

Harroway Road Open Space Management Plan 2008 – 2013

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in May 2008

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

Site Description:

Site Name: Harroway Road Open Space

Location: Harroway Road Open Space is bounded to the north by Gwynne Road; to the east by Yelverton Road; to the south by a ball games court in Holman Road and to the west by Harroway Road and Caius House.

Map showing location and internal layout is available on request

Grid reference: The grid reference of the bottom south west corner of the site is TQ26787625

Council Ward: St Marys Park Ward, Elected members for this area are:
Cllr Mark Davies (Conservative)
Cllr John Hallmark (Conservative)
Cllr Mrs Tessa Strickland (Conservative)

Site Area: The area of the site totals 3753 square metres (4488 square yards 0.37 ha /0.9 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.

Designations: The gardens are designated as "Canine Faeces Removal Area" under the Councils Dog Bye Laws. Playgrounds are designated as "No Dogs".

The Multiple Dog walking Bye Laws also apply 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, Harroway Road Open Space had an overall quality average score of **7.2**, which puts it in the 'good' rating. Suggested improvements included lighting and improved signage. It was also noted that the presence of the railings detracted from the openness of the space, and that the path is routed through the play areas, missing the more natural edges.

History:

Yelverton Road and Harroway Road were built as rows of small Victorian terrace housing. Adjacent streets were industrial, with small units along Gwynne Road (as today) and the Lombard Road power station on the corner. Much of this area adjacent to the railway line suffered significant bomb damage during World War Two.

Caius College set up a mission to help the disadvantaged young people of Battersea. The building housed a stained glass window designed by the pre-Raphaelite artist, Burne Jones.

Development didn't come to this area until the late 1970s when Totteridge House and the housing estate behind it were laid out. The power station was replaced by a timber yard. Harroway Road itself was closed and part pedestrianised. The park is mounded up, probably using brick and rubble from demolished buildings.

At the time of this management plan. The Caius mission house is currently undergoing transformation.

Site Features:

Harroway Road Open Space is a small, heavily fenced space with mounded grass and shrub areas. Features include very large mature trees, shrubs and play equipment. Very heavy-duty, flat-topped railings enclose the site on three sides. A central path, leading from Yelverton Road, divides the park, with both sections separately enclosed with similar heavy-duty railings. A double gate, on the northern side of the central footpath, leads to an area of mounded grass with a strip of trees and shrubs at the boundaries. A single gate, to the south, leads from the central path to a playground and an area of mounded grass, shrub beds and trees. Apart from the toddler section, the playground is not fenced off from this grass area. A path runs from the playground to a gate at the southwestern corner towards Holman Road. An adjacent ball games area does not form part of the park and is due to be developed for housing in the near future.

There are 4 seats and 3 litter bins, including those in the playgrounds. There is 1 dog waste bin.

The site is not well lit, with no internal lighting. The park is not locked at night.

The overall impression is of a natural looking but oppressive space, with little to encourage use, other than to exercise dogs or use the playground.

Safe & Secure:

Shrubs and the mounded areas obscure visibility to some extent from within the site. Views into the site are obstructed at several locations by both the trees and shrubs, with the heavy nature of the railings doing little to enhance this.

The dominant railings, around and within the space, create a small, enclosed space, with the potential to get trapped or feel “hemmed in”, with the potential for users to feel trapped if a threatening situation arose.

There is a sign detailing the different designations under dog control bye laws at the entrance to the central path. Signs at the playground detail restrictions and contact information.

Welcome:

A single entrance sign, in good condition, is limited to detailing dog bye laws and other restrictions. This is contained in a cabinet style sign at the Yelverton Road entrance. There is no entrance sign at the other entrance from Holman Road, apart from a slightly faded sign on the railings, detailing restrictions on use of the playground. There are also faded, illegible signs at both of the entrances.

The name of the park is rather cumbersome and does little to engender a sense of place or welcome.

Without a gate at the northern end of the space, staff from nearby industrial units and users of a mobile catering unit in Gwynne Road are not encouraged to use the park.

