

York Gardens Management Plan 2008 – 2013

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Written for and on behalf of Wandsworth Council Parks Service by:

Jennifer Ullman, Chief Parks Officer,
Valerie Selby, Principal Parks Officer (Biodiversity)
Patrick Phelan, Horticultural Development Officer
Geraldine Kelly, Strategy and Information Officer

First round of public consultation: April / May 2008

Final version: March 2008

To be approved by Wandsworth Council Environment and Leisure Committee
in May 2008

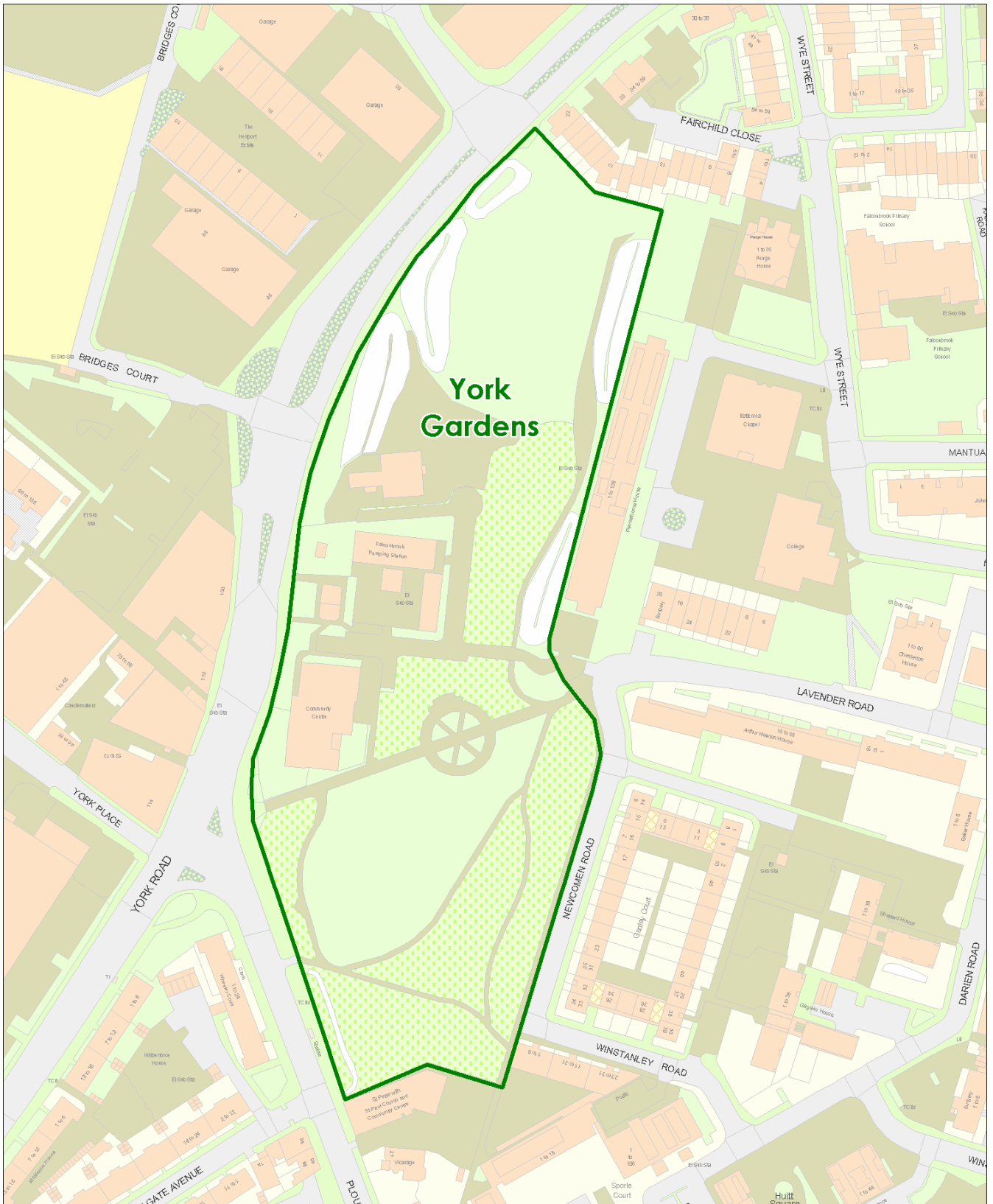
Progress against action plan to be monitored annually via the Parks Service
AQPR.

