planted with Rhododendrons etc.

x. *"the necessary accommodation for croquet, archery, cricket, lawn tennis,*

xi. *bowling and recreation; also a fountain, a pavilion and a pretty sheet of ornamental water broken up with two islets which might be utilised as an abode for water fowls."* This article indicates an intended provision for sports activities possibly at the rear of the park (west side).

4.2.2 Key views are confirmed by postcards views Appendix 2 that are largely from the turn of the century.

4.3 Profile of McLean

4.3.1 McLean (variously spelt MacLean or Maclean in texts) was a landscape gardener from Castle Donington near Derby although he originated from Scotland. The census records of 1871 describe McLean as a market gardener having a wife and daughter. However in the 1901 census John McLean who is by then 62 years old portrayed himself as a landscape gardener with three children. He was active circa 1877 during which period he is known to have designed and laid out three parks.

4.4 Comparator Review and Analysis.

Williamson Park, Lancaster

4.4.1 The park was laid out in 1877 to a design by John McLean described as a landscape artist and this design layout included an ornamental lake.

4.4.2 It is said in press reports of the day that a proposal was made to drain part the moor into the lake but it is not clear how this would be achieved at the lofty elevation of the lake.

4.4.3 The waterfall was also designed by John McLean and the fountain designed by Sir John Belcher. A feature of the Lake is the stone bridge, which replaced an original rustic timber bridge.

Dartmouth Park, West Bromwich

4.4.4 This park in West Bromwich was a competition entry judged by a local landscape gardener Exsuperius Weston Turner who chose John McLean's entry over six other entries. Exsuperius Weston Turner wrote that

"The Park is naturally so fine a situation, with such good views and beautifully undulating varieties of the ground and has already such great advantages from containing so any trees which give it at once a park-like character..."

4.4.5 Again plant species were chosen for their proven ability for survival in the town atmosphere. The boundaries were laid out in 1876 creating a park over 22 hectares. The creation of a cricket ground, ornamental lake and a circular pathway typical of parks created at this time soon followed.

4.5 Elements of design commonality

4.5.1 The use of plants that would withstand the heavily polluted town atmospheres is a common theme.

4.5.2 There seems to be preference for less formal settings as two out of the three parks known to be designed by him have informal circulatory paths.

4.5.3 Mesnes Park is exceptional in being largely formal in layout, at least 3ha out of the total 12ha.

4.5.4 There appears to be a distinct usage of plants to give a layered appearance with a foreground of lawn, then shrubs and trees. McLean favoured the use of Rhododendrons for the planting effect and bun-shaped plants were clearly chosen by him.

4.5.5 Vistas were deliberately created to provide views to the focal point such as the pavilion view across the lake and the view from the main gates.

4.5.6 Williamson and Dartmouth Parks both have the advantage of good external views out of the park. Wigan however does not have the benefit of borrowed views.

4.5.7 It may be prudent to assume that McLean used a bold internal landscape structure to compensate for lack of external viewpoints. The design may have intended the viewer's eye to be inside the park boundaries and away from the industrial developments which then surrounded Mesnes Park.

4.5.8 Visual impacts from elevated viewing points have been exploited to their full potential. Early illustrations support the importance of simple strong designs of the flower beds. This contrasts with other designs of McLean where external views were available.

- i. Plant species were chosen for their proven ability for survival in the town atmosphere (Mesnes Park, Dartmouth Park- historical texts).
- ii. Use of Rhododendrons (Mesnes Park, Williamson Park- historical texts).
- iii. Tiered effect of planting – with foreground of lawn, shrubs and trees. Observable on Mesnes park postcards C, E, F, Appendix 2.
- iv. Spaces with differing design styles – Evident the in Central axis, known as the flats are bilaterally symmetrical (Termed “Italianate” style in the Wigan Examiner 1878) while the lake surround is informal with naturalistic planting. Undeveloped west section of the park was most probably reserved for recreation.

4.6 Analysis of Original Design

- 4.6.1 This analysis focuses on the 19th century design trends and influences in relation to northern public parks. Since detailed planting layouts are rare and illustrations of the period largely concentrate on buildings and distant views, evidence has had to be drawn from old photographs, postcards and OS maps.
- 4.6.2 Although there was a profusion of plant material available at the end of the 19th century, for example Edward Kemp used 150 species of plants at Grosvenor Park Chester (1867), costs and air-pollution tended to restrict and define the choices. See Appendix Volume 3: Shrubs and Trees of the Period.
- 4.6.3 Parks frequently employed the circulatory path systems with flowing curves and peripheral routes developed by Paxton and Mesnes Park had a modified type. Also during this period, Loudon advocated the creation of municipal parks including the use of walks augmented by ornamental planting in the gardenesque style.
- 4.6.4 Loudon, Major, Smith and Milner supported the use of parks with provision for sports, sophisticated circulatory systems, buildings as focal points and arrangements of trees and shrubs imitative of those found in private gardens of the period.

