

# Raising the standard



The Green Flag Award  
guidance manual



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## Part 1

# Introduction

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- + What is the Green Flag Award?
- + Purpose and Aims
- + This Guidance Manual
- + The Concept of the Green Flag Award
- + The History of the Green Flag Award
- + Relevance of the Award Today



The Green Flag Award<sup>®</sup> scheme recognises and rewards well managed parks and green spaces, setting the benchmark standard for the management of recreational outdoor spaces across the United Kingdom and around the world.

# Introduction

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## Purpose and Aims

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- + To ensure that everybody has access to quality green and other open spaces, irrespective of where they live
- + To ensure that these spaces are appropriately managed and meet the needs of the communities that they serve
- + To establish standards of good management, and to promote and share best practice amongst the green space sector
- + To recognise and reward the hard work of managers, staff and volunteers

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## This Guidance Manual

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This manual is for applicants and judges, to explain the process and the requirements of the Award. It goes through each of the criteria in detail, under eight section headings, explaining what exactly is being examined in each, the kind of evidence to submit, and what judges will be looking for in the desk assessment and on site. It also suggests issues for managers to consider during their decision-making process.

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## The Concept of the Green Flag Award

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Successful sites show that they manage a quality space with a clear idea of what they are trying to achieve, why, and who they seek to serve. Award applicants are judged against 27 different criteria and must submit their active management plan, showing that they understand:

- + **the users** – who they are, who they could be, what they want, how they are informed and involved
- + **the site** – what is special about its history, biodiversity, landscape, social and physical setting, and what it is trying to achieve; and
- + **the management** – that what is there is safe, in line with legislation and policy, well maintained, and that there are plans for the future

This flexible and useful management framework is the key to the Green Flag Award, making it relevant to any green space. It is deliberately conceived not to be a formulaic list of things to have or to do, but instead as a guide to the ways professionals and communities can approach the management of their sites. It also helps to quantify what they are doing now and in the future, helping to prove value to customers, colleagues and funders. Having a fully considered and fully costed management plan is the first step in ensuring that our green spaces are adequately funded.

Good practice is shared between the site managers submitting their management plans for each site and the trained judges (often one and the same) who judge the sites. Each site that enters, whether or not it achieves the Green Flag Award Standard, receives a detailed advisory report written by two expert judges – helping to share, recognise and reward good practice across the sector. Aspiring judges can submit their CV to the Green Flag Award team through the website; If successful, you will be selected for a training course and then mentored closely for the first year by an experienced judge.



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## The History of the Green Flag Award

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In 1997, when the first Green Flags were awarded, the green space sector in the United Kingdom was in a parlous state. Decades of underfunding had left many once proud and beautiful historic city centre parks derelict, dangerous, no-go areas, and many other green spaces neglected or barely maintained. Experts with a shared interest in promoting natural spaces from a range of backgrounds came together in response to this decline. The Scheme was directed by a Steering Group made up of individuals and representatives of larger organisations, led by Mark Davis of the Pesticides Action Network UK, who worked closely with the following individuals to develop and drive the Scheme forward in these early years: Nick Reeves – ILAM (The Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management) and then of CIWEM (The Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management); Ken McAnespie – KMC Consultancy; George Barker – English Nature; Allan Tyler – independent consultant; and Liz Greenhalgh – independent consultant.

Their intention was to establish agreed standards of good management, to help to justify and evaluate funding and to bring people back into the parks. And it worked. As the Standard became established, other green spaces began to apply for the Award, and now Green Flags fly over parks, cemeteries and crematoria, recreation grounds, canals, reservoirs, educational campuses, hospital grounds, housing estates, nature reserves and allotments. There is no limit on the size of the site; they currently range from less than one hectare to thousands of hectares.

In 2008 the Scheme started to expand as pilot studies into other countries. The Green Flag Award is managed under license from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)<sup>1</sup> by Keep Britain Tidy. Keep Britain Tidy have

partnered with Keep Scotland Beautiful, Keep Wales Tidy and Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful to deliver the Scheme in the UK.

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## Relevance of the Green Flag Award Today

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Nowadays, across the world, the importance of equal access to green and other open spaces has been highlighted in relation to healthy living, especially the far-reaching impacts of stress, mental health and obesity. For children, experts recognise the importance of natural play and the freedom to play imaginatively, as well as the physiological development benefits of outdoor activity. National governments are investigating the knock-on economic benefits of wellbeing, health and exercise, as well as the impact of volunteers working in this sector – the way that public services are delivered in times of austerity and the positive impacts on the volunteers themselves, especially amongst older otherwise isolated individuals or younger people making a start in a world of work rather than worklessness.

The Green Flag Award also sets out to recognise, understand and promote our national heritage in biodiversity, landscapes and buildings, in all settings – appreciating and understanding history and its related multicultural and social bonds.

Well managed green spaces combine to provide a wider range of ecosystems which feed into vital infrastructure networks at a global level. Locally, they have huge benefits for nature, in establishing wildlife corridors, flood plains, good practice in biodiversity management and horticultural and arboricultural management for wildlife and sustainability – through choices made in planting, landscaping and design that reduce our environmental impact in the future.

<sup>1</sup>DCLG have pledged to continue to support the Green Flag Award Scheme in The Natural Choice: Securing the Value of Nature 2012 paragraph 4.25 [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/228842/8082.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/228842/8082.pdf)

## Further Information

### **Centre for Public Health: Fact Sheet 6 Urban Green Space and Public Health (2010)**

<http://www.cph.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/health-and-sustainability-factsheet-6-february-2010.pdf>

### **Department for Communities and Local Government: The Natural Choice: Securing the Value of Nature 2012**

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/228842/8082.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/228842/8082.pdf)

### **European Environment Agency**

<http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/forests-health-andclimate-change>; <http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/10-messages-for-2010-urbanecosystems>

### **Natural England Case Studies**

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140605090108/>

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/12629856>

### **The Parks' Alliance:**

<http://theparksalliance.org>

A campaigning and research not-for-profit body representing and supporting those working across the green space sector.

### **Rethinking Parks (NESTA)**

[http://www.nesta.org.uk/sites/default/files/rethinking\\_parks.pdf](http://www.nesta.org.uk/sites/default/files/rethinking_parks.pdf)

### **Fields In Trust**

[www.fieldsintrust.org](http://www.fieldsintrust.org)

For information regarding protection of open spaces



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**Part 2**

# The Green Flag Award

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- + Criteria
- + Judging Process
- + Award Process
- + Further Information
- + Green Flag Award Scoresheet

A photograph of a dirt path winding through a forest. The path is covered in light brown mulch and is flanked by lush green ferns and vibrant purple flowers. Tall, slender trees with dense green foliage form a canopy overhead, with sunlight filtering through to create dappled shadows on the ground.

Any green space that is freely accessible to the public and has a site-specific management plan is eligible to apply for a Green Flag Award.

# The Green Flag Award

## Criteria

A successful Green Flag Award site demonstrates through a sound management plan and a well-run site that the management understand:

- + **their users** – who they are, who they could be, what they want, how they are informed and involved
- + **their site** – what is special about its history, biodiversity, landscape, social and physical setting, and what it is trying to achieve
- + **their management strategy** – that what is there is safe, in line with legislation and policy, well maintained and that there are plans for the future

A green space is never finished – it needs to reflect and respond to the changing needs of its users, whilst retaining its character. The Green Flag Award is looking for continual improvement, hence the strapline ‘raising the standard’. This is reflected in the scoring line used in the judging process. See the diagram below.

A green space should be striving to achieve a good level of management in all areas.

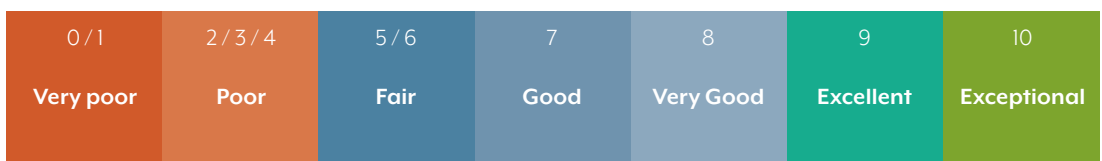
For example, in the area of horticultural management, a ‘good’ standard would require all horticultural elements to be managed in line with recognised horticultural practice – plants

to be in good condition and everywhere clearly looked after. An ‘excellent’ standard would only be awarded to a site with exemplary horticultural techniques displayed throughout, understood by all staff, and accompanied by a clear plan of both how this standard would be maintained in future years and why.