Site Description:

- Site Name: York Gardens
- Location: York Gardens is bounded to the north by garden walls of housing at 13 to 22 Fairchild Close; to the east by the Winstanley housing estate and Newcomen Road; to the south by Plough Road and St Peter and St Paul church (currently awaiting housing development) and to the west by York Road.
Map showing location and internal layout is shown on following page.
- Grid reference: The grid reference of the bottom south west corner of the site is TQ26717586
- Council Ward: Latchmere Ward, Elected members for this area are:
Cllr Tony Belton (Labour)
Cllr Mrs Leonie Cooper (Labour)
Cllr Maurice Johnson (Labour)
- Site Area: The area of the site totals 30,786 square metres (3.1 ha or 7.6 acres).
- Tenure: The site is owned by Wandsworth Borough Council and managed by the Council's Parks Service (part of the Department of Leisure and Amenity Service).
- Management: The site is managed and maintained by Wandsworth Borough Council, with responsibility for the site taken by the Parks Service, with the exception of the adventure playground and One o'clock Centre, which are managed and maintained by Play Services, and the Library and Community Centre managed by Library Services.
- Designations: The council has adopted planning policies, which aim to protect and enhance the quality of life, and improve economic and social opportunities. They are the basis for promoting and controlling development in the borough. The current statutory development plan for the borough comprises the Wandsworth Unitary Development Plan (UDP), adopted August 2003.
In the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) this site is designated as "Other Larger Protected Open Space Sites".

The gardens are designated as Canine Faeces Removal Area under the Councils Dog Bye Laws. The Multiple Dog walking Bye Law also applies to this site. This limits the number of dogs that can be walked without obtaining a licence from the Council (Parks Police)

York Gardens Management Plan 2008



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York Gardens

Scale: 1:1925

Date: 08/04/08



Wandsworth Open Space Study

In 2006, the Wandsworth Planning Office carried out an Open Space Study. As part of that Study, a quality assessment of all of the open spaces in the Borough was carried out. The range and condition of facilities within each open space were assessed using a scoring criterion derived from the Civic Trust Green Flag standard assessment which is also consistent with the GLA guidance.

The criteria included the assessment of the quality of natural and landscape features, conservation of buildings and structures, provision of interpretation facilities, standards of arboricultural management, whether the space was welcoming, its accessibility and safety, signage, levels of personal security, dog-fouling, cleanliness, standards of horticultural maintenance and the overall appropriateness and quality of provision of facilities for the site.

All aspects were scored between 0 and 10, with below 5 being poor, 5-6 Fair, 7 good, 8 very good, 9 excellent and 10 exceptional.

In this assessment, York Gardens had an overall quality average score of **7.2**, which puts it in the 'good' rating. Suggested improvements included improving signage and more litter and dog bins

History:

During the 1960s, new housing replaced old slums in Kambala Road and other areas. In 1971 the Council took the opportunity to clear up the borough and improve the range of public facilities, including further new housing. The Council's 'first new park for fifty years', York Gardens, was formally opened in 1972, to provide open space for the new housing nearby.

York Road is so-named for the former Archbishops of York who maintained a London palace adjacent to the River Thames in Battersea. The road historically links the village of Battersea with Wandsworth. It was known and is recorded on maps as 'Pickpocket Lane'.

This area was a grim, hard working, industrial zone. The riverside was lined with working warehouses. Prices manufactured candles, and the Battersea gas mantle company all operated locally.

Site Features:

York Gardens is a large enclosed area of mown amenity grass, scattered trees, rose beds and several semi natural planted areas, visually divided by several buildings in the centre.

The most northerly of this group of buildings is a fenced enclosure housing an adventure playground and supervised play centre for children under 5 (One o'clock Centre). A further building towards the centre of the park, houses York Gardens Library. A large area, between the adventure playground and library, houses the Falconbrook pumping station, a facility operated by Thames Water that does not form part of the freehold of the park, although definite boundaries of the Councils freehold are currently unknown. Thames Water has vehicle access rights to this building. A disused public toilet, to the west of the pumping station, is currently being used to store play equipment (for use at One o'clock Centres across the borough). It is unclear whether this building is within the Councils freehold.

A large circular seating area, with rose beds, is located on a wide path that runs through the centre of the park

There are 14 seats, including 8 seats at the central seating area. There are 3 dog waste bins, and 10 litter bins, including 6 at the central seating area. There are 2 cycle racks, recently installed at the library entrance.