4.7 Character Areas

- 4.7.1 Character areas have been identified in the stage 1 submission and consist of Formal gardens (central drive, flats and terraces), Lake area, Rose garden, Sport, Play, Informal recreation and depot. However the original park design was formulated into Formal layout area, Idealised Naturalistic Informal style area, Recreation and Events Area, Depot and Nursery. Drawing Number Volume 1 Section 1C 01/1.

Formal layout.

- 4.7.2 The structure and layout consists of geometric bilaterally symmetrical formal lawns, terracing and formal beds which create a main vista having intersecting straight paths mirrored on both sides and described by the *Wigan Examiner* 1878 as in the "Italianate" style. The Italianate style was revived by Sir Charles Barry (1795-1860) and William Nesfield (1793-1881) but was losing favour by the turn of the century to more relaxed and less expensive informality that more readily accommodated newly introduced plants. This layout however has features in common with Italianate design in that areas of bedding forming patterns on the ground can be viewed from a higher terrace, although it lacks the usual statuary of the Italianate style but has the central symmetry. Appendix 2, postcards D to G, I and J.

Idealised Naturalistic Informal style.

- 4.7.3 Areas of planting surrounding the lake have been laid out to give arranged views. The 1894 OS map Appendix 4 and postcards Appendix Volume 2, postcards L to O illustrate this intention to imitate natural features in an imagined and more acceptable manner.

Recreation and Events Area.

- 4.7.4 This area has been heavily modified from the original landscape to accommodate recreation with the bowling pavilion erected 1903 and with various additions post 1926. Mention is made in the *Wigan Post* 1878 for future recreation provision and with preparedness in the original design for them to be located at the rear of the park. Appendix 2, postcards H and Q.

Depot and Nursery.

4.7.5 As shown on the 1894 OS map Appendix 4, the location has remained the same but is poorly located to accommodate modern access.

4.8 Planting Layout and styles

4.8.1 Planting, according to J.C. Loudon, should be grouped or massed in a gradation of sizes with the principal masses for screening or channelling views and planting that followed boundaries and rising ground. Loudon argued for the use of differences in form, extent, character and function. He also advocated planting that created or excluded views of distant scenery according to the conditions of the site. These general principles are identifiable in Mesnes Park in the channelled views, boundary planting and elevated mass planting of the promontory that links with the pavilion.

4.8.2 The mixed³ or mingled approach of planting consisted of alternating single species in parallel rows, this was not used even in Mesnes Park nor was there use of systematic or botanical⁴ styles of planting current in mid 19th century (Loudon).

4.8.3 However, in Mesnes Park the grouped or mass planting style was of a modified form; softened from the severity of a rugged picturesque¹ appearance by a gardenesque² periphery and slackening and smoothing of the layer profile rather than a strict stepped or theatrical style⁵. The use of Rhododendrons and other flowering shrubs introduced colour and the dome-shaped planting increased interest and variety of form. In the mid 19th century Edward Kemp advised that effects may be increased where lawn areas are restricted by planting outlier shrubs from the main body with specimen trees and also to soften the shrubbery outline with specimen trees and shrubs. This appears to reflect the methods used in the formal areas in Mesnes Park. A picturesque style is used for the body-planting consisting principally of indigenous trees and shrubs with gardenesque influences which had gained momentum toward the end of the 19th century. A peripheral gardenesque admix of lilacs, probably speckled Aucuba and variegated holly in Mesnes Park, and other shrubs were firm favourites of the period. These picturesque and gardenesque styles are discernible in Mesnes Park. The picturesque principles of being viewed from low ground with open space and planting to the wings and upper levels that guide and stop views although they are much more formalised than usual. Appendix 3 Shrubs and Trees of the Period shows this intention.

4.9 Characteristics of McLean's Work.

4.9.1 McLean appears to favour informal landscape influenced by the picturesque school but with leaning towards a more gardenesque approach. He generally worked with areas having good borrowed views and incorporated them into his designs through vistas and framed views. He had generally adopted the use of meandering circular walks and was an advocate of tough enduring plants such as Rhododendron.