It may be that a site is demonstrating a good or excellent standard in all but one or two areas. To gain and retain the Green Flag Award, it would be expected that these areas are clearly identified in the management plan alongside a coherent strategy for development. Judges may make the Award, but with clear recommendations for improvement, to which applicants would be required to respond in subsequent assessments.

Applicants are judged against 27 different criteria divided into eight sections. These are not a list of requirements – the strength of the Green Flag Award is that it provides a framework for good management that professionals can evaluate and apply to their own particular site. For some sites, some of the sub-criteria will be ‘not applicable’ and for every site their proportionate importance will vary widely. This approach provides a clear but flexible framework for current management and future planning, and helps to make a case for funding, proving the value of the site to the community that it serves (often in ways that are otherwise difficult to quantify) and recognising the hard work of staff and volunteers.

## Judges scoring line





Listed below are the Green Flag Award assessment criteria. Should a National Operator wish to add an additional criterion relating to a specific agenda in that country, they are permitted to do so, subject to the prior and specific agreement of the Green Flag Award scheme. The Green Flag

Award standards are based on official standards set and recognised in the United Kingdom and/ or the European Union. Green Flag Award sites in other countries are expected to achieve these standards as a minimum, or their national equivalent if it is of a similar or higher standard.

## Section 1: A welcoming Place

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This section recognises the culmination of everything done well. A welcoming place is one that invites and draws people into it. This means creating a space which, through its visual appearance, range of facilities, standards of maintenance and ease of access, makes people feel that they are in a cared-for place.

- 1. Welcome**
- 2. Good and Safe Access**
- 3. Signage**
- 4. Equal Access for All**

## Section 2: Healthy, Safe and Secure

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This section looks at how well managers understand their users' needs, encouraging them to enjoy healthy activities using appropriate, safe-to-use facilities and activities, and to feel personally safe and secure.

- 5. Appropriate Provision of Quality Facilities and Activities**
- 6. Safe Equipment and Facilities**
- 7. Personal Security**
- 8. Control of Dogs/Dog Fouling**

## Section 3: Well Maintained and Clean

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For aesthetic as well as health and safety reasons, issues of cleanliness and maintenance must be addressed, in particular:

- + litter and other waste management issues must be adequately dealt with;
- + grounds, buildings, equipment and other features must be well maintained;
- + policies on litter, vandalism and maintenance should be in place, in practice, and regularly reviewed.

- 9. Litter and Waste Management**
- 10. Horticultural Maintenance**
- 11. Arboricultural Maintenance**
- 12. Building and Infrastructure Maintenance**
- 13. Equipment Maintenance**

## Section 4: Environmental Management

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This section seeks to ensure that the way the site is managed has a positive impact on the environment, locally and globally, both now and for the future. Where choices can be made for future procurement, landscaping or buildings, they should aim to minimise energy and resource consumption and waste, and design in benefits to the local and global environment. Policies should seek to eliminate the use of peat and chemicals to control pests and as fertilisers. Horticultural and arboricultural decisions should reflect an understanding of the impacts of climate change.

- 14. **Managing Environmental Impact**
- 15. **Waste Minimisation**
- 16. **Chemical Use**
- 17. **Peat Use**
- 18. **Climate Change Adaption Strategies**

## Section 5: Biodiversity, Landscape and Heritage

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Attention should be paid to the appropriate management and conservation of natural features, wildlife and flora; landscape features; and buildings and structures. Their particular character and requirements should be identified and appropriate management strategies put in place to conserve and enhance them.

- 19. **Management of Natural Features, Wild Fauna and Flora**
- 20. **Conservation of Landscape Features**
- 21. **Conservation of Buildings and Structures**

## Section 6: Community Involvement

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This section examines the extent to which the managing organisation:

- + understands the community it seeks to serve;
- + actively and appropriately involves members of the community in making decisions about the site's development;
- + provides opportunities for active participation in site projects; and
- + ensures that there is appropriate provision of recreational facilities and activities for all sectors of the community.

- 22. **Community Involvement in Management and Development**
- 23. **Appropriate Provision for Community**

## Section 7: Marketing and Communication

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This section seeks to examine the ways that managers understand the key benefits of the site and how they use this information to promote it appropriately. They should understand who the main user groups are, could be or should be, and use a fitting range of interpretation and engagement techniques to communicate with them. This basis ensures that appropriate facilities, events and activities can be offered and most effectively promoted, and forms a solid foundation for development now and in the future.

**24. Marketing and Promotion**

**25. Appropriate Information Channels**

**26. Appropriate Educational and Interpretational Information**

## Section 8: Management

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This section evaluates how well the management plan is implemented on site.

**27. Implementation of Management Plan**

# Judging process

## This process has two parts

### Stage One:

Desk Assessment

In this first stage the judges will assess the application – the site-specific management plan and associated documentation, and a response to the judges' feedback from the previous year (if this isn't a first application).

This section is worth 30 out of 100 points. The average score is calculated and multiplied by 3 to give a score out of 30. At least 15 points are required to gain the accreditation.

### Stage Two:

Site Assessment

The second stage will comprise a site visit where the judges assess whether the management plan is in practice on the site, and how well the Green Flag Award expectations have been met, by observation and by questioning staff, volunteers and visitors. Every new site is visited by a pair of experienced judges, who make an appointment to inspect the site and meet staff and volunteers. In subsequent years, judges alternately 'mystery shop' sites and carry out pre-arranged assessments alongside site staff and other representatives.

This section is worth 70 out of 100 points. The average score is multiplied by 7 to give a score out of 70. It must score at least 42 points to gain the accreditation.

A total pass mark of 66 is needed to gain the accreditation. Every application will receive a full desk assessment, a site visit and a full feedback report, irrespective of the outcome.

Applicants will not see their individual scoresheet; the scoring is applied as a band.

### Bandscores

30-44

45-54

55-59

60-65

66-69

70-74

75-79

80+



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## The Award Process

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When you are ready to make your Award application, apply through the website, [www.greenflagaward.org](http://www.greenflagaward.org). Details of the application timetable in each country are available from the National Operator. Once

the application window has closed, judges are allocated to sites and undertake full assessments or 'mystery shops' as required. The National Operator collates all judging scores, notifies applicants of the outcome and arranges for the Awards to be announced.

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## Further Information

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### Notes for Applicants

The website, [www.greenflagaward.org](http://www.greenflagaward.org), hosts additional information for applicants, including specific expert guidance, a range of useful case studies explaining how the Green Flag Award is applied across different sites and information from National Operators.

Trained judges have access to online training, administrative notes and case studies on how to approach the judging of different sites through the Green Flag Award website.

### Notes for Judges

All new judges are required to attend a two-day induction training programme and are mentored by experienced judges in their first year. Judges are also required to attend ongoing training and annual debriefs. The judges are all part of a Judges Association Committee comprising regional and national representatives.

# Green Flag Award Score Sheet



0/1	2/3/4	5/6	7	8	9	10
Very poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Exceptional

Name of Green Space	
Managing organisation	
Judge(s)	
Date of Desk Assessment	
Date of Field Assessment	

## Scoring

- + Each category must be scored out of 10
- + Work out the average score for desk assessment and multiply by 3 (score out of 30)
- + Work out the average for field assessment and multiple by 7 (score out of 70)
- + By adding the two scores together you will get a final mark
- + For a site to pass each section they must reach a minimum of 15 on the desk assessment and 42 on the field assessment.
- + An overall score of 66 must be scored for a site to achieve Green Flag Award status
- + Rounding up or down of numbers must be done at the very end of each assessment, when you multiple the average.