There are paths running the length and width of the park, mostly paved in tarmac with brick edging. Two sections are paved with concrete paving slabs. A wide roadway allows vehicle access to the library, adventure playground and Thames Water pumping station.

Footpaths in the southern section of the park form an important part of a pedestrian route for commuters walking to and from Clapham Junction station. The large open grassed area is used for informal sports.

There is internal lighting along most of the footpaths in the park.

The park is not locked at night.

The overall impression of the park is of a large open space with some appeal, but with large areas that could be improved.

Safe & Secure:

A recent housing development at the junction of Newcomen and Winstanley Road has resulted in the park gate at this point facing a narrow dark alleyway. Following a successful grant application, works are programmed to take place in March 2008 to realign the path and gate to a more open position. Access from Fowler Close would continue to be gained via the alley unless the future development of the church site provides an alternative.

Potholes and damage from tree roots are a potential trip hazard on several sections of footpaths in the northern section of the park.

Dense, semi natural planting areas, to the York Road and Plough Road sides of the park, screen the busy roads but form a grim area to walk past. Views are obstructed at entrances in York Road by large mature shrubs and trees.

There are hidden areas to the York Road side of the Library and also the pumping station.

Cars and delivery vehicles accessing the various facilities could be regarded as a potential danger to park users, with no segregation at access points, and no separate path to the play areas from the eastern side.

There is no control of vehicle access or parking and up to 30 cars are parked on occasion. These may be associated with training courses being run at the library. Parking by local residents and commuters using Clapham Junction station nearby could become an issue, if parking controls were introduced to surrounding streets. One pedestrian entrance, having no gate, has had two bollards broken off at ground level. The lack of control of the vehicle gate, and the missing bollards nearby, leaves the park vulnerable to fly tipping, abandoned vehicles and illegal access by joy-riders.

Welcome:

There are signs detailing the childrens adventure playground and One o' clock Centre, but general entrance signs are either missing or in very poor condition. Play signs are of a different style to the existing entrance signs. This presents a cluttered appearance at entrances.

The vehicle entrance and the wide pedestrian entrance nearby, lack definition and this also detracts from a sense of welcome.

The areas of dense planting along York and Plough Roads look very unkempt and detract from both the street scene and views into the park.

Two groups of densely planted trees cause heavy shade to an area inside the gate at the junction of Newcomen and Winstanley Roads. This results in extensive areas of bare earth and a very uninviting appearance.

The park is visually divided into two halves by the group of buildings and facilities at the centre of the park. This should be borne in mind during any proposals for additional facilities such as a playground. It may be appropriate to avoid further restricting the width of the open space.

Although in sound condition, the disused toilet building is visually unattractive. Planted areas provide limited colour and interest

Clean and well maintained:

The grass is mown regularly to maintain a short dense sward across the bulk of this open space. Rose beds are weeded regularly with minimal pruning required, as these are ground cover roses. There is a regular litter collection programme for both general litter and dog waste.

Occasionally, drugs paraphernalia is found in some parks. A system has been devised to ensure safe removal and recording of each incident. This helps to ensure staff and park users are protected, and Metropolitan and Parks Police informed. Steps to minimise drug use in parks can then be undertaken using this information. Drugs paraphernalia has been found occasionally at York Gardens and action has been taken to deal with this problem.

The play areas have daily visual safety inspections carried out by the staff on site, weekly recorded inspections by Council staff and quarterly safety inspections made by technical staff. There is, in addition an annual inspection of all Council owned playgrounds carried out by an independent inspector.

Some sections of footpaths are in poor condition, with the remainder in reasonable condition. Two old litterbins, previously removed because of vandalism, have not been replaced and the redundant ground fixings have been left in place. A section of concrete paving slabs, along one boundary to the pumping station, is badly damaged by vehicles. Roadways are in fair condition, with some sections of misaligned kerbstones needing resetting, but these may form part of the freehold of the pumping station.

Seats are in fair condition if a little shabby. A recently installed dog waste bin and bins at the central seating area, are in good condition, The remainder are poor. .

External railings and gates are in reasonable condition but would benefit from painting. Adventure Playground fencing is painted in several primary colours and is in good condition

An old skip, outside the fence to the Adventure Playground and used by them for storage, looks very unsightly, with some rust and extensive graffiti.