4.10 Investigation of planting design intentions

4.10.1 Drawing Number Volume 1 Section 1C 01/1 shows the following information:

- 4.10.2 Formal Structure Planting on the flats now consists chiefly of Rhododendrons, but it is known that there was a formal planting arrangement from the 1894 OS map and more clearly shown on the 1908 OS map Appendix 5. The aerial photograph I , post 1926 shows this starting to lose the regularity but the intricacy of the design is still clearly visible. Appendix 2 photograph I.
- 4.10.3 Principal Mass Planting (Projection and backdrop) is a feature identified on the 1894 OS map and early postcards. It strengthens the composition from the intended main axis and secondary axis views and links the building with the landscape Appendix 2 postcards E and G.
- 4.10.4 Principal Mass Planting (Channelling Views) is again identified on 1894 OS map and early postcards with containment planting as a likely function controlling the views in and out of the park because the surroundings were visually very poor. It has retained some original trees.
- 4.10.5 Screen planting is mentioned in Wigan Post 1878 with reference to the railway and is identified on the 1894 OS map and early postcards. It was intended to screen out bad views beyond the park and serves as another function of Principal Mass Planting.
- 4.10.6 The Traditional Rose Garden (1949) was previously an enclosure then became tennis courts used later for vegetable production in World War II and made into a formal rose garden in 1949. Pagett's memorial garden is a popular and culturally accepted feature within the park Appendix 2 photograph P.
- 4.10.7 The Park Lodge Garden was shown as an enclosure (enclosed open space) on the 1894 OS map; later used as tennis courts (OS 1908) and then as a Park keeper's garden and now under consideration for appropriate use associated with the park lodge.

4.11 Heritage Significance.

- 4.11.1 Mesnes Park is the focus of the Mesnes Conservation Area in Wigan. Mesnes Park has supplied the primary open space area for the inner town from origin to present times. Its importance has been recognised by its inclusion in the English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens 1996 when it became a grade II listed park. The body of planting in the park has remained relatively unaltered since its Victorian inception and the mature trees and vegetation form a major contribution to the Mesnes Conservation Area.
- 4.11.2 The formal geometric layouts of the main drive (flats) are an important feature that requires judicious treatment as it is the only known example of John McLean's more extensive formal design. Approximately three hectares are devoted to formal geometrical layout of the 12 hectare park. It is surmised that this geometry was imposed to compensate for lack of any worthy external views and therefore this area requires a concentration of horticultural input.
- 4.11.3 This use of formality on such a large scale is uncommon in McLean's work which confers upon it an importance locally and possibly regionally.

5.0 CURRENT CONDITION

5.1 Site Survey

5.1.1 Investigation of the site conditions by looking at character areas, tree cover, shrubs and ornamental planting have supplied points of reference to inform proposals.

5.2 Character areas

Formal gardens (central drive, flats and terraces)

5.2.1 Both the structural and ornamental planting have grown out of their formal patterns and in some cases encroached upon the lawns. Trees within this layout have dense canopies exacerbating the problems.

5.2.2 Within the principle mass plantings dense shade has been created by the trees that have had an adverse effect upon the shrubs and under planting causing loss of vigour and untidy feeble growth. Many of the shrubs are inappropriate being poorly chosen or utilising very tough uninteresting types only serving to fill spaces available and reflecting the difficulties of establishment on site conditions. In some cases both trees and shrubs require renewal.

Lake area

5.2.3 The Pulham rock feature is colonised by woody and herbaceous weeds but the central island of the lake has been refurbished and is establishing well although weed problems persist. The shelter area is overcrowded with vegetation and the grass areas of the original layout have been lost. Some areas of lawn fringing the lake towards the eastern end have been lost due to shrub growth and the lake edge is generally untidy with poor unhealthy shrubs.

The rose garden

5.2.4 This has good structure and condition but the surrounding shrubbery is tall and untidy in parts.

Sport zone

5.2.5 The screen planting along the railway bank is generally in reasonable condition but has points of weakness where short-lived species are failing. On the southern area the surrounding trees are generally dense with some open spaces and the shrub layer commonly poor.

Play

5.2.6 Relatively new plantings carried out in the 1980s have become excessively overgrown although consist of abundant species some of which are good quality specimens.

Informal recreation

5.2.7 The screen of trees fronting the college is densely spaced with shrubs crowding the entrance steps; elsewhere the shrubs are thin and poor.

5.3 Planting

Tree cover

5.3.1 A complete tree survey Appendix 7 was carried out in 2001 and this has been largely revised in 2007 with the individual tree information held on a GIS mapping system link to a database.

5.3.2 This survey has revealed a number of facts regarding the tree cover.

5.3.3 Trees within the park are of a limited species range and the mass plantings within the park generally have dense canopies exacerbating light and growth problems to the vegetation below and competition between trees. Mass plantings generally comply with the original layout but a few specimen trees have been planted around the lake in the last three decades.