## Strengths and Recommendations

- + Comments and recommendations must be included against each category in the feedback sections. They should be detailed enough to provide constructive information to applicants

Desk Assessment (minimum 15)		Field assessment (minimum 42)	
Total Score		Green Flag Awarded	

## Field Assessment

<b>A welcoming Place</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Biodiversity, Landscape and Heritage</b>	<b>Score</b>
1. Welcome 2. Good and Safe Access 3. Signage 4. Equal Access for All		19. Management of Natural Features, Wild Fauna and Flora 20. Conservation of Landscape Features 21. Conservation of Buildings and Structures	
<b>Healthy Safe and Secure</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Community Involvement</b>	<b>Score</b>
5. Appropriate Level of Quality Facilities and Activities 6. Safe Equipment and Facilities 7. Personal Security 8. Control of Dogs/Dog Fouling		22. Community Involvement in Management and Development 23. Appropriate Provision for the Community	
<b>Well Maintained and Clean</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Marketing and Communication</b>	<b>Score</b>
9. Litter and Waste Management 10. Horticultural Maintenance 11. Arboricultural Maintenance 12. Building and Infrastructure Maintenance 13. Equipment Maintenance		24. Marketing and Promotion 25. Appropriate Information Channels 26. Appropriate Educational and Interpretational Information	
<b>Environmental Management</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Management</b>	<b>Score</b>
14. Managing Environmental Impact 15. Waste Minimisation 16. Chemical Use 17. Peat Use 18. Climate Change Adaption Strategies		27. Implementation of Management Plan	
		<b>Total</b>	

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## Field Assessment Comments

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Criteria	Strengths	Recommendations
A welcoming Place		
Healthy, Safe and Secure		
Well Maintained and Clean		
Environmental Management		
Biodiversity, Landscape and Heritage		
Community Involvement		
Marketing and Communication		
Management		
Additional Comments		

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## Desk Assessment

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	Score
1. Presentation	
2. Health, Safety and Security	
3. Maintenance of Equipment, Buildings and Landscape	
4. Litter, Cleanliness, Vandalism	
5. Environmental Management	
6. Biodiversity, Landscape and Heritage	
7. Community Involvement	
8. Marketing and Communication	
9. Overall Management	
<b>Total</b>	
<b>Average (divide by 9)</b>	
<b>Out of 30 (average x 3)</b>	

Criteria	Strengths	Recommendations
Presentation		
Healthy, Safe and Security		
Maintenance of Equipment, Buildings and Landscape		
Litter, Cleanliness, Vandalism		
Environmental Management		
Biodiversity, Landscape and Heritage		
Community Involvement		
Marketing and Communication		
Overall Management		
Additional Comments		

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## Part 3

# Green Flag Criteria

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- + **Section 1:** A Welcoming Place
- + **Section 2:** Healthy, Safe and Secure
- + **Section 3:** Well Maintained and Clean
- + **Section 4:** Environmental Management
- + **Section 5:** Biodiversity, Landscape and Heritage
- + **Section 6:** Community Involvement
- + **Section 7:** Marketing and Communication
- + **Section 8:** Management



# Section 1: A Welcoming Place



# Section 1

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## A Welcoming Place

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This section recognises the culmination of everything done well. A welcoming place is one that invites and draws people into it. This means creating a space which, through its visual appearance, range of facilities, standards of maintenance and ease of access, makes people feel that they are in a cared-for place. This generates an innate understanding for why things are as they are, which is in turn reflected in the greater enjoyment of, and respect for, the place itself.

It is assessed through the following criteria:

### 1 Welcome

### 2 Good and Safe Access

### 3 Signage

### 4 Equal Access for All

In the desk research, Section 1 assesses the presentation of the management plan:

how easy it is to understand, to navigate (page numbers, contents page), and from its content the sense of how useful it is as a practical day-to-day management document.

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## 1. Welcome

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This is assessed on site, and judges should consider how welcome they feel throughout the visit and calculate the score from the overall sense that they leave with. On arriving at the site, would you be encouraged to enter? On entering the site, would you be encouraged to stay?

+ All major entrances should be visited, and all of the facilities where possible. For large sites such as country parks and waterways, judges should

be shown a representative variety of entrances and facilities, and during each subsequent visit their tour should take in a different cross-section

- + The welcome given should be appropriate to the site
- + Every element of management combines to give a sense of welcome, or otherwise
- + Well considered and innovative, yet practical, design features can really encourage people to enjoy using the site. Incorporate elements such as interesting planting, varied textures, and natural and built features that can be explored in play and used for relaxation

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## 2. Good and Safe Access

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It should be easy for anybody, irrespective of their ability, to enter and get around the site, where practicable. This criterion assesses the safety and practicality of physical routes into, out of, and around, the site, and how these affect the visitors to, and residents of, the site or its immediate environs.

**Managers should consider, and judges will assess, issues such as these:**

- + Presence of clear sightlines in and out, and welcoming entrances (but practical ones – vehicular barriers can be used)
- + Public transport links and whether they can be improved
- + Pedestrian routes – whether they are logical, useful and suitable for the whole range of users. For example, are they wide enough for the likely combinations of cycles/pedestrians/prams/wheelchairs/children/dogs to use safely together?

- + Cycles within the site – whether to encourage them with appropriate provision or provide safe storage at entry points. Are cycle routes designed to be complimentary and minimise conflict?
- + Vehicles on site (including service vehicles), appropriate signage, control and safety measures, including how shared access between vehicles and pedestrians is managed
- + Car parking – if provided, appropriate provision for the quantity and range of visitors
- + Equality of access including disabled access – the site should adhere to relevant national legislation

and the standards set in the UK Equality Act 2010 as a minimum. On site and online as appropriate, provide clear information on the accessibility of the various routes and areas to different users. Where appropriate, an access statement, a marketing document providing detailed information on the accessibility of your site, could be drawn up and published

- + Public access and the safety of residents either on the site (e.g. canals, housing estates, hospitals) or local residents in the immediate vicinity

## Further Information

### **The Equality Act 2010 (which applies to England and Wales, Scotland and some parts to Northern Ireland)**

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance>; Disability Legislation in Northern Ireland.

### **Access statements – examples and information**

<https://www.visitbritain.org/writingaccess-statement>. A free online tool to produce your own access statement is at <http://www.access.tourismtools.co.uk/>.

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### 3. Signage

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Signage and information panels should be appropriate to the type of site, of good quality, well maintained and free from vandalism. The content should be useful, appropriate to the visitor, friendly and welcoming, and easy to read. It should help visitors to find the site, and once there, to get around and make the most of the facilities and activities on offer.

Avoid using unnecessary signage which could detract from the site itself.

#### **Managers and judges should also consider the following details:**

- + Sites attracting visitors from a distance may benefit from installing signs from major routes; for others with mostly local and repeat visitors a sign at or near the entrance is enough; for some rural sites, very minimal signage may be appropriate
- + Signs should be placed only where needed, for example at entrances, or 'honeypot' sites
- + Consideration should be given to where they are sited, for example at what angle to approach routes and at what height, so that they can be seen and read easily
- + Sign design should be coherent and complement the overall 'feel' of the green space
- + The information should help users to have an enjoyable visit. It should give at least the following basic information
  - + name of site
  - + name of managing organisation and contact details, such as a telephone number, social media information and/or a website address as appropriate to enable visitors to contact them straight away if they encounter a problem on-site; and

+ where appropriate, opening and closing times

+ Knowing your visitors, use appropriate maps, accessibility information, infographics, other languages, and display lists of events and activities, by-laws, regulations, and interpretation boards. All of the information should be current

+ Messages should be friendly, welcoming and clear

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### 4. Equal Access for All

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This criterion assesses how well managers welcome the range of visitors (and potential visitors) to their site. It is closely linked with Section 6 Community Involvement and Section 7 Marketing and Communication, where judges look to see that managers have assessed and understand who their visitors are and who they are not, in relation to the area that they serve. It also crosses into Section 2 Healthy, Safe and Secure.

Balancing the requirements of different ages, cultural and social groups can be difficult.

Judges will be interested in the ways that managers consider the needs of various groups, how each is catered for and how conflicts are handled.

#### **Some issues to bear in mind:**

+ Consider the whole community – who is using it now? Are they well served? Who might use it but currently are not? How can it be made safer for them? Are there cultural issues that need to be considered? One of the ways of assessing this is to invite different groups to visit and use the site and provide feedback

+ Is the placement of facilities well thought out with a range of busy and quieter areas if the space allows? Are there areas where dogs are prohibited?

