

# **Leaders Gardens Management Plan 2009 – 2014**

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

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

First round of public consultation: April / May 2009

Final version: June 2009

To be approved by Wandsworth Council Environment and Leisure Committee  
in June 2009

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

**Site Description:**

Site Name: Leaders Gardens

Location: Leaders Gardens is bounded to the north by the River Thames Embankment; to the east by Festing Road; to the south by a public footpath leading from Festing Road to Ashlone Road and to the west by Beverley Brook and a housing development in Ashlone Road.

Map showing location and internal layout is shown on the following page.

Grid reference: The grid reference of the site is TQ2358.7611

Council Ward: Thamesfield Ward, Elected members for this area are:  
Cllr Edward Lister (Cons) (Leader of the Council)  
Cllr James Madden (Cons)  
Cllr Ms Rosemary Torrington (Cons)

Site Area: The area of the site totals 12,080 square metres (1 2ha /2.96 acres).

Tenure: The site is owned by Wandsworth Borough Council.

Management: The site is managed and maintained by Wandsworth Borough Council, with responsibility for the site taken by the Parks Service, part of the Leisure and Amenity Services Department. Playgrounds are managed by the Play Services section of the Childrens Services Department.

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.

Under the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Local Development Framework (LDF) – this site is designated as “Other Larger Protected Open Space Sites”.

The gardens are designated as “Poop Scoop / Canine Faeces Removal Area” under the Councils Dog Bye Laws with the play area designated as “Dog Ban”.

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)



## **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, Coronation Gardens had an overall quality average score of **6.8**, which puts it in the 'fair' rating. Recommendations for improvements included improving natural surveillance and the need to make better use of the area by the Beverley Brook.

**History:**

Leader's Gardens opened to the public in 1903.

The Putney riverside was used by boatmen and for boat building from at least the seventeenth century, and for rowing from around 1830. A towpath existed from at least the late eighteenth century.

The Embankment was laid out in about 1890 as a recreational area by the Putney parish surveyor, J C Radford. Radford was surveyor to the Leader Estate in west Putney and was responsible for the slipway serving various rowing clubs, the bridge over the Beverley Brook. The residential development came a little later than the layout of the Embankment and gardens.

At the towpath entrance to the park the original cast iron gate and piers are in good condition, as are the original railings along riverside which feature very dynamic finials.

Leader's Gardens have been altered and extended since the original layout and the park now has a play area and a separate railed-off tranquil garden which slopes down to Beverley Brook.

**Site Features:**

Leaders Gardens is a medium sized, enclosed area of mown grass, trees, shrubs beds, play equipment, cafe and tennis courts. The large mature London Plane trees to the north and centre of the park are a major feature.

Original, highly ornamental, railings and gates, with almost all spikes removed, form the boundary to the majority of the park, with the remainder being poor quality wire mesh fencing or industrial steel railings

Part of the original, formal layout of paths remain, with some paths, added in the 1980's when the park was extended, being less formal. A recently installed statue stands in a central, concrete block paved area, surrounded by London Plane trees.

Original double gates at the Embankment and modern double gates at Ashlone Road, allow pedestrian and service vehicle access, with a third entrance being pedestrian access only.

A café operates from the very small former public toilet building, with a small, poor quality paved area outside, providing essential seating space for customers.

The site of a former GLC depot has been landscaped to provide a natural area next to the Beverley Brook.

There are 16 seats, 8 litter bins and 2 dog waste bins. Seats and bins are of differing types and colours. There are 3 wooden picnic tables

There is no internal lighting and the park is locked at night.

The overall impression is of a quiet, poorly maintained park with some original features and layout.

Safe & Secure:

Most areas of the park are visible from both outside and inside the site, although internal shrub beds mask areas to some extent.

Works have recently been carried out to alleviate the poor surface condition of some areas of paving, but this was very limited, leaving large sections of paving in very poor condition.

The vehicle gates at The Embankment and in Ashlone Road provide access for service vehicles and pedestrian users of the park. The lack of separation between vehicles and pedestrians could be regarded as a potential threat to users. Access by cars to the cafe has been an issue in the past but this seems to have been resolved.