This site contains several hundred native and non-native trees. There is a healthy age class distribution with significant numbers of young, semi-mature and mature trees.

Routine tree inspection and maintenance is undertaken on a three-year rotation. No significant Pest or Disease problems have been recorded. There is a substantial and ongoing problem with vandalism and dog damage. The trees along the northwest boundary require substantial maintenance and threaten the structural integrity of the boundary wall.

Health and well being

York Gardens has an adventure playground and One o'clock Centre, which provides for play and exercise of children. It does not have a formal toddler

and a junior play area, although Play Services are currently investigating the possibility of providing a playground in the near future. Local teenagers play informal ball games on the two large grass areas.

Grant funding has been awarded to provide a Trim Trail. There are 2 cycle racks at the library. Passive use of the park also contributes.

Community involvement:

Contact has recently been made with members of a local housing estate residents association, to begin discussions on the future of the park.

Service delivery:

Landscape maintenance is carried out by contractor and monitored by the Parks Operational team based at Wandsworth Common.

Structural maintenance of buildings and paths is the responsibility of the Premises section of the Leisure and Amenity Department. Lighting columns are maintained by the Technical Services Department (DTS).

Playground maintenance is the responsibility of the Childrens Services Department.

Staff skills & knowledge:

Skills required to manage this site include basic horticultural maintenance including the use of mowing and strimming machinery. A higher level of knowledge is required for maintenance of trees. Building and engineering skills are required to maintain structures and equipment such as paths, railings and the playground.

Sustainable approach:

The site is generally managed without the use of pesticides or watering.

Weeds are occasionally controlled with glyphosate.

Organic material, collected from all sites during maintenance operations, is composted and used, when suitable, for mulching and soil improvement of ornamental planted areas.

Finance:

Maintenance costs are met from Parks budgets covering all small parks.

There is no separate budget for this site within the Parks Service. Playground maintenance is carried out through the Childrens Services budgets. The Department of Technical Services (DTS) meets the operational cost of lighting.

Current Management:

All horticultural maintenance and litter clearance is as specified in the Parks Service Horticultural Maintenance contract, which includes all routine grass cutting, litter collection, weed clearance, shrub pruning and other routine horticultural tasks. All work that does not fall under this contract is carried out under additional works programmes by order with the main contractor or outside contractors depending on the scope of the work entailed.

Falconbrook Pumping Station:

Thames Water owns paved areas surrounding this building and is responsible for maintenance, although the exact extent of their freehold is unknown.

Adventure playground and One o'clock Centre:

The Childrens Services Department manage these facilities and the associated fencing and gates.

Library:

The Library Services section of the Leisure and Amenities Department manages this facility.

Trees:

There are several hundred trees on the site. These trees are inspected every 3 years and were structurally in good condition at their last inspection. This is apart from damage to the tree bark of a large number of trees on the site, which has subsequently been caused by dogs.

Ornamental planting:

There are areas of naturalistic planting along the boundary to York and Plough Road, thickly planted with semi mature trees. These areas have limited value for wildlife. These will need thinning out or replacing in the near future. Currently, these areas are kept clear of litter, but areas of nettles and brambles have established in some sections.

An area of rose beds in the centre of the park is in fair condition although it has suffered considerably from vandalism.

Seats:

There are fourteen seats excluding those in the play areas. Twelve of these are of horizontal wooden planks fixed to a black painted metal frame (the same style as those used by the Department of Technical Services on streets in Wandsworth). They are sound but the original varnish has worn away to leave a dull, poor quality finish. The remaining two seats are similar in style, apart from having concrete supports, and are in similar condition.

Bins:

There are ten litterbins. Nine are constructed of wooden slats surrounding a steel liner. One is a recently installed metal bin, fitting in conjunction with a dog waste bin This litterbin is supplied by Earth Anchors Ltd bin, model HG66 finished in dark green (RAL 6005). There are additional bins, of differing types, in the play area. In addition 2 large wire basket style containers are

installed during the summer only. Litterbins are generally placed in association with benches. There are three dog waste bins. Two of these are in very poor condition and need replacing, while the third is a recently installed Earth Anchor HG66 bin in red finish (RAL3003)

Hard / paved surfaces:

Footpaths are mostly surfaced in black tarmac with brick edging. Sections to the north of the park need repair and removal of weeds at the brick edges. A concrete paving slab footpath runs from York Road to the junction of Lavender and Newcomen Roads. This is in good condition, but a further section of paving slabs, between the roadway and pumping station, needs replacing and protecting from further vehicle damage.