+ Not all areas have to be made physically accessible to all visitors – but provide information on site where appropriate as well as off-site so that visitors can look up accessible areas in

advance. You may consider publishing an access statement, a marketing document providing detailed information on the accessibility of the site

+ Staff and contractors on site should be identifiable, helpful and courteous

## Further Information

### Equality Act 2010

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance>

**Black Environment Network works to enable full ethnic participation in the built and natural environment and publishes information that might be useful to those managing green spaces. ([www.ben-network.org.uk](http://www.ben-network.org.uk))**

Access statements – examples and information

<https://www.visitbritain.org/writingaccess-statement>. A free online tool to produce your own access statement is at <http://www.access.tourismtools.co.uk/>.



## Section 2: Healthy, Safe and Secure



# Section 2

## Healthy, Safe and Secure

This section looks at how well managers understand their users' needs, encouraging them to enjoy healthy activities using appropriate, safe-to-use facilities and activities, and to feel personally safe and secure. The scheme regards 'facilities' as any structures on the site that are there for the use and enjoyment of users – including sporting facilities and their related clubhouses and changing facilities, toilets, visitor centres, cafes, benches, play and exercise equipment, water fountains and bandstands.

The cleanliness and upkeep of these visitor facilities are examined in Section 3, Clean and Well Maintained. Functional buildings such as storage facilities are considered under 12 Building and Infrastructure Maintenance. Relevant issues must be addressed in the management plan and implemented on the ground. New concerns which arise must be handled promptly and appropriately.

The following four criteria are examined:

- 5 Appropriate Provision of Quality Facilities and Activities**
- 6 Safe Equipment and Facilities**
- 7 Personal Security**
- 8 Control of Dogs/Dog Fouling**

## 5 Appropriate Provision of Quality Facilities and Activities

This criterion is concerned only that the provision of facilities and activities enables users of the site to be healthy, safe and secure. The offer

should be appropriate to the the site, and fit for purpose. Under 23 Appropriate Provision for the Community, judges will examine how, having analysed the users and potential users of the site, managers use this understanding to adjust the the full range of facilities and activities available on site.

All facilities should be attractive and functional, should perform well and meet the users' needs. Procurement of new facilities, for example children's play equipment, should meet the EU standard as a minimum. Research<sup>2</sup> shows that high quality facilities are more likely to be respected and looked after, whilst facilities perceived as low quality, substandard and unattractive are much more likely to be unused, mis-used or vandalised.

Activities should be suitable, of good quality and effectively run. Reasons for the provision or non-provision of particular facilities and activities, along with future aspirations, should be recorded in the management plan.

Judges may test facilities on site and question managers and users about their perceptions of the quality of the facilities and activities. These might include the quality of the toilets, cafe, sports and changing facilities, play and health provision, safety equipment and first aid provision.

<sup>2</sup> Cabe Space Decent Parks? Decent Behaviour? The links between the quality of parks and user behaviour (GreenSpace 2005)



+ Healthy facilities and activities can include:

- + Play and exercise equipment, trim trails, active volunteering programmes, health and fitness activities and suitable sporting facilities
- + Provision of seating – for contemplation, physical rest, solitude, and enjoyment of nature
- + Healthy eating options in the cafe

**Safety and security equipment for when things go wrong:**

- + Life-rings by open water (if deemed appropriate)

+ First aid facilities

- + Appropriate toilet provision – toilet facilities should be provided where the size of the site or extent of the facilities demands them, and should comply with national disability access regulations

.....  
**Further Information**  
.....

**European Union EN1176 – Playground Equipment Standard**

Keep Britain Tidy: People, Places and their Green Spaces: A segmentation of people who use green spaces (2010) [www.keepbritaintidy.org](http://www.keepbritaintidy.org)

**Fields in Trust publish several different guides on safe play outdoors for children, both on structures and in nature, and learning and playing for early years. Their updated “Beyond the 6 Acre Standard” (2015) sets out the latest guidance on open space and design.**

[www.fieldsintrust.org](http://www.fieldsintrust.org)

**Sensory Trust – information and projects on inclusive and sensory design**

[www.sensorytrust.org.uk](http://www.sensorytrust.org.uk)

## 6 Safe Equipment and Facilities

This criterion examines whether the equipment and facilities provided on site are safe to use, and that any events or activities held on the site are safely managed.

The management plan should list all of the policies, procedures and inspection regimes that ensure that the equipment and facilities are safe for use, from procurement through to disposal, as well as risk assessments and other safety

checks on staff and equipment relating to events and activities. On site, judges will check that the documentation is adhered to in the day to day management of the site and may ask to see some examples.

This might include policies and records on health and safety, risk assessments, food hygiene, noise and pollution levels.

### Further Information

**Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA) – provide play equipment guidelines.**

[www.rosipa.com/play-safety](http://www.rosipa.com/play-safety)

**Relevant National Health and Safety legislation – UK**

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/legislation/hswa.htm>

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## 7 Personal Security

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This sub-criterion examines the measures taken to ensure that people on the site are kept personally safe. The management plan should list all policies, procedures, risk assessments and checks in place and methods employed to reduce the risk of personal harm whilst using the site. On site, judges will check that the policies are working in practice and may ask to see actual documentation.

### Also:

- + Consider the need for on-site staff presence. Where appropriate, and in line with good practice, there should be permanent staff on site at least during peak hours. Contact details should be clearly provided on signage for out-of-hours problem reporting. Staff should be readily identifiable, approachable, trained and with the responsibility to deal with security situations. Ideally, each staff member should be in telephone or radio contact with base. Where possible, organise grounds maintenance activity to ensure that the same staff are present at particular times, making them familiar to the community
- + Consider whether there are clear sightlines and views in and out of the site. Ensure that shrubbery and trees are properly maintained or removed where necessary to avoid creating secluded areas or pathways, and where possible have paths connect with places where people congregate. Consider installing lighting along paths and in car parks used by the public when it is dark. Play areas should be informally visible where possible and ideally overlooked by housing
- + Review issues that cause fear for different members of the community – for example, inclusivity, racism, drugs, bullying, vandalism, and vagrancy

- + Risk assessments should consider the site as a whole and movements around it, not individual areas
- + Carry out disclosure checks on staff where necessary
- + Where possible, incorporate the green space into a Police or Community Support Officer beat; seek powers for designated local authority officers to deal with statutory nuisance from individuals; build safety inspections into the regular staff walk-round; and set up a “watch” group with a monitored telephone number to enable Friends’ and Residents’ groups to report problems easily and provide an early warning of increases in anti-social behaviour
- + Any hazards should be clearly marked and adequate steps taken to protect the public
- + An Incident Log should be maintained and reviewed on a regular basis, and should form the basis for future decisions

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## 8 Control of Dogs/Dog Fouling

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This section seeks to ensure that relevant strategies are in place on site to ensure that dogs do not become a nuisance and affect the enjoyment of others, whilst making dog walkers feel welcome. Dog fouling should be controlled.

Dog exercise is one of the main reasons why people use green spaces. Promoting responsible dog ownership ensures that uncollected dog fouling and uncontrolled dogs do not upset other users, or become a danger to other animals and wildlife.

Judges will examine whether dogs are suitably controlled on the site and may ask questions about the measures in place and the reasons for them. Should dogs cause a problem on the site, the approach taken should be documented in the management plan.

- + Maintain a sound understanding of relevant national legislation and use it as necessary to control dogs on the site. Good practice is to keep dogs out of children's play areas and off sports' pitches, and consider making fenced and gated dog-free zones on grass so that children can sit and play with confidence

- + Dogs can be excluded or requested to be on a lead at certain times of the year if it has an adverse effect on wildlife
- + Consider holding events aimed at dog owners
- + Are there strategies in place to handle dog walkers with multiple animals if they cause a problem?
- + Liaise with local authority dog wardens and engage with local dog walking groups
- + Consider using legislative powers where appropriate

# Section 3: Well Maintained and Clean



# Section 3

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## Well Maintained and Clean

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For aesthetic as well as health and safety reasons, issues of cleanliness and maintenance must be addressed, in particular:

- + litter and other waste management issues must be adequately dealt with
- + grounds, buildings, equipment and other features must be well maintained
- + policies on litter, vandalism and maintenance should be in place, in practice, and regularly reviewed

### 9 Litter and Waste Management

### 10 Horticultural Maintenance

### 11 Arboricultural Maintenance

### 12 Building and Infrastructure Maintenance

### 13 Equipment Maintenance

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## 9 Litter and Waste Management

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There should be a policy for managing litter and waste, and fouling from dogs and other animals and birds. It should be referenced in the

management plan and evidently effective on site. On their visit, judges will look to see that litter, fouling and waste disposal is under control, how incidents are dealt with, and may wish to see the policy or ask questions of staff about its implementation.