The lack of alternative entrances, enclosed central path, heavy railings and lack of colour or interest in the planted areas, does not encourage use of the space. The almost exclusive use of the northern section for dog exercising also detracts from any sense of welcome, to those wanting to use the park for

reasons other than exercising a dog. . The strip of trees here screen off the nearby industrial units fairly well, and provides a natural feel to the area, but is of little wildlife value and could be more attractive. There are no seats in this section of the park. Grass in this section is worn and has dog faeces present, where dog owners have not cleared up after their dogs. Planted areas in both sections provide little colour or interest. An area adjacent to the current ball games area is due to be used temporarily for a works area for the housing development of that area. On completion of works, the area will be reinstated, but will have electric and water services underground. This will restrict planting, as access by utility bodies may be required at any time.

Clean and well maintained:

The grass is mown regularly to maintain a short dense sward. Shrub beds are weeded regularly, and cut back once a year as required. There is a regular litter collection programme for both general litter and dog waste from bins. 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 occasionally been found at Harroway Road Open Space and action has been taken to deal with this problem.

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

Footpaths are in reasonable condition, although areas next to the safety surfaces in the playground have a coloured surface layer in poor condition. A section of wooden fencing outside the toddlers playground is redundant and needs to be removed.

Grass inside the gate to the northern section of the park is worn by heavy use and is often muddy

Seats and bins are in reasonable condition. A single dog waste bin is in very poor condition.

This site contains a mixture of native and non-native trees. There is good age class diversity with trees ranging from young to mature. The routine tree inspection and maintenance is undertaken on a three-year rotation. There are no significant Pest or Disease problems and no evidence of recent vandalism.

Health and well-being

Harroway Road Open Space has both a toddler and a junior play area, which provide for play and exercise of children. The park is well used to exercise dogs, although there is limited scope for activity by the dog walkers themselves.

Community involvement:

There is no known organised community involvement currently.

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 playground 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. General building and engineering skills are required to maintain structures, paths and 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. Costs of playground maintenance are met from Childrens Services Department 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.

Trees:

There are many mature trees on the site and many smaller trees. These trees are inspected every 3 years and were in general good health at their last inspection, although several have subsequently suffered damage to the bark, caused by dogs.

Ornamental planting:

There is a small area of mature ornamental shrubs within the playground. This is weeded regularly and pruned as required. More natural areas of trees and shrubs at the northern and western sides of the park are maintained as a "woodland edge" with more minimal maintenance.

Seats:

There are four seats, constructed of horizontal wooden rails with tubular steel frame. These are in fair condition, with some vandalism damage.

Bins:

There are three litterbins in good condition, and one dog waste bin, in very poor condition.

Hard / paved surfaces:

Footpaths are surfaced with black tarmac and are in good condition. Paved areas in the playground have a worn surface finish.

Lighting:

There is no lighting within the park.

Fencing:

1.2 metre high heavy-duty metal railings, fixed on top of a 0.6 metre high retaining wall, enclose the park on three sides. Similar walls and railings enclose the toddler playground and the central path from Yelverton Road. A chain-link fence to the southern boundary is the responsibility of the adjacent landowner. A redundant wooden palisade fence is located in the northern section of the park. There are two gated entrances, with one entrance leading to a further two internal gates.

Services:

There is no water, electricity, gas or telephone supply to the park.

Future Management:

Safe & Secure:

Routinely prune shrubs to maintain views through the site. Where appropriate, prune lower branches of existing large shrubs to create views through the tall stems. Ensure new planting is either low growing or suitable for routine pruning.

Provide a new entrance at Gwynne Road and ensure a second entrance is retained at the playground, following housing development at Caius House. Investigate the potential to remove all railings or alter the position of internal railings to remove the narrow alleyway from Yelverton Road. Ensure all entrances have signs showing details of dog control areas.

Welcome:

Design and install more welcoming entrance 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 welcome. Remove redundant signs.

Following consultation, change the name of the park. It may be appropriate to suggest Harroway Green or Harroway Gardens as possible alternatives. Both these measures would give a greater sense of place and a better welcome. Install new gates at Gwynne Road and elsewhere as appropriate. Redesign the entrance in Yelverton Road to remove the narrow alleyway.