Lighting:

There is lighting along all but one section of footpath. Nearby lighting on a parallel path however, is sufficient. Lighting around the library is partly obscured by trees.

Fencing:

Garden walls at the northern boundary are the property of adjacent householders. Metal railings to the western boundary and part of the southern boundary are set on a low wall clad with York stone paving slabs. The remainder of the southern boundary has chainlink fencing to the disused church. The eastern boundary has flat topped metal railings.

There are 8 gates, including gates in York Road, Plough Road and Newcomen Road. This includes gates at the junction of Newcomen and Lavender Road that also allow vehicle access to service vehicles, users and staff at the library, as well as staff at the play facilities.

Services:

There are water, electric and telephone supplies to the library and play buildings in the park.

There are no watering points in the park itself. Lighting columns are powered from lighting supplies in adjacent streets.

Future Management:

Safe & Secure:

Monitor improvements to access at the realigned path and gate once current works are completed. Establish whether access can be improved from Fowler Close as part of future development of the church site in Plough Road.

Liaise with Leisure and Amenities Premises section to ensure repairs to footpaths are carried out as soon as possible.

Prune shrubs and tidy beds at entrances to remove obstructions and improve views. Some replacement planting would help achieve this. Survey areas of dense planting along York and Plough Roads to prepare a programme of replanting.

Continue programme of shrub pruning at boundary hedges to outside area of the library and elsewhere to maintain views through the site. Remove hedges at the side of the library facing the central path. This will eliminate one of the hidden areas and reveal the small grass area behind.

Investigate ownership of the roadway and the paved areas to the outside of the pumping station and establish access rights. This will help with any decision to improve safety, both at the roadway and at hidden areas around the pumping station.

Provide a separate pedestrian path to the play area from the park entrance at Lavender Road.

To prevent unauthorised vehicle access, install bollards or gates at the wide pedestrian entrance, adjacent to the vehicle gate. Provide alternative access for service vehicles, either at this point or elsewhere as appropriate. Separation of pedestrians and vehicles is to be preferred.

Welcome:

Design and install more welcoming signs at each entrance, detailing the features within the park and relevant contacts. These should contain more positive information about features of the site. This would give a greater sense of place and a better welcome. It may be appropriate to incorporate information from the current signs detailing childrens facilities into a combined sign or, alternatively, to position both signs more effectively. This would ensure less visual clutter at entrances. Liaise with Childrens Services to this end.

A review of the vehicle entrance and nearby pedestrian entrance should be undertaken to see what improvements could be made to the appearance and safety.

Improve maintenance to the York and Plough Road boundary planting. This should be carried out while decisions are being made as to any future replanting.

Investigate thinning branches of some of the trees at the entrance gate at the junction of Winstanley and Newcomen Road. Complete removal of some trees may be appropriate as many have been seriously damaged by dogs and have no long term future.

Ensure the position of any future playground does not further break up the park into two halves.

Investigate potential alternative uses of the disused toilet building.

Clean & well maintained:

Programme repairs to paths and improve protection of paved areas from vehicle damage. Establish ownership of damaged kerbstones at the pumping station and ensure repairs are carried out as appropriate. Remove ground fixings to missing litterbins.

Install additional seats, litterbins and dog waste bins. Replace or repair existing items in poor condition. Establish whether additional seats near rear gardens of Fairchild Close would be appropriate, or might be liable to cause a nuisance to residents.

Programme repainting of railings and gates. Paint colour to be Juniper Green BS12B29 as at other recently renovated park railings. This will help establish a Parks style.

Discuss the condition and need for the skip outside the Adventure Playground with Childrens Services. It may be possible to incorporate the storage space this provides within any new playground.

Remove vandalised trees and replant if necessary. Replacement trees should be located to improve site lines into the gardens. Protect selected trees with tree guards to ensure their long-term retention. Address vandalism problem through improved education and policing. Consider the selective removal of trees along the northwest boundary with a view to replanting elsewhere. Monitor and the species mix and age class distribution.

Health and well being:

Assess the need for formal toddler and junior playgrounds. Provide Trim Trail. Consider other features that would contribute. Consider extra cycle parking racks in addition to those at the library.

Community involvement:

Install new cabinet signs to include area for temporary notices and any community group contact information. Contact residents association groups in nearby housing estates

Sustainable approach:

Maintain restriction on use of chemicals. Use composted materials for mulching planted areas. Use recycled plastic seats etc where possible.