- + Both users and staff have a responsibility in keeping a site free of litter and fouling
- + An organisational culture should be developed whereby every staff member is prepared to pick up litter when they see it rather than waiting for the routine visit of a maintenance team
- + Managers should study the patterns of littering throughout the day, week and year, and should deal with them accordingly
- + Consider a specific policy on chewing gum – once it hardens it is costly and difficult to remove, detrimental to wildlife and a blight on the area – and smoking litter, if required



- + Where appropriate, bins should be provided on site, with consideration given to providing separate recycling facilities, cigarette stub plates and dog fouling bins. Managers should regularly evaluate the overall provision, location, position, maintenance and emptying of bins. Bins should be carefully and securely positioned and emptied regularly to encourage proper use by the public
- + Campaigns and events could be used to reduce particular problems, if appropriate
- + Managers should understand and use relevant national legislation to tackle problems
- + Managers should be aware of their legal duties under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to keep their relevant land clear of litter and refuse, and the Waste Management Licensing Regulations. These standards apply internationally as a minimum requirement for any Green Flag Award site
- + Site waste storage areas should be positioned out of sight of the public and arrangements made to ensure that waste is transported off-site as quickly as possible
- + Consider composting horticultural waste for use as a replacement for peat-based products. For example, can you chip clippings and use them as mulch?

## Further Information

**Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse – land managers have a responsibility to keep their relevant land clear of litter and refuse under s.89 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (UK).**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/code-of-practice-on-litter-and-refuse>

**Relevant national litter and waste legislation and regulations (see national guidance for details).**

## 10 Horticultural Maintenance

Horticultural maintenance should be based on the quality of the outcome. The schedule or contract should ensure that maintenance is carried out to recognised National Sector Standards. The management plan should detail both what managers are trying to achieve now, and in the future, and outline how different areas of the site are managed.

Details should be made available to judges on their visit. During their visit, judges will be looking for a good quality standard of horticultural maintenance across all areas of the site.

Relevant staff within the organisation should be qualified in recognised horticultural skills.

### Issues to consider:

- + There should be evidence that good standards of horticultural practice are being maintained across all areas of the site, e.g. shrub beds, flower beds and grassed areas

- + Sites must demonstrate appropriate management of other features, such as water bodies
- + Work specifications should emphasise the quality of the end product and new tenders should include assessment of horticultural expertise and staff experience as well as cost
- + If not done in-house, smaller contracts could be awarded for specialised items of grounds maintenance, such as shrubberies, lakes and ecology areas
- + Can you involve volunteers (through, for example, Friends' or Conservation Groups, Tenants and Residents' Associations or green gym programmes) in looking after small areas of a site? It is vital that a dedicated, skilled member of staff is present to provide assistance and oversight and to ensure safety as well as the quality of the finished job

All necessary training should be provided.

## Further Information

**Lantra (UK) – A leading body in land based and environmental training courses**

[www.lantra.co.uk](http://www.lantra.co.uk)

**Royal Horticultural Society (RHS)**

[www.rhs.org.uk](http://www.rhs.org.uk)



## 11 Arboricultural and Woodland Maintenance

Good arboricultural or forestry practice should be evident across the site. Regular monitoring of trees, as appropriate to the site, should be undertaken as part of a management approach to tree health and duty of care to visitors and staff. The management plan should, informed by the tree survey, explain how the different areas of the site are managed and why. There should also be an established emergency response to fallen or dangerous trees, plans for the future and succession planning.

During their visit, judges may ask to see the tree survey results and discuss your response to it.

### **The following should be considered where appropriate:**

- + Zoning the site according to levels of use to inform likely levels of risk
- + Establishing regular informal inspections (by individuals familiar with the site) and formal (expert) observations at an appropriate frequency. Any problems should be reported, acted upon and these actions recorded
- + Identifying any potentially problematic trees and developing an action plan to ensure safety and effective maintenance
- + Making plans for replacement of the tree stock over time
- + Site managers should have knowledge of key specimen trees and understand how to ensure their upkeep
- + Taking suitable biosecurity actions relating to tree stock and measures to avoid the spread of tree diseases, including thorough cleaning of equipment and reputable stock sourcing
- + What to do with dead wood on the site – for example, where and when it is left to provide a habitat for bats, hole nesting birds and invertebrates, where and when it is taken away for health and safety or aesthetic reasons

## Further Information

### **The Arboricultural Association – A world leading body for over 50 years delivering professional skills and guidance**

[www.trees.org.uk](http://www.trees.org.uk).

### **The Forestry Commission – information on managing forests, biosecurity in the UK nations**

<http://www.forestry.gov.uk>; hosts The National Tree Safety Group – Commonsense Risk

### **Management of Trees (2011)**

[http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FCMS024.pdf/\\$FILE/FCMS024.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FCMS024.pdf/$FILE/FCMS024.pdf), which includes legal obligations for landowners and managers, and a summary for estates and smallholdings at [www.forestry.gov.uk/safetreemanagement](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/safetreemanagement).

### **IOSH – Institution of Occupational Safety and Health – offer a variety of training courses**

[www.iosh.co.uk](http://www.iosh.co.uk)

### **Lantra (UK) – the lead body for land based and environmental training courses provide basic tree survey courses**

[www.lantra.co.uk](http://www.lantra.co.uk)

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## 12 Building and Infrastructure Maintenance

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This section broadly includes the buildings, fences, gates, paths and roadways on site.

They should be well maintained and clear of graffiti, flyposting, weeds and potholes as relevant. The management plan should refer to schedules for maintenance, repainting and renewal, and policies for dealing with vandalism, fly-tipping, graffiti and fly-posting.

Any problems should be noted and future plans stated along with a timetable. On site, judges will assess the effectiveness of these schedules in practice, may wish to see them, and may ask what happens when something goes wrong.

Buildings should be in use where possible (and ideally used in connection with the purpose of the site), and should look cared for. Any building awaiting a decision on its future should be maintained so that the structure is safe and signage provided to explain the situation to the public. This approach and future aspirations should be documented in the management plan.

On some sites, this responsibility may sit within other departments, and in some cases, other organisations. Evidence of efforts to engage with relevant third parties is expected.

It is important that connections are made to ensure ongoing maintenance and emergency response, as poorly maintained or damaged buildings and infrastructure have a huge impact on the overall feel, appearance and safety of the site.

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## 13 Equipment Maintenance

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**This criterion looks at the policies and procedures in place to carry out checks and maintenance on:**

- + the equipment used by staff
- + the equipment used by the public

The management documentation should refer to each separately and list the relevant maintenance schedules and regular checks, including the job title of who is responsible.

Judges may carry out a visual inspection of any equipment on site. They might ask to see the documentation listed above and ask a variety of members of staff about the details and location of policies.

For all equipment used by staff (and public volunteers where applicable), there should be a maintenance schedule; relevant Health and Safety legislation must be observed; and operators must be adequately trained and wear the correct safety equipment. Equipment and related materials should be stored securely. Vehicles should be maintained to high standards and national legislation adhered to in storing and disposing of liquids and materials.

Equipment provided for public use (for example, playground and exercise equipment) must be maintained to the highest recognised standard to prevent injury and accidents.