5.3.4 A number of trees are extant from the original layout. Assuming slower than average growth, around 0.64mm of diameter increment per annum, some 22 trees exist from the original and they are largely confined to the northern boundary. All those identified as over 100 years old consist of 11 ash; 4 sycamore; 3 Turkey oak; 2 Small-leaved lime; 1 Largeleaved lime; and 1 Hornbeam. A analysis of the most frequently found species show the following constituents; Sycamore 16%, Holly 15%, Ash 10%, Alder 7%, Birch 7%, Lime 5%, Hawthorn 4%, Poplar 4%, Norway Maple 3% and Turkey Oak 2% representing 73% of the constituent species.

5.3.5 The areas requiring thinning of canopy by removal of dying or suppressed trees are the mass plantings consisting of the screen parallel with Bridgeman Terrace, screen fronting the Pagefield Buildings (Gidlow Mill) and projectory north of the pavilion.

Shrubs

5.3.6 Shrubs most frequently occurring which are likely to be relics of the original planting consist of Rhododendron ponticum, speckled Aucuba and Japanese privet. Hollies which have now reached tree-sized proportions are very numerous. Other than recent planting adjacent to the Play shack. The park is generally species poor many of which are senescent.

Ornamental Planting

5.3.7 The flowerbeds have progressively increased in number but decreased in size of bed to the point that they no longer have any impact. The loss of individual scale combined with fragmentation has reduced the association with the surrounding landscape.

6.0 DESIGN OBJECTIVES

6.1 Design considerations.

6.1.1 From the historical knowledge gained from research and the condition of the soft landscape the design has been considered and objectives have been formulated to guide the proposals.

6.2 Historical importance and planting styles.

6.2.1 It is imperative to preserve the historical layout as far as it is extant.

6.2.2 One of the paths evident on the 1894 OS map has been removed in the 1960s which has rendered an element of the design incomplete and lacking the original symmetry. There would be great merit in replacing this element. Consideration has been given to the possibility of extending this through to restore the original design.

Preservation of planting styles and species.

6.2.3 Plants were originally selected to survive air pollution but this is no longer a limiting factor. The structure of the planting was clearly tiered or layered and the styles have been discussed above. Emphasis is placed on re-establishing the shrub-tree dispositions and group mixing to give a layered effect. Appendix 2, postcard G, J and M.

Visual impact.

6.2.4 Key Views, Drawing Volume 1 Section 1C\01\2 should be viewed in conjunction with the following information. The elevated area of the pavilion provides a grand viewpoint for the layout bedding patterns down the central axis and the breadth of vision is confined by the tree/shrub planting to right and left. Early postcards pre 1910 show large fleur-de-lis patterned beds on the main drive. Appendix 2 postcard J. Conversely the pavilion provides a strong focal point for the scene when entering the park see appendix B, postcards D, E and F. Structure of the vistas viewed towards the main gates have been given a false perspective by reducing the width of view right and left to increase the perception of distance of this internal view see Appendix 2, postcards I. Vistas have been created to afford views from across the lake to the pavilion providing a filtered view of the pavilion through the trees. See Appendix 2, postcards A, B and C.

Maintenance.

6.2.5 The design will take into account the maintenance implications and costs for a continuing and sustainable future as well as practical maintenance considerations of "historical style" planting. Planting must also be enduring and provide for education and development of horticultural skills providing practical involvement for learners and volunteers.

6.3 General Objectives for all Areas

- i. To develop a planting design to facilitate a financially viable maintenance regime.
- ii. To meet the needs of present usage and expectations and be suitable for intended use.
- iii. To provide opportunities for education and development of horticultural skills that offer practical involvement for learners and volunteers.

Read in conjunction with drawing Volume 1 Section 1C/01/3: Hierarchy of Historic Vegetation Treatment .

| Specific Objectives for all areas | | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|--|--|
| Key | Area | Objective intention | Rationale |
| A | 1, 2 & 4 c, d. | To preserve the integrity of historical design layout. | Preserve the original design intentions. |
| B | 1. | To imitate the planting style of John McLean and his contemporaries from the evidence available utilising trends manifest in northern parks of the period. | Rare example of John McLean using the formalized approach on a large scale. |
| C | 2a. | To recreate the views and maintain the ambience of the lake area while enhancing a more gardenesque planting reflecting the period style. | The lake has been planted with a few exotic trees but now lacks floral interest. |
| D | 2b. | To retain the functionality of the planting in the picturesque style. | Functional backdrop and screen forming part of the original design. |
| E | 2c. | To retain the functionality of the planting but introduce a more gardenesque influence. | Adjacent to a later gardenesque style planting. |
| F | 3a. | To enhance the ambience of the traditional rose garden as created in 1949. | Long accepted as a traditional rose garden. Previously used as tennis courts and the original functions are less certain. |
| G | 3b. | To create a functional and attractive screen. | Links the changes in use of the area with surrounding design. |
| H | 4a & 4b | To retain and enhance in the gardenesque style. | The quality of this planting requires only minor changes. |
| J | 4c | To retain a screen in the spirit of the original design but allow filtered views. | Originally designed to screen out the factory but the building is now considered to be architecturally important and aesthetically pleasing. |
| K | 4d | To retain and improve screening important to the original design intention. | Integral to the original design function. |
| L | 5a,5b 5c & 5d | To improve the planting to meet present requirements and functions. | Areas of changing modern usage with no strong historical connections or integral design function. |