A missing removable bollard at The Embankment entrance, leaves the park vulnerable to fly tipping, abandoned vehicles and illegal access by joy-riders.

Welcome:

Signs at the three entrances are limited to detailing dog bye laws and other restrictions. These are contained in cabinet style signs and are in fair condition. There is a faded "Dogs on Leads" sign at the Ashlone Road entrance. Faded signs at internal entrance gates to the Beverley Brook area warn park users of the danger of flooding, although railings have been

installed some years ago some distance from the bank of the brook, so as to alleviate this danger.

Internal signs at the playgrounds and tennis courts impart a cluttered untidy look to the park, with some in very poor condition.

Only one of the two sides of the double gates at the three entrances is usually opened, restricting access, if only visually.

The entrance at Ashlone Road is frequently cluttered by parked cars. These cars are parked on a strip of land outside the park gates which does not form part of the highway, hence not covered by parking regulations.

The dense canopy of trees along the river front and centre circle results in very shaded areas in the summer. Grass growth under these trees is very poor.

The toddler and junior playgrounds are each located in different sections of the park. This is likely to be inconvenient for parents with children of both age groups. The original formal layout of the park is also compromised.

Planted areas provide limited colour and some interest, but could be improved.

#### Clean and well maintained:

The grass is mown regularly to maintain a short dense sward. Rose beds are weeded regularly, and hedges trimmed two or three times a year. 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 not been found at Leaders Gardens.

Large sections of footpaths are in very poor condition, with the top layer of tarmac missing on some sections, and very uneven sections of granite setts. Entrance signs are poor and need replacement.

Some seats and litter bins are in poor condition and should be replaced, refurbished or removed as appropriate.

A small tree stump underneath the canopy of a large Bird Cherry should be removed to prevent a trip hazard..

Routine tree inspection and maintenance is undertaken on a three-year rotation. There is no significant Pest or Disease problem and no evidence of recent vandalism.

#### Health and well-being

Leaders Gardens has both a toddler and a junior play area, which provide for play and exercise of children. Childrens Services are currently drawing up plans to redevelop the junior playground in the near future, following the recent refurbishment of the toddler area. Three tennis courts are available for hire with tuition. There is some use by dog walkers and others who also use

the riverside embankment.. The café provides a useful “target” for locals and those using the adjacent Thames Path to walk to.

Due to the small size of the park and it’s layout, casual ball games have been discouraged by landscaping with grass banks and shrub beds.

Community involvement:

There is no known community involvement currently, although members of The Putney Society use the park and recently sponsored the replanting of a Lavender bed.

Service delivery:

Landscape maintenance, including maintenance of seats and bins, is carried out by contractor and monitored by the Parks Operational team based at Wandsworth Common.

Structural maintenance of buildings paths and railings is the responsibility of the Premises section of the Leisure and Amenity Department. Maintenance of the playgrounds is the responsibility of the Play Services section of the Childrens Services Department. The café is operated under a leasehold arrangement with maintenance of the building and small outside area the responsibility of the leaseholder.

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, paths and railings.

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. Maintenance of the Playgrounds is met from Childrens Services budgets.

**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.

Playgrounds:

The outside play areas and associated fencing and gates are managed by the Play Services section of the Childrens Services Department

The play areas have daily visual safety inspections carried out by Parks Police staff, weekly recorded inspections by designated Council staff. In addition an independent specialist carries out quarterly and annual inspections of all Council playgrounds.

Trees:

This site contains an avenue of large mature London Plane trees at the riverside frontage and the central paved area. There is a mix of native and non-native tree species with a good age class diversity. Routine tree inspection and maintenance is undertaken on a three-year rotation, with trees being in general good health at the last inspection. There is no significant Pest or Disease problem and no evidence of recent vandalism.

Ornamental planting:

Shrubs, hedges, and ornamental rose beds are pruned or trimmed as required.

Seats:

The Victorian style seats were installed approximately three years ago and are now due for painting. Comments have been received about how uncomfortable the seats are. Other seats are in sound condition but need cleaning or replacing.

Bins:

The 8 litter bins are of various types, mostly in good condition, but with 2 in very poor condition. A further 2 dog waste bins are in very poor condition.