**Ideally, this means:**

+ daily 'visual inspections' when ground and other surfaces, equipment and natural features are checked for potential hazards and litter, debris and graffiti are cleared away

+ weekly 'technical inspections' to check equipment. Equipment manufacturers usually provide a checklist for this

+ annual inspections, which should be carried out by independent specialists

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## Further Information

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### RoSPA

[www.rospace.com](http://www.rospace.com) – Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents. Information on legal requirements and good practice for equipment provision. <http://www.rospace.com/playsafety/advice/>

### National Health and Safety Regulations

[www.hse.gov.uk/legislation/](http://www.hse.gov.uk/legislation/)

### National Waste Regulations

[www.gov.uk/guidance/waste-legislation-and-regulations](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/waste-legislation-and-regulations)



# Section 4: Environmental Management



# Section 4

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## Environmental Management

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This section seeks to ensure that the way the site is managed has a positive impact on the environment, locally and globally, both now and for the future.

Where choices can be made for future procurement, landscaping or buildings, they should aim to minimise energy and resource consumption and waste, and design in benefits to the local and global environment. Policies should seek to eliminate the use of peat and chemicals to control pests and as fertilisers. Horticultural and arboricultural decisions should reflect an understanding of the impacts of climate change. This links to 26 Provision of Appropriate Educational and Interpretational Information, as there are great opportunities for green and other open spaces to give people an understanding and an experience of living a life closer to nature.

### 14 Managing Environmental Impact

### 15 Waste Minimisation

### 16 Chemical Use

### 17 Peat Use

### 18 Climate Change Adaption Strategies

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## 14 Managing Environmental Impact

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The management plan should reference a wider Environmental Policy, to which all decisions about procurement, landscaping or buildings and an assessment of their environmental impact would defer. Future aspirations should be identified and recorded in the management plan. Judges will be looking to see how, in practice, it does reduce environmental impact.

If the site's managing organisation does not have its own environmental policy (which may adhere to a recognised International standard), judges would expect that the site follows the principle of an Environmental Management System, broadly to:

- + set objectives and targets for environmental improvement
- + establish operational procedures for achieving them
- + measure, record and evaluate environmental performance
- + review and seek to improve on these targets

Judges will be looking to see that, where possible and where relevant, measures have been taken

to reduce impact on the environment as the opportunity arises – usually when replacing old features or creating new ones. For example:

- + Water efficiency – installing features to reduce water consumption and reuse rainwater where possible, in building, infrastructure and water bodies whether that be across whole canal systems, large water bodies or individual ornamental water features
- + Energy saving or efficient features installed within buildings, in new vehicles and machinery
- + Renewable energy generation on site or procurement of off-site power

- + Measures taken to improve air quality
- + Measures taken to stop pollution into water
- + Measures taken to reduce noise pollution
- + Purchasing choices give equal consideration to sustainable and socially and environmentally sound sources, alongside value for money

Sites will be expected to demonstrate that, wherever possible within their particular limitations, they are doing what they can to reduce their environmental impact.

## Further Information

**European Commission Eco-Management and Audit System (EMAS) and EN/ISO 14001**

[www.iema.net](http://www.iema.net).

**Landscape Institute – guidance for Greenspace Managers and Landscape Architects**

[www.landscapeinstitute.org](http://www.landscapeinstitute.org).



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## 15 Waste Minimisation

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Policies should be in place to follow established waste management procedures – procurement strategies should seek to reduce, within reason, the amount of material being used by the site. Materials should be reused where possible, recycling should be encouraged and promoted, and disposal to landfill should be a last option. Each individual strategy will depend on the limitations of the site. The approach should be referenced in the management plan and be in practice on the ground. Future aspirations should also be recorded.

### Judges may look for the following:

- + Have all facilities on the site been considered – cafes, concessions, sporting facilities, site operations?
- + How is green waste handled? Is it mulched and put back on site? Is compost made from clippings?
- + Recycling facilities should reflect the collection facilities available locally and be suitable for the type of litter generated and for the site itself

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## Further Information

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Relevant national and international waste legislation [www.gov.uk/guidance/wastelegislation-and-regulations](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/wastelegislation-and-regulations), see also specific national guidance.

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## 16 Chemical Use

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In the interests of protecting the health of users and staff on the site, pesticides and chemical fertilisers should not be used. Minimal use may be acceptable as part of an Integrated Pest Management strategy and a full explanation is given.

'Pesticides' is a general term that includes a variety of chemical and biological products used to kill or control living organisms such as rodents, insects, fungi and plants. For the purposes of the Green Flag Award, this includes herbicides which are effectively weed killers. If this operation is carried out by external contractors, their contract must be governed by the same robust controls to ensure that the principles of the Green Flag Award are maintained. If pesticides and fertilisers continue to be used on site there must be a justification

for doing so. Relevant national and international legislation for procurement, transport, use, storage and application of these chemicals must be adhered to.

The management plan should reference any issues that you are trying to address, state the solutions that you have considered and the decision that you have made. Judges would like to see this in practice on site and will be interested in the decision-making process.

### **An elimination or reduction strategy should address the following questions:**

- + Where are pesticides and fertilisers used?
- + What would happen if there was no treatment? Is there a problem?
- + Is there a way of altering the environment to prevent the problem?

- + What physical or mechanical control methods are available?
- + What biological control methods are available that can supplement the environmental, physical and mechanical methods in use?
- + What are the least toxic chemical controls available that can supplement environmental, physical, mechanical and biological methods in use?

See the Green Flag Award Good Practice Pesticide Reduction Guide for more information.

The types and quantities of pesticides and chemical fertilisers used on site should have been recorded. Judges would expect there to be a substantial reduction compared to past use. A site should be able to demonstrate that it has done all that it can to reduce chemical use to an absolute minimum on site.

## Further Information

### **Green Flag Award Pesticide Reduction Good Practice Guide.**

[www.greenflagaward.org](http://www.greenflagaward.org)

### **Pesticides Action Network**

UK [www.pan-uk.org](http://www.pan-uk.org) – guidance on all pesticide usage.

### **EU Regulation 1107/2009, the Placing of Plant Protection Products on the Market. For the current status of active substances in the EU:**

<http://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/pesticides/eu-pesticidesdatabase/public/?event=homepageandlanguage=EN>

### **For a current list of permitted pesticides in the UK check the Chemical Regulation**

Directorates database: <https://secure.pesticides.gov.uk/pestreg/>

### **EU Directive on the Sustainable Use of Pesticides**

[http://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/pesticides/sustainable\\_use\\_pesticides/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/pesticides/sustainable_use_pesticides/index_en.htm) recommends the use of pesticides be reduced or eliminated in certain specific areas.

### **The Soil Association publishes good practice examples.**

[www.soilassociation.org](http://www.soilassociation.org)



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## 17 Peat Use

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Governments in the United Kingdom and across Europe are seeking to protect and enrich peat reserves, recognising their value to biodiversity and in global carbon storage. In the UK, there is a move to reduce peat use in horticulture to zero by 2030, subject to the development of ethically and practically suitable alternatives.

The management plan should detail your approach, now and in the future, to reducing peat use in all growing media to zero where possible, and where it is not possible, Judges will be interested in your reasoning.

**The following approach may help managers to eliminate peat use:**

- + Avoid purchasing plants grown in peat or products containing peat. Request relevant information from your suppliers
- + Use alternatives to peat such as appropriate recycled waste, or coir
- + Make your own compost from cuttings

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## Further Information

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### **National Peatland Plans:**

“The Natural Choice: Securing the Value of Nature” 2011 (England)  
Scotland’s National Peatland Plan, Scottish Natural Heritage  
Restoring Welsh Peatlands – for people and wildlife, Natural Resources Wales, 2015  
Peatland Action Plan – Irish Peatland Conservation Council

**Friends of the Earth [www.foe.co.uk](http://www.foe.co.uk) suggest alternatives to peat products.**

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## 18 Climate Change Adaption Strategies

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All new landscape management, arboricultural and horticultural decisions should consider the future likely impacts of climate change. The rationale should be evaluated in the management plan and judges may question managers further about their approach. The impact of this particular criteria will vary widely. If you are managing a historic landscape, it may be very difficult to make many changes. Where possible, judges will want to see that sites are planning for the future. What is not expected is wholesale redevelopment of sites.

This element seeks to ensure that green spaces help to mitigate the likely future impacts of climate change. Horticultural and arboricultural practice should be dealt with under 10 Horticultural Maintenance and 11 Arboricultural Maintenance, and woodland structure, tree succession planning and the specific management of the unique features of the landscape is assessed under 19 Management of Natural Features, Wild Flora and Fauna.