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ACTION PLAN

| Code | Aim | Objective | Action / task | Target date | who |
|-------|--|---|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| YG101 | To make York Gardens a place where people feel safe and secure | Improve access at dark alleyway. | Complete works and confirm realigned path is completed and has desired effect | June 08 | Parks Service Premises Management |
| YG102 | | | Assess impact of future development of disused church to access from Fowler Close | When proposals are provided | Parks Service Borough Planners |
| YG103 | | Improve path surfaces | Arrange for Premises section to view problem areas and decide works | June 08 | Parks Service Premises Management |
| YG104 | | Reduce forbidding aspect of boundary planting | Produce survey of planting to indicate possible removals | | Parks Service |
| YG105 | | Improve sightlines at entrances and within park | Prune or remove growth at entrances | | Parks Service |
| YG106 | | | Remove hedge at side of library | | Parks Service |
| YG107 | | Improve safety on footpaths | Establish ownership of, and access rights to, areas around pumping station | | Parks Services Legal Services |
| YG108 | | | Provide new path to play areas | | |
| YG109 | | Secure entrance with missing bollards | Order installation of recycled plastic bollards | | Parks Service Premises Management |

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| Code | Aim | Objective | Action / task | Target date | who |
|-------|--|--|---|--|---------------------------------------|
| YG201 | To make York Gardens welcoming and define a sense of place | To provide information on facilities within the park, at entrances. | Install new signs at each of the entrances to the park. | As part of wider signage review of parks and open spaces | Parks Service Graphics |
| YG202 | | | Install name sign at all entrances including the vehicle entrance | As part of wider signage review of parks and open spaces | Parks Service Graphics |
| YG203 | | Improve visual appearance at vehicle entrance | Carry out review of use in this area | | Parks Service Premises Management |
| YG204 | | Improve appearance of boundary planting | Increase maintenance visits | | Parks Service |
| YG205 | | Reduce shade from trees at Newcomen Road entrance | Survey trees at this point Order works as appropriate | | Parks Service Tree section |
| YG206 | | Ensure location of new facilities do not further divide park into two halves | Check plans for new playground and Trim Trail | | Parks Service Childrens Services Dept |
| YG207 | | Maximise use of existing buildings | Investigate potential uses of disused toilet | Following YG107 | Parks Service |

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| Code | Aim | Objective | Action / task | Target date | who |
|-------|---|---|---|-----------------|--------------------------------------|
| YG301 | To provide a clean and well maintained Park | To improve condition of footpaths | Contact Premises section to produce timetable of repairs, including protection to paving slab path. | | Parks Service Premises Management |
| YG302 | | | Depending on outcome of ownership query (see YG107), ensure repair of kerbstones on roadway | Following YG107 | Parks Service |
| YG303 | | | Order removal of redundant litter bin fixings | | Parks Service Premises Management |
| YG304 | | Improve existing seats. | Agree programme of cleaning of seats, if appropriate, with Parks contractor | | Parks Service Parks contractor |
| YG305 | | Replace bins in poor condition. Provide additional seating and litter bins. | Install new seats and bins. Contact residents at Fairchild Close before fixing | | Parks Service |
| YG306 | | Improve appearance of railings | Contact Premises section to agree timetable for painting | | Parks Service Premises Management |
| YG307 | | Improve appearance outside Adventure Playground | Contact Youth Services to establish need for skip and possible alternatives | | Parks Service |

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| Code | Aim | Objective | Action / task | Target date | who |
|-------|--|--|---|-------------|---|
| YG308 | | Improve tree stock | Remove, replace protect as necessary | Ongoing | Parks Service Tree section Parks Police |
| YG401 | To provide a park which contributes to the health and well-being of all who use it. | Increase facilities in the park | Assess need for new playground | | Parks Service Childrens Services Dept |
| YG402 | | | Install new Trim Trail | | Parks Service Childrens Services Dept |
| YG403 | | | Assess what other features could be installed | | Parks Service |
| YG404 | | To increase cycle facilities to and within parks. | Investigate the potential for more cycle parking at play facilities | | Parks Service Childrens Services Dept |
| YG501 | To effectively engage with, and involve, the community in decisions made relating to York Gardens. | To carry out consultation with different user groups to influence the enhancement of this park | Contact any local residents associations and schools etc | | Parks Service |