

Furzedown Recreation Ground Management Plan 2007 – 2012

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To be approved by Wandsworth Council Environment and Leisure Committee
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Progress against action plan to be monitored annually via the Parks Service
AQPR.

Site Description:

- Site Name: Furzedown Recreation Ground
It is also known by the synonyms: Furzedown Rec, the Rec
- Location: Furzedown Recreation Ground is bounded to the north by the back gardens of housing facing Crowborough Road; to the east by Furzedown Drive; to the south by Welham Road and to the west by Chillerton Road. It is dissected by Ramsdale Road which effectively creates 2 sites, the lower principally comprising of the Furzedown Recreation Centre.

Map showing location is available on request
Map showing internal layout is available on request
- Grid reference: The grid reference of the bottom south west corner of the site is TQ284710
- Council Ward: Furzedown Ward, Elected members for this area are:
Cllr Mrs Claire Clay (Conservative)
Cllr John Farebrother (Labour)
Cllr Ms Judi Gasser (Labour)
- Site Area: The area of the site totals 1.4 ha (3.4 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 playground, which is managed and maintained by Play Services, and the Recreation Centre managed by Sports Services.
- Designations: There is a legal injunction over the use of sections of the northern part of the site.

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.
Unitary Development Plan (UDP) – This site is designated as "Other Larger Protected Open Space Sites".

History:

Public recreation ground opened in 1924. The area now south of Tooting Common was gradually developed for housing from the late 19th century onwards, and the name Furzedown recalls the former heathland. Furzedown Training College, near the recreation ground, has as its core Furzedown House of 1800 that stood in its grounds. The recreation ground had a café structure (removed due to vandalism in 2004), two bowling greens, a pitch and putt course, a flower garden and tennis courts. In the mid 1970's the Council installed a playground to the rear of the houses facing Crowborough road on the Chillerton Road side. In 1977 a number of local residents successful sought an injunction requiring the Council to limit use of the playground because of nuisance and noise. The injunction also limited the use of the 5 tennis courts to tennis and required that the playground be staffed when open.

The Council re-sited the playground in the 1980's in response to these limitations.

In 2001 local residents petitioned the Council to protest about the lack of provision for youth in the area. The Parks Department encouraged a local interest group to form, the Furzedown Recreation Ground Management Advisory Committee (MAC). The MAC took forward research and design development into improvements to the Rec. The Council sought to amend the 1977 injunction to allow some of the tennis courts to be used as a ball games area. In 2002, the second bowling green was taken out of use due to declining demand, freeing up that space to become a picnic area in the MAC's plans. The Council were finally able to amend the injunction in 2004 after prolonged consultation with the remaining original plaintiffs.

The amendment to the injunction allowed three of the five existing tennis courts to be the subject of environmental improvements including the creation of the new ball games area. That the remaining two tennis courts are retained as tennis courts, and that the area behind the courts, between the court fencing and the boundary fencing of the adjacent properties on Crowborough Road remain as 'greenspace with through access via a footpath.' The complete historic and current Court Orders are available on request.

Site Features:

Ramsdale Road divides the site into 2 sections.

The southern section comprises principally of the Furzedown Recreation Centre, which has its own internal 4 metre high steel mesh fencing. 2 small grass areas lie outside the Centre at its northern and southern ends. A strip of tall shrubs at its western boundary provides some screening to residents in Chillerton Road overlooking this part of the site. 1.5 metre high iron railings with 2 pedestrian and 1 service gates enclose the whole of this section of the site.

The northern section comprises of open grass areas, bowling green, 2 tennis courts, ball games area, skateboard area, playground, ornamental seating area and a small ecological area. 1.5 metre railings, with 6 pedestrian gates and 1 service gate, enclose 3 sides of this section of the site, as well as half the northern boundary. The remainder of the northern boundary is enclosed by 3 metre high security fencing.

Safe & Secure:

The site is overlooked on most sides by residential properties, with open views through the site. Recently installed 3 metre high fencing to part of the northern boundary has mitigated vandalism to rear gardens of properties in Crowborough Road, backing onto the site. Discussions with residents are currently taking place to consider extending the tall fencing to remaining properties following recent vandalism.

The site is routinely patrolled by Parks Police, who also lock and unlock the gates.

The play area is inspected visually daily by Parks Police, with a more detailed inspection every week by the Playground Development Officer. An in-depth inspection by qualified engineers is carried out annually.