7.0 Proposals

7.1.1 The proposals which follow have been determined by reference to the objectives and the condition of vegetation described above in 5.0. Categories of inputs required were dictated by their historic value and by need.

7.2 Hierarchy of Historic Vegetation Treatment

7.2.1 Three key elements were considered important in the deliberation of the hierarchy of treatments consisting of :-

| Key to Considerations | Design considerations and guides for Hierarchy of Historic Vegetation Treatment. |
|-----------------------|---|
| 1 | The historical value and integrity. |
| 2 | The condition of vegetation. |
| 3 | Modern usage and the benefits that might be conferred to park users from the proposed improvements. |

High input.

7.2.2 Treatment has to be as historically accurate so far as possible carrying a high priority because of the importance of the area (Consideration 1), visual impact (Consideration 3) and to refurbish deteriorating vegetation structure (Consideration 2).

7.2.3 Works identified consists of opening the entrances (particularly the main gates), thinning trees and replanting shrubs, renewing the herbaceous border, re-shaping outlier shrubbeds, regrouping and shaping flowerbeds, replacing lost shrub beds and restocking/succession tree planting.

Moderate input.

7.2.4 These are a second priority area because of the need to re-establish principal views (Consideration 1) and the deterioration of the vegetation (Consideration 2). Whilst retaining the intended idealised naturalness it provides an opportunity to introduce a slightly more gardenesque approach than was possible in its inception.

7.2.5 Work identified consists of removing failing shrubberies, removal of defunct walls, ground re-modelling, establishing lawns and replanting redesigned shrubberies, removing trees, thinning areas and tree planting. The Pulham rock feature will be addressed separately.

Low input.

7.2.6 These areas generally only require a little re-newel of vegetation to increase effectiveness (Consideration 2).

7.2.7 Work consists of small areas of shrub removal and replanting, tree planting, tree surgery works and enrichment with additional shrub and tree varieties.

Minor changes only are required.

7.2.8 Minor changes are required of a low priority consisting of removal of limestone rocks, additional tree planting as eventual replacements and some shrub thinning.

Present Functions and Requirements.

7.2.9 Changes are dependent upon decisions about usage and needs. Priority will reflect these requirements. (Consideration 2 & 3) landscaping will require the reconfiguration of the sport and play areas, nursery yard and land to the rear of the lodge in a manner sympathetic to design aims.

7.3 Vegetation Treatments Overview

7.3.1 A summary of the proposed elements of treatments to the soft landscape for the park are as follows and should be read in conjunction with drawing Volume 1 Section 1C/01/4 : Vegetation Treatments Overview.

I. Thin Trees Selectively To Provide Light And Growing Space.

ii. Remove shrubs and replant with appropriate species.

iii. Remove areas of shrubs and grass down. iv. Remove flowerbeds and grass down.

v. Recreate shrub beds as per historical records. vi.

Recreate flower beds as per historical records. vii.

Remove herbaceous beds and grass down.

viii. Reshape/remove/replant outlier shrubs. ix.

Tidy and reinforce shrub planting.

x. Selectively remove shrubs and replant. xi.

Remove trees to restore historical views.

xii. Create herbaceous border.

7.4 Character Areas.

7.4.1 The following proposals should be read in conjunction with drawing Volume1 Section 1 C/01/5: Soft Landscape Layout.