### Issues to consider:

- + Likely impacts of climate change and some of the mitigating factors
- + Torrential Rain: Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS), re-naturalising of modified water courses and flood plains and other flood reduction strategies, soil binding
- + Drought: adaptive vegetation, rain water harvesting and soil mulching
- + Wind: tree layout and design, and public safety
- + Heat: suitably tolerant vegetation, shade and waterbodies for cooling off
- + Opportunities to enhance ecological networks and habitats or populations of species so that they are better able to adapt to a changing climate through, for example, choices for planting or their positioning

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## Further Information

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### Climate Change Parks:

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140605090108/http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/11909565>; <http://greenspacescotland.org.uk/climate-change-parks.aspx>

### Climate Change Adaption Manual:

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5629923804839936>

# Section 5: Biodiversity, Landscape and Heritage



# Section 5

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## Biodiversity, Landscape and Heritage

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Attention should be paid to the appropriate management and conservation of natural features, wildlife and flora; landscape features; and buildings and structures.

Their particular character and requirements should be identified and appropriate management strategies put in place to conserve and enhance them.

This section is judged under three criteria:

### 19 Management of Natural Features, Wild Fauna and Flora

### 20 Conservation of Landscape Features

### 21 Conservation of Buildings and Structures

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## 19 Management of Natural Features, Wild Fauna and Flora

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The particular natural features, the habitats and species of the site should be identified, their characteristics understood, and appropriate management strategies put in place to conserve and enhance them. A site is likely to contain a number of different habitats, each with its own particular management requirements, but decisions should also be taken in the context of the site as a whole. Any official designations should be noted and the requirements for management adhered to; all types of habitats present should be identified and their management approach detailed and delivered. Habitat management can take an informal or a formal path, but it needs to

be appropriate, with consideration given to what is feasible and practical within the context of the site, while managers should be able to explain their choices and the decisions made.

Judges will be looking to see that managers understand the unique natural features of the site, its historical context and physical setting, the needs of the community, and what is feasible, practicable or desirable in the future. They would like to see that all decisions to manage, create or promote the natural features, wild flora and fauna on the site are made with reference to this understanding. The current management strategy and future plans should be detailed within the management plan. On site, judges may ask questions about the kinds of decisions that have been taken and the rationale behind them.

### Issues to consider:

- + Potential for sites to form part of a network for wildlife, as natural floodways or open spaces, to buffer and enhance
- + The presence of any ancient trees, or historic tree or plant collections and how they are identified, managed and promoted
- + Local historical or social links with types of biodiversity or particular habitats
- + Links to wider local and national strategies – including Local Nature Partnerships, National Pollinator Strategy, health and wellbeing and nature, natural play, forest schools, involving people in ‘growing their own’, green infrastructure and climate change adaptation

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## Further Information

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### **The Ancient Tree Forum – Information on the ecology, management and conservation of veteran trees**

[www.ancienttreeforum.co.uk](http://www.ancienttreeforum.co.uk)

### **The Green Flag Award Biodiversity Advice Pack**

[www.greenflagaward.org](http://www.greenflagaward.org)

### **Woodland Trust – Information on managing and promoting trees**

[www.woodlandtrust.org.uk](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk)

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## 20 Conservation of Landscape Features

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This section is almost always applicable – every landscape reflects elements of historic, design and cultural importance that tell some of the story of the site and why it is as it is now. Green spaces, their views, vistas and features are almost all designed landscapes.

Recreation Grounds are historic landscapes because they were built to provide sporting facilities for the masses; the landscape of a nature reserve is carefully managed to maintain particular features; and some green spaces have grown up around existing or former features (mines, quarries, flood defences, reservoirs, canals, rivers, geological features, historic or iconic buildings) that have already played some part in shaping the landscape.

Management on such a large scale will cross administrative boundaries and should be approached in conjunction with the other parties involved.

This sub-section seeks to ensure that important elements of the site's landscape are firstly identified, and then appropriately managed, both in theory and in practice.

### **The management plan should contain a statement, recognising:**

- + what landscape features are present and their relationship to each other (natural and landscaped features; trees – individual, groups, avenues, plants and planting; geological; important view lines; open areas)
- + where they came from (social and cultural importance)
- + what has come since
- + specific reference to any conservation designation applied to the landscape (registered park or garden, conservation area, scheduled ancient monument and local designations)

The management plan should demonstrate how specific features and relationships between features are being protected, enhanced and maintained. It should also detail ways in which features might be better managed in the future, should circumstances change.

During their visit, judges will examine how this works in practice. They might speak to individuals working on site to find out whether they know and understand why the landscape is as it is, or what the manager sees as the strategic landscape elements. They might ask how landscape

decisions are made, who is consulted and the process undertaken.

- + What makes the landscape can be naturally occurring (open grass, moor, water bodies, rolling hills or mountains) or designed in – trees, 'ha-has', hummocks, feature views. Landscape can also be cultural and geological
- + Connections between landscape and local history or culture and its reflection of their relationship could be explored, if relevant
- + Landscape features that are not wanted but cannot currently be changed should be identified and future aspirations noted. For example, why trees currently growing in the wrong place should not be replanted when they reach the end of their lives

- + Activities relating to the landscape should be identified and relationships made with relevant user groups and interested parties, who should be appropriately involved in future landscape decisions

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## Further Information

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**Heritage Lottery Fund publishes management guides, including Management and Maintenance Plan Guidance and Conservation Plan Guidance, [www.hlf.org.uk](http://www.hlf.org.uk) and Learning to Rethink Parks, exploring different strategic approaches to management –**

[www.nesta.org.uk/publications/learning-rethink-parks](http://www.nesta.org.uk/publications/learning-rethink-parks)

**Historic England publishes an extensive range of expert advice and guidance to help managers care for and protect historic places**

[www.https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/](https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/); see also [www.historicenvironment.scot](http://www.historicenvironment.scot)

**The Green Flag Award Biodiversity Advice Pack**

[www.greenflagaward.org](http://www.greenflagaward.org)



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## 21 Conservation of Buildings and Structures

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Iconic and historic buildings and structures play a prominent role in interpreting a site – technically defined as those over 30 years old, but more recent iconic buildings and structures should also be considered in this section. They require careful maintenance to maintain their integrity. This category seeks evidence that managers appreciate every building and structure within their site, understand what each adds to the character of the site and manage and preserve them appropriately.

### **The management plan should:**

- + identify the individual historic or iconic buildings and structures on site (making reference to any specific conservation designations)
- + understand the significance of each
- + make reference to an appropriate maintenance schedule
- + show a sensitive approach to management and change

Judges, during their visit, will look for evidence that high quality and appropriate maintenance is being carried out on the buildings and structures, and might ask questions to ascertain that their heritage value is understood. They will also be interested in the processes undertaken to come to a decision on any future building plans.

This section is concerned with the sensitive management and preservation of noteworthy structures, rather than regular ongoing maintenance of the more inconspicuous buildings and infrastructure covered in 12 Building and Infrastructure Maintenance.

- + The entirety of the estate is important and managers should recognise the whole setting even if it isn't within their remit. For cemeteries, canals, areas of social housing and large campuses for example, the buildings and structures physically dominate the site and they should be part of the management plan, even if only to ensure ongoing consultation with the relevant stakeholders
- + Key developmental stages in the history of the place can be represented through enhancing structures and buildings from different eras
- + Buildings should be in use where possible, ideally by groups involved in the life of the site
- + Friends' groups could be encouraged to take over or look after some of the heritage features and improve or extend their use
- + Buildings or structures identified as in need of maintenance or restoration should have a vision and a plan to maintain them. The site should be safely contained, kept unblighted, and signage erected to let the public know what is happening



+ Ruins shouldn't be allowed to be dangerous but they can be managed appropriately. For example, cemeteries often contain memorials that are in a ruinous condition. The approach to management is important. Heritage England publish guidance on managing ruins

+ Not all buildings have to be kept; ongoing community consultation is important, and even if it is a relevant part of history but the community

are happy if it goes and is either replaced with a better alternative or it is no longer needed, then it doesn't need to stay. Judges will be interested in the decision-making process and appropriateness of the outcome for the people using it, rather than the outcome itself

## Further Information

**Green Heritage Site Status** is awarded to Green Flag Award sites that take this section one step further to develop and implement a specific Conservation Management Plan to manage the site centering on the significance of these features and concentrating on retaining them in the long term (see Appendix 2).