Hard / paved surfaces:

Footpaths are mostly surfaced with black tarmac. In several places this is in very poor condition

Lighting:

There is no lighting within the park.

Fencing:

Original, decorative, iron-railings and gates are in good condition. Chain link fencing to the tennis courts is in very poor condition. There are three gated entrances to the park, with no separate service gate.

Services:

There are no electric, gas or water services to the park, except to the cafe.

## **Future Management:**

### Safe & Secure:

Routinely prune shrubs and trim hedges to maintain views through the site.

Liaise with Premise section to ensure repairs to paving are carried out as soon as possible.

Ensure that vehicle access is kept to a minimum. Replace the missing bollard at the Embankment gate.

### Welcome:

Design and install more welcoming entrance signs at the entrances, detailing the features within the park and relevant contacts. This would give a greater sense of place and a better welcome. Remove faded signs.

Ensure that both gates at the entrances are opened when unlocked by Parks Police.

Consider options to improve the appearance and layout at the Ashlone Road entrance.

Liaise with Play Services and Sports Services to improve the quality of signs to the playgrounds and tennis courts.

Consider removal of the internal gates and railings to the Beverley Brook area of the park. Remove faded redundant signs at this boundary.

Consider measures to improve the grass under trees.

Investigate options to improve planted areas in the park

Liaise with Play Services in any redevelopment of the junior playground. It may be appropriate to relocate this play area nearer to the existing toddler play area.

### Clean and well maintained:

Continue routine horticultural maintenance, including hedge trimming to maintain sightlines into the park.

Establish a work programme to repair footpaths and to repair or replace seats and bins as required.

Remove small tree stump underneath Bird Cherry at the Embankment entrance

### Health and well-being

Consider features which might promote more activities in the park

### Community involvement:

Continue involvement with the Putney Society. Investigate whether any other local groups exist.

### Sustainable approach:

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

Leaders Gardens Park Management Plan 2009

**ACTION PLAN**

Code	Aim	Objective	Action / task	Target date	Who
LG101	To make Leaders Gardens a place where people feel safe and secure	Ensure users can readily see all areas	Maintain routine pruning and hedge trimming.	Ongoing	Parks Service
LG102		Ensure footpaths do not cause a trip hazard	Liaise with Premises to establish repair programme	March 2010	Parks Service Premises Section
LG103		Control vehicle access	Maintain access restrictions	Ongoing	Parks Service
LG201	To make Leaders Gardens welcoming and define a sense of place	To provide information on facilities within the park.	Replace signs at entrances to the park.	As part of wider signage review of parks and open spaces (partial completion by April 2009)	Parks Service Graphics Parks Police
LG202		Improve visual appearance at entrances	Remove faded signs at entrance	March 2010	Parks Service

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Code	Aim	Objective	Action / task	Target date	Who
LG203			Ensure both sides of gates are fully locked back when open		
LG204			Consider layout outside gates at Ashlone Road		
LG205		Improve visual appearance internally	Remove faded and redundant signs. Replace signs at playgrounds and tennis courts	March 2010	Parks Service Play Services Sports Services
LG206			Consider removal of internal railings to Beverley Brook Remove faded signs on gates	March 2010	Parks Service
LG207			Investigate options to improve grass growth under trees	Ongoing	Parks Service Play Services
LG208			Thin out and replace plants as appropriate	Ongoing	Parks Service

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Code	Aim	Objective	Action / task	Target date	Who
LG209			Relocate junior playground		Parks Service Play Services
LG301	To provide a clean and well maintained Park	Improve safety of path surfaces	Liaise with Premise section to repair	March 2010	Parks Service Premises section
LG302		Improve use of seats and bins	Clean or replace seats. Replace bins		Parks Services
LG303			Remove tree stump	March 2010	Parks Services
LG401	To provide a park which contributes to the health and well-being of all who use it.		Consider additional facilities	Ongoing	Parks Service
LG402		To increase cycle facilities to and within parks	Investigate the potential for cycle parking	March 2010	Parks Service Technical Services Dept

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Code	Aim	Objective	Action / task	Target date	Who
LG501	To effectively engage with, and involve, the community in decisions made relating to Leaders 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