8.0 FORMAL GARDENS PROPOSALS

8.1 Central formal area [Flats] (Objectives: A and B)see 6.0 above.

- 8.1.1 The formal central axis was the focus for bedding and the proposal is to return to the earliest known style shown in Appendix 2 postcard J (pre 1910). The shapes adopted reflect those illustrated in postcards of the period. The bedding will emulate the planting style and plant selection of the period determined by the historic importance of this area. Drawing Volume 1 Section 1e C/01/7: Bedding Schedule.
- 8.1.2 Formal structural planting (outlier shrubs) will be returned to formal shrub layouts as per the 1894 OS map and as more clearly illustrated on the 1908 OS map. These intricate beds would be cleared and reshaped to the original design. These were shrubs rather than bedding and are further illustrated in Appendix 2, aerial photograph I (post 1926 pre 1937). The replacement shrubs would be as close to authentic varieties as possible and all would be shaped and trimmed to retain formality and crispness of outline.
- 8.1.3 Trees would be crown raised and pruned and a number of less valuable trees removed to increase light and aeration to the shrubs under them.
- 8.1.4 The mass planting screen adjacent to Bridgeman Terrace would be returned to a picturesque style with gardenesque fringe restoring the inward slope of vegetation and removing the herbaceous border and replacing with grass bordering the paths. Drawing Volume 1 Section 1C/01/9: Bridgeman Terrace Cross Section.

8.2 Lodge and Main Gates (Objectives: A & B to frontage and K to rear of lodge). See 6.0 above.

- 8.2.1 The 1894 OS map shows the space as an enclosure (field) behind the lodge but this was later developed as tennis courts (1908/9 OS map) then as a garden for the park superintendent. It is likely that the tennis courts were cultivated for vegetables during World War Two and the usage as a garden lingered into the late 1970s. This area no longer has a private use and yet is related to the lodge as a functionally dependant space.
- 8.2.2 Proposal are to remove trees inappropriately close to the lodge and open-up the aspects and entrance revealing internal views of the park from the roadside through the gates as per Appendix 2, postcards R and S. The planting and control of vegetation will seek to reproduce the type of design found in these postcard views.
- 8.2.3 A new elm of a disease resistant variety (Elm "Princeton") will be planted to counterbalance and link the building to landscape replacing the felled Wych Elm that precariously straddled a dry-stone retaining wall. Vegetation along the side of Mesnes Park Terrace will be thinned and under-sown with grass (all privets removed) but remaining sufficiently dense to filter unwanted views of the rear of the building.
- 8.2.4 It is proposed to develop the area in a manner sympathetic to the original design concept but create an informal sitting area that may also be used for occasional vehicular access to the lodge with overspill parking and some peripheral seating. The redundant hard surface path parallel with the main drive would be removed and grassed down.

8.2.5 An opportunity arises for the development of educational and ecological interests that might be supported by utilisation of facilities at the lodge. A British native annual flower bed that reflects the sinuous historical formal beds adjacent would provide a landscape link and opportunities for volunteer involvement with native bulbs planted in the periphery and banking supplementing the informality and casual setting. The rear of the clinic would be screened by shrubs and tree planting. Drawing Volume 1 Section 1C/01/17: Rear of Lodge Cross Section.

8.2.6 In the area immediately opposite the lodge, although there is little supporting evidence for any flowerbeds it provides a welcoming function with flowerbeds which have long been accepted. The removal of the shrubs facing is supported by the 1894 OS map and the recreation of a small island bed of shrubs to right of the path is also supported.

8.3 Pavilion (Objectives: A & B with D to the Northwest) see 6.0 above.

8.3.1 The south and east aspects of the pavilion are open and terraced but the North West sector has the important promontory planting that links the building to the landscape. This contains some trees from the earliest planting period. It is proposed that some younger trees are removed and some holly bushes that are now trees are cut back to near ground level and allowed to re-grow. Grass and shrubberies will be re-established under the trees as the 1894 OS map suggests. Some crown thinning and pruning will be necessary to admit light and clear the low overhanging branches Appendix 6 shows sample of schedule of works. It is proposed that occasional parking of vehicles servicing the pavilion could utilize the hard porous surface track with sight of them partly screened by shrubs whereas users of the park would be confronted with tantalising views beyond and under the tree canopies. Drawing Volume 1 Section 1 C/01/14: Pavilion and Structure Backdrop and C/01/15:Pavilion, Bandstand and Play Shack Cross Section.

8.3.2 Flower beds on either side of the steps on each terrace would be increased from their present size (Appendix 2 postcard N) and reshaped.

8.3.3 The boundary to the north-east of the pavilion (objective E) will be remodelled to accommodate an herbaceous border for education and these associate with the gardenesque area found upon on entering Bridgeman Terrace gates. The outer planting will be selectively thinned and the inner portions made more gardenesque. Drawing Volume 1Section 1C/01/13: College Entrance Cross Section

8.4 Bandstand (Objectives: K) see 6.0 above.

8.4.1 A decagon-shaped (ten-sided) hedge of oval-leaved privet (*Ligustrum ovalifolium*) which surrounds the bandstand is in reasonable condition and could be returned to full vigour by judicious feeding, weeding and trimming to 800mm height with the faces lightly clipped.