Alternatively, removal of some or all boundary railings could be considered. This would change the way the northern section is used currently, and should encourage use by a wider section of the local population. Wider use of the northern section of the park could also be encouraged by increasing maintenance of the boundary planting and by providing seats and a footpath, possibly as a circular route. A footpath would also reduce wear and tear on the grass.

Following reinstatement, an area approximately 6 metres deep, adjacent to the forthcoming housing development at the south of the park, will need to be kept clear of major planting, trees and furniture, as access to utility services underground will be required at all times.

Clean & well maintained:

Establish whether repairs are possible to the path surface in the playground. Remove redundant internal wooden fencing. Worn grass areas would be eliminated by the provision of new paths, but applying sharp sand and decompacting the surface could make temporary improvements.

Replace the dog waste bin and provide another at any new gate in the northern section of the park.

This site is well stocked with trees; any replacement or additional trees should be located to improve site lines into the gardens and assist with the future aims for this site.

Health and well being:

Consider other features that would contribute. Consider cycle parking racks to encourage greater use of cycles to and from the park. A path in the northern section would encourage more use of this area. A new gate and

facilities at Gwynne Road would encourage staff at nearby industrial units, and users of a mobile catering unit, to use the park.

Community involvement:

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

Sustainable approach:

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

Harroway Road Open Space Park Management Plan 2008

ACTION PLAN

| Code | Aim | Objective | Action / task | Target date | Who |
|--------|--|---|--|--|--------------------------------------|
| HRG101 | To make Harroway Road Open Space a place where people feel safe and secure | Ensure users can readily see all areas | Prune or replace shrubs as appropriate | Ongoing | Parks Service |
| HRG102 | | Improve access | Install new entrance at Gwynne Road. | | Parks Service Borough Planners |
| HRG103 | | | Install fence and 2 nd gate to playground | Following housing development | |
| HRG104 | | | Remove all boundary railings | Following consultation | Parks Service Premises section |
| | | | Remove enclosed alley at Yelverton Road entrance | | Parks Service |
| HRG105 | | Improve effect of dog control bye laws | Ensure all gates have signs showing designation of differing areas | As part of wider signage review of parks | Parks Service Graphics |
| HRG201 | To make Harroway Road Open Space 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 | Parks Service Graphics |

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| Code | Aim | Objective | Action / task | Target date | Who |
|--------|---|---|--|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| HRG2O2 | | Improve visual appearance at entrances | Remove redundant faded signs | May 2008 | Parks Service |
| HRG2O3 | | Improve sense of place | Change name of park | Following consultation | Parks Service |
| HRG2O4 | | Increase use of the park | Install new entrance at Gwynne Road | See HRG102 | |
| HRG2O5 | | | Remove all boundary railings | See HRG104 | |
| HRG2O6 | | | Install footpath to northern section | | |
| HRG2O7 | | Retain access to major underground services | Keep 6 metre section to south clear of plants, trees and furniture | Ongoing | |
| HRG3O1 | To provide a clean and well maintained Park | Improve appearance within park | Repair tarmac paths. | | Parks Service Premises section |
| HRG3O2 | | | Remove redundant fence | | Parks Service Premises section |
| HRG3O3 | | | Replace dog waste bin | | |
| HRG3O4 | | Remedy worn grass areas | Apply sand and decompact area | | Parks Service |
| HRG3O5 | | Improve tree stock | Remove, replace, protect as needed | Ongoing | Parks Service Tree section |

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| Code | Aim | Objective | Action / task | Target date | Who |
|--------|--|--|--|------------------|---------------------------------------|
| HRG401 | To provide a park which contributes to the health and well-being of all who use it. | | Consider other features | | Parks Services |
| HRG402 | | To increase cycle facilities to and within parks. | Investigate the potential for cycle parking | | Parks Service Technical Services Dept |
| HRG403 | | Encourage greater use of the park | Create new path and entrance at Gwynne Road | See HRG102 above | |
| HRG501 | To effectively engage with, and involve, the community in decisions made relating to Harroway Road Open Space. | To carry out consultation with different user groups to influence the enhancement of this park | Contact any local residents associations and schools etc | Ongoing | Parks Service |