Welcome:

The site can be entered through 5 gates in the northern section. Bowlers control access through an additional gate to the bowling green. The Recreation Centre controls access to the 2 gates to the southern section with no public access when local schools are using the Centre. All gates have a cabinet sign adjacent, showing contact details and outlining dog control and other bye laws, with space for temporary notices.

Clean and well maintained:

In general this park is well maintained, and free from litter, although litter is regularly left by users on and around the picnic tables and not placed in the nearby bins.

Health and well being

A diverse range of physical activities is provided at the site, contributing to the health of the local population. Passive use of the picnic area and ornamental area also contribute.

Community involvement:

There is a high level of involvement by local residents and schools.

There is an active local users group (Management Advisory Committee) who guided the refurbishment of the Rec and who raised funds for its progress. The MAC continue to meet on a regular basis at meetings attended by Council Officers, and remain involved in the day to day management of the site. Additional involvement has been with the Furzedown Community Network which has an interest in the part the Rec plays in the wider community. This group hold activities in the Rec and have acted as the coordinating group of one funding grant for the refurbishment. All changes and proposals will be sent to these two groups as necessary.

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.

Playground maintenance is the responsibility of the Play Services section of Leisure and Amenities department.

The Recreation Centre is managed by the Sports Services section of Leisure and Amenities department

Staff skills & knowledge:

Skills required to manage this site include basic horticultural maintenance such as mowing and strimming machinery. A higher level of knowledge is required for maintenance of trees and the bowling green. General building and engineering skills are required to maintain structures and equipment such as the pavilion, playground and irrigation system.

Sustainable approach:

The site is generally managed without the use of pesticides or watering, with the exception of the bowling green, which has an automatic watering system and is occasionally chemically treated to ensure green quality. The weeds are occasionally controlled with glyphosate on the hard surfaces.

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 Play Services budgets and the Recreation Centre is managed by the Sports Services section of the department.

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, Furzedown Recreation Ground had an overall quality average score of 8.1, which puts it in the 'very good' rating. Suggested improvements included some more planting including a buffer zone around the playground to achieve NEAP/LEAP play standards.

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.

Amenity grass:

There are 3 main areas of grass apart from the bowling green. One area has been converted to a picnic and relaxation area, a second remains an open area suitable for informal ball games and a third, at the southern boundary of the Recreation Centre, has limited access when the Recreation Centre is being used by local schools.

Naturalising of 20,000 daffodil bulbs in grass areas took place in November 2006 with the assistance of local users and school children.

Bowling green:

Specialised maintenance tasks are carried out at various times during the year.

Trees:

There are relatively few trees on the site, in part due to use of the site being principally for sport and play. These trees are inspected every 3 years and were in general good health at their last inspection (2003). As part of recent landscaping, 15 small fruit trees were planted in the spring of 2006 as a potential teaching resource for local schools.

Ecological Area:

In consultation with local residents a small "wildlife garden" was created in the spring of 2006. This will be maintained and improved with input from users. Some changes to the layout and planting scheme may be required as the finished refurbishment did not match the MAC's desired layout.

Ornamental planting:

There are 4 areas of ornamental planting, which are pruned as required. The planting in these areas is characterised by low level, low maintenance shrub planting. Formative pruning will need to take place after the first few years of establishment. At present the priority is to keep the area in a weed-free condition.

Seats:

There are several seats within this park excluding the play area. These were installed in spring 2006 and are model KC150 manufactured and supplied by David Ogilvie Engineering. The colour is dark green (RAL 6005)

There are 3 picnic tables in the newly created picnic area. These are model Broderic 3 seater picnic set, manufactured and supplied by David Ogilvie Engineering. The colour is dark green (RAL 6005).

There are also seats in the play area. These are the same model as elsewhere in the Rec. but finished in various primary colours.

Bins:

There are several litterbins, which match the seats. The bins are model KC125 and are finished in the same dark green as the seats. There are additional bins, of differing types, in the play area. These were installed prior to the recent refurbishment. In addition 2 large wire basket style containers are installed in the picnic area for the summer only. Litterbins are placed in association with benches. Location plan available on request. There are no dog bins as the whole site is designated dog free, except the southern grass area .

Hard / paved surfaces:

Footpaths and hard surface games areas are surfaced with black tarmac. Hopscotch and similar games are marked in paint at various points. The play area has safety surfacing installed under individual pieces of equipment. There is an area of mosaic tiles designed to replicate a pond, created by local schoolchildren.

Lighting:

There is no lighting within the park, with the exception of floodlights at the Recreation Centre.