8.4.2 The hedge is shown as a decagon on an engineer's map dated 1919 but the body of information on that map is dateable to between 1903 (Barley Brook partly culverted) and 1910 (Powell Statute erected).

8.4.3 However the apron of asphalt was installed in 1923 to allow larger concert audiences to sit closer to the bandstand. Removal of the hedge would leave the building isolated and unrelated

to the landscape therefore it must be retained. The hedge should be opened on each angle to create 1.2m gaps and hard surfaced. The post-1926 photograph of an event in the bandstand shows a castellated hedge with the crenulations (turrets) at the angles and centres of the straight lengths. Turrets of some 20cm high and 30cm long could be developed at either side of the gaps to emphasis the entrances in keeping with the older decorated concept. Drawing Volume 1 Section 1C/01/8: Hedge Detail To Bandstand.

8.4.4 This strategy would provide easy access to the bandstand, be practical, avoid ugly extensive areas of unbroken hard surfaces and yet retain the links with the past. One of the holly trees will be felled to recreate the view from the main gates and the bandstand to the left of the pavilion providing a lesser main object of the occult symmetry principle or the golden triangle. Drawing Volume 1 Section 1C/01/2: Key Views.

9.0 LAKE AREA PROPOSALS

9.1 Shelter (Objectives: C) see 6.0 above.

9.1.1 This triangle of land associated with the lake will seek to recreate a similar trees/shrub and grass configuration as appears on the 1894 OS map but protect the rear of the shelter created in 1936 with appropriate planting. Toilets at the rear of the shelter were demolished. The appendix B postcard M shows the shrub and grass to the right which is the south side of the triangular plot. The planting style may be made more gardenesque. Drawing Volume 1 Section 1C/01/10: Shelter Cross Section.

9.2 Lake vicinity.

9.2.1 The north side of the lake was originally enclosed with hoop top fencing and is distinguishable on appendix 2, post card M (post 1903–pre 1914) and O (post 1903–pre 1914). These should be restored to prevent further compaction damage to the root-plate of the trees and erosion of grass surface near the lake. This would also concentrate the duck-feeding to the feeding/viewing bay on appendix 2, photograph L. (1908) which has recently had the lake bed modified to allow cleaning of surplus feed reducing the possibility of pollution and vermin.

9.2.2 On the south bank of the lake the proposal is to re-shape to historic layout, selectively remove shrubs and reinforce, enhancing the gardenesque in an idealised naturalistic manner. The three islands will be treated individually as shown on the cross section drawings.

9.2.3 Drawings Volume 1 Section 1C/01/11: Lake Island Cross Section and 1C/01/12: Lake Edge Cross Section also Soft Landscape Layout 1C/01/5

9.3 Pulham Rock feature.

9.3.1 The Pulham rock feature will be fully refurbished in accordance with Pulham's "Picturesque Ferneries and Rock-Garden Scenery" for which a detailed planting schedule has been prepared Drawing Volume 1 Section 1C/01/6: Pulham Planting Schedule.

10.0 PAGETT'S MEMORIAL ROSE GARDEN PROPOSALS

(Objective: F) see 6.0 above.

10.1.1 The rose garden was constructed in 1949 on the site of lawn tennis courts that had been cultivated for vegetable production during the Second World War. Prior to the construction of tennis courts the 1894 OS map suggest some type of enclosure with grass and an island of trees and shrubs.

10.1.2 A path skirted the edge of the central grass area and joined the circulatory system in a Jshaped path but this was evidently removed to accommodate the tennis courts between 1926 and 1937 see appendix 2 aerial photograph I.

10.1.3 The re-instatement of this path would erode the tranquil secluded atmosphere of this feature that has been refurbished as accurately as possible to the 1949 design and was completed in 2003. However, it would benefit from being opened at the north side and a grass verge backed by shrub roses would advertise its existence which is somewhat obscured as a tranquil secluded area in its own right. At the far end of the garden the shrubbery could be partly cleared in similar fashion and filled with wilder roses and ramblers. Seats should be installed at the end of each hard surface path to re-enforce the logic of the design and provide a haven for quiet contemplation. Appendix Appendix 2: Post card P and also drawing Volume 1 Section 1C/01/18: Rose Garden Cross Section.

11.0 SPORT ZONE PROPOSALS

(OBJECTIVES: L)

11.1.1 The section of screen planting on the railway embankment that is within the boundary of the park will have failing trees removed and replaced together with some strategic pruning in conjunction with improvements to the sports pavilion. The area of the proposed new depot i.e. bowling green I, will be reconfigured to provide strategic screening and ornamental planting to enhance important new buildings. A buffer zone is proposed between the bowling greens and more active sports. Screen planting will form part of the landscaping to the former depot area to restrict views out of the park and create filtered views from the northern entrance; this will also incorporate replacement planting and major soft landscaping around the proposed extreme sport area.