**Heritage Lottery Fund publishes management guides, including Management and Maintenance Plan Guidance and Conservation Plan Guidance, [www.hlf.org.uk](http://www.hlf.org.uk) and Learning to Rethink Parks, exploring different strategic approaches to management**

[www.nesta.org.uk/publications/learning-rethink-parks](http://www.nesta.org.uk/publications/learning-rethink-parks)

**Historic England publishes an extensive range of standard expert advice and guidance on care for and protection of historic places**

<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/>. See also [www.historicenvironment.scot](http://www.historicenvironment.scot)

**Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM) provide specific guidance on management of those sites**

<http://www.iccm-uk.com/iccm/index.php>

## Section 6: Community Involvement



# Section 6

## Community Involvement

**This section examines the extent to which the managing organisation:**

- + understands the community it seeks to serve
- + actively and appropriately involves members of the community in making decisions about the site's development
- + provides opportunities for active participation in site projects
- + ensures that there is appropriate provision of recreational facilities and activities for all sectors of the community

Understanding the community is assessed in Section 7 Marketing and Communication, and the marketing strategy would contain an analysis of who the site currently serves, and who they would like to include. Armed with this information, this section is examined under two sub-criteria:

### 22 Community Involvement in Management and Development

#### 23 Appropriate Provision for Community

## 22 Community Involvement in Management and Development

This should be entirely appropriate to the site and the needs of the local community and will vary hugely. Judges will be interested in whether and how representative members of the community (current users and other people local to the site who could use it more) have been identified and actively involved (not simply consulted) in the

management and key developmental decisions about the site. Judges will seek to understand that this engagement role is properly resourced with skilled staff, and that people within the wider managing organisation also support this work. Current and future plans should be detailed in the management plan, and judges may like to discuss with the management their approaches to this, and, if possible, to meet community representatives on site.

### Managers should have examined

- + Who is and who could be involved with the space?
- + How could they be involved with the space?

They should also have approached these groups and sought to engage them

### Some issues to consider:

- + A variety of methods could be used to involve communities, including: forums, questionnaires, surveys, as well as outreach work to schools, youth organisations, faith groups and organisations that represent people with disabilities. Particular consultation should be aimed at the 13–19 age group, often one of the hardest groups to engage with
- + Providing evidence of active engagement with, and understanding of, communities might be the analysis of survey results or outcomes or decisions made at community forum meetings, ideally summarised and referenced in the management plan
- + It is important that groups are fairly represented and conflicting demands are equitably balanced when decisions, particularly those involving significant redesign and investment, are made

- + It can be better to approach representative groups individually, rather than try to bring them together. However, where groups are disproportionately interested in one part of the site, a quarterly meeting of all interested parties can be useful. Use methods as appropriate to seek to identify and resolve conflicts between user groups
- + Groups should be approached and supported in developing their vision for different use of the space. Where it is unachievable, clear feedback should be given and alternatives explored where possible
- + 'Friends' Groups' are often an indication of community engagement, but there doesn't have to be one – judges are looking to see regular engagement across the whole community – those geographically local to the site and its existing users
- + Some sites will have obvious bodies for consultation, such as allotment associations, student bodies, residents' groups, sporting committees, historical societies or friends' groups. Also involve others with impact on or who are impacted by the site – other site departments or contractors, local residents, businesses, faith or interest groups and people running events or facilities on the site
- + Reflect the local multicultural community – try to get representation from all groups in the locality. It may mean going out to some groups as they wouldn't engage with more traditional techniques
- + Properly supervised by a dedicated member of site staff, groups can be involved in the day to day running of the site, and can sometimes leverage additional funding, providing great benefit to all
- + Community involvement in some sites, such as cemeteries and crematoria still in use, may not comprise the traditional groups. It might be better to engage with users through feedback via funeral directors. Friends' groups could be established for historic cemeteries and may be able to carry out supervised works on the site

## Further Information

**BEN-network – advice on involving hard-to reach groups: Guidance for Greenspace Managers.**

[www.ben-network.org.uk](http://www.ben-network.org.uk)

**Advice on campaigns and communication materials are available from national operators.**

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## 23 Appropriate Provision for the Community

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This criterion serves to verify that the provision of facilities, services and events is suitable for the whole range of users and potential users – within the limitations of the site. Judges will welcome evidence of analysis of the current provisions, clearly identified gaps for particular groups and proposed solutions inserted into future plans in the management plan.

In 5 Appropriate Provision of Facilities and Activities, the existing facilities, activities and events on site are evaluated only to ensure that they allow users to lead healthy lifestyles, and to be personally safe and secure. This criterion takes a much broader and longer term approach as it looks at how, having analysed the needs of users and potential users, the full range of facilities and activities on site have and will be adjusted to serve them better.

Research<sup>3</sup> shows that people visit green spaces for different reasons – some for adventure and challenge, some seeking peace and solitude and a spiritual connection to nature, others for family activity and the recreational needs of their children, and yet others for social activity, sports and fun with friendship groups. Age, gender, culture, ethnicity, and social and personal circumstances also play a part in shaping these needs.

Recognising that every site will have its limitations, managers should seek to understand this diverse range of needs, and where possible, to provide suitable facilities and related activities. The part that this site plays in any district-wide or local plan for varied provision should be detailed in the management plan.

Limiting facilities to maintain a particular site's characteristics is just as valid. For example, a nature reserve protecting sensitive ecosystems or species may aim to keep visitor numbers low, so they might aim to keep on-site facilities to a minimum. There is no predetermined list of expectations depending on the 'type' of site – it is important to respond to the needs of users. It is also important to feed back to users what can and cannot be provided and the reason behind the decision.

Reasons for the provision or non-provision of facilities should be recorded in the management plan, alongside future aspirations, and judges may enquire into this whilst on site.

### Some issues to consider:

- + Is there potential for any conflicts between user groups that need to be managed? Could the area be better zoned?
- + Is there fair provision – for all ages, sectors of the community, and all types of activities that the site encourages?
- + Play equipment should be physically challenging, functional and imaginative, catering for a range of ages and physical abilities, located in a safe area away from main roads, dogs excluded. Opportunities for wild and free play are equally valuable and develop imagination, connection to nature and stimulate senses. Can you link better to existing facilities, events and programmes already underway to encourage wider engagement with them?
- + Would it help to make a study of patterns of use across the day, week or year?
- + Have you considered what people do when they visit the site?
- + Can the site provide informal space for community events or social get-togethers?

<sup>3</sup>Keep Britain Tidy: People, Places and their Green Spaces: a segmentation of people who use green spaces (2010) [www.greenflagaward.org](http://www.greenflagaward.org)



# Section 7: Marketing and Communication



# Section 7

## Marketing and Communication

This section seeks to examine the ways that managers understand the key benefits of the site and how they are using this information to promote it appropriately. They should understand who the main user groups are, and could or should be, and use a fitting range of interpretation and engagement techniques to communicate with them. This basis ensures that appropriate facilities, events and activities can be offered and most effectively promoted, and forms a solid foundation for development now and in the future.

Linked to this, and examined in Section 6, Community Involvement, is that knowing and understanding the community who use the site means that managers can develop far more active engagement from users. This helps to promote the site, to protect it from misuse and potentially to engage practical help.

This section is judged using the following sub-criteria:

### 24 Marketing and Promotion

### 25 Appropriate Information Channels

### 26 Appropriate Educational and Interpretational Information

## 24 Marketing and Promotion

There should be an appropriate marketing plan for the site, referenced in the management plan, which at its most basic level, considers the following:

- + What are you trying to achieve?
- + How is the place currently used?

- + How would you like it to be used?
- + Who would you want/need to work with?
- + Who are your main target audience(s)? For each of them consider:
  - + the best channel(s) to speak to them
  - + the best way(s) of getting information back, and if not getting any back, why not?
  - + who is not included and how can you include them?
- + Review and evaluation to inform future plans
- + Plans for now