Fencing:

An iron-railing fence surrounds the entire northern site. Railing spikes have been removed from much of the boundary in line with Council policy to prevent injury to children using adjacent trees to climb either the fence or the tree. In several sections the tree has since been removed for unrelated reasons. There are 10 gated entrances to the park in total. 5 are routinely accessible by users. Bowlers control one, the Recreation Centre controls two, and two are service gates only. This fencing was last repainted in 1999.

Services:

Water – there are separate water supplies to the bowling green and Recreation Centre. An inspection cover at the southern boundary of the green accesses the bowling green supply with pipes leading from a valve in the pavement of Furzedown Drive. This feeds both an automatic pop up system to the green, via a storage tank located behind the bowls pavilion, and the pavilion itself.

A previous supply has been terminated at the site of a demolished café building and toilet at the southwest corner of the play area.

Gas – there is a gas supply to a water heater in the bowling pavilion.

Telephone – a telephone connection to the Recreation Centre is via underground wire from Chillerton Road.

Future Management:

Safe & Secure:

Continue discussions with residents in Crowborough Road reference extension of current 3 metre high fencing. This forms part of the agreement to vary the Court Injunction recently. Monitor use of the site following recent refurbishment and changes to establish any remedial works required to respond to vandalism etc.

Routinely prune shrubs to maintain views through the site.

Welcome:

Design and install more welcoming entrance signs containing more positive information about features of the site.

Improve litter disposal by users, particularly in the picnic area.

Install more seats as discussed with users.

Clean & well maintained:

Install additional litter bins and position the summer only wire containers more appropriately. Maintain monitoring of dog exclusion byelaws.

Health and well being:

Install "Trim Trail" equipment for use by older children / youths and adults

Replace skateboard "Grinder" as discussed with users.

Community involvement:

Continue to work with the MAC and Furzedown Network user groups and encourage more participation.

Use notice boards and user groups to update users of the Rec. Install new cabinet sign to include area for temporary notices and community group contact information.

Staff skills and knowledge:

Monitor any effect to staff following the start of a new landscape maintenance contract in February 2007.

Sustainable approach:

Improve and develop the wildlife area in consultation with interested users.

Furzedown Recreation Ground Management Plan 2007

ACTION PLAN

Code	Aim	Objective	Action / task	Target date	who
FZ1O1	To make Furzedown Rec a place where people feel safe and secure	Address the fear of injury to children climbing on trees near spiked railings.	Remove remaining spikes where appropriate	Jan 07	Parks Service to order from Premises Management
FZ1O2		Ensure residents agree to extend tall railings at boundary to Chillerton Road	Contact relevant residents	Dec 06	Parks Service
FZ1O3		Install tall railings to match existing	Dependant on responses from residents, secure funds and order works	Mar 07	Parks Service to order from Premises Management
FZ2O1	To make Furzedown Rec welcoming and define a sense of place	To provide information on facilities within the park, at entrances.	Install name sign across vehicle entrance	As part of wider signage review of parks and open spaces	Parks Service Graphics

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Code	Aim	Objective	Action / task	Target date	who
FZ202			Replace or provide new signs at each of the entrances to the park.	As part of wider signage review of parks and open spaces	Parks Service Graphics
FZ301	To provide a clean and well maintained Park	To maintain defined and well kept planting areas	Maintain a phased programme of replanting shrub borders.		Parks Service
FZ302		Provide additional seating and litter bins.	Order 2 new seats and bins to match existing, once wording for memorial plaques has been agreed		Parks Service
FZ401	To provide a park which contributes to the health and well-being of all who use it.	Monitor usage of recently installed facilities (tennis, ball games, skateboard areas)	Respond to feedback from users and MAC members	Ongoing	Parks Service
			Replace "grinder" on skateboard ramp		Parks Service Play Services
FZ402		Assess possibility of "Trim Trail"			Parks Service Play Services

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Code	Aim	Objective	Action / task	Target date	who
FZ403		To increase cycle facilities to and within parks.	Investigate the potential for cycle parking		Parks Service Technical Services Dept
FZ501	To effectively engage with, and involve, the community in decisions made relating to Furzedown Rec.	To carry out consultation with different user groups to influence the enhancement of this park	Continue to support MAC and links to Furzedown Network and local schools	Ongoing	Parks Service
			Involve users and local schools in bulb planting	Nov 06	Parks Service
			Involve users and local schools in enhancement of wildlife area	Ongoing	Parks Service