12.0 PLAY PROPOSALS (OBJECTIVES: L)

12.1.1 It is proposed that much of the shrubbery will be removed and be replaced by grass lawn to facilitate circulation and use around the play shack; strategically areas of shrubs/trees will be left to provide interest and break the open nature of the area. The proposed picnic area will be planted on three sides to provide pleasant enclosure. Strategic back drops and wind breaks will be retained and enhanced sympathetically with the style of McLean. Drawing Volume 1 Section 1C/01/16: Pavilion Bandstand and Play Shack 2.

13.0 INFORMAL RECREATION PROPOSALS (OBJECTIVES: L)

13.1.1 Thinning of the screen of trees fronting the college (Pagefield Building formerly Ryland's Gidlow Mill) would allow views of this historic and majestic grade II listed building to be glimpsed from the park although the original intention would have been to screen this off much is to be gained from viewing its facade. It is intended to remove the shrubs and have grass beneath the trees to facilitate viewing. Trees will still form a part of the historic layout. (The special architectural character and aesthetic appeal are noted in the Mesnes Conservation Area Appraisal) See cross section drawing K-L

14.0 MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE IMPLICATIONS

14.1.1 The basic specification is a quality specification for the existing and future soft landscape development. There is a commitment for a thirty-five thousand pounds revenue spend for the next ten years. The Parks Regeneration Team will instruct the works by means of outline plans, detail drawings, written specifications and onsite instruction.

15.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW

15.1.1 It will be an internally monitored process by the park regeneration team who will monitor the success of the outcomes by reference the design intentions and the planned results. The monitoring will compare and check works achieved against drawings and specification.

15.1.2 Where desired effects are not realised the parks regeneration team will adjust the methods procedures and specifications employed as appropriate to ensure expected standards are achieved. The employment of public and stakeholder consultations will ensure that community concerns and aspirations are being fully addressed.

16.0 CONCLUSIONS

16.1.1 It is envisaged that by efficient management, monitoring and implementation the desired effect can be achieved with regards to accurate historic representation, meeting the needs of park users, conservation enhancement, education provision and a sustainability of green space.

17.0 DRAWINGS

| | |
|--|---------------------------|
| Design Layout Analysis | Volume 1 Section 1C/01/01 |
| Key Views | Volume 1 Section 1C/01/02 |
| Hierarchy of Historic Vegetation Treatment | Volume 1 Section 1C/01/03 |
| Vegetation Treatment Overview | Volume 1 Section 1C/01/04 |

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| Soft Landscape Layout | Volume 1 Section 1C/01/05 |
| Pulham Planting Schedule | Volume 1 Section 1C/01/06 |
| Bedding Schedule | Volume 1 Section 1C/01/07 |
| Hedge Detail to Bandstand | Volume 1 Section 1C/01/08 |
| Bridgeman Terrace Cross Section | Volume 1 Section 1C/01/09 |
| Shelter Cross Section | Volume 1 Section 1C/01/10 |
| Lake Islands Cross Section | Volume 1 Section 1C/01/11 |
| Lake Edge Cross Section | Volume 1 Section 1C/01/12 |
| College Entrance Cross Section | Volume 1 Section 1C/01/13 |
| Pavilion & Structural Backdrop Cross Section | Volume 1 Section 1C/01/14 |
| Pavilion, Bandstand & Play shack Cross Section | Volume 1 Section 1C/01/15 |
| Pavilion, Bandstand & Play shack Cross Section 2 | Volume 1 Section 1C/01/16 |
| Rear of Lodge Cross Section | Volume 1 Section 1C/01/17 |
| Rose Garden Cross Section | Volume 1 Section 1C/01/18 |

18.0 APPENDICES

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|------------|--|--------------------------|
| Appendix 1 | Chronology of features | Volume 1 Section 1C/02a |
| Appendix 2 | Landscape features - postcards and photographs | Volume 1 Section 1C /02b |
| Appendix 3 | Shrubs and Trees of the Period. | Volume 1 Section 1C /02c |
| Appendix 4 | OS Map 1894 | Volume 1 Section 1C /02d |
| Appendix 5 | OS Map 1908 | Volume 1 Section 1C /02e |
| Appendix 6 | Sample Schedule of Tree Works | Volume 1 Section 1C /02f |
| Appendix 7 | GIS Tree Survey Plan | Volume 1 Section 1C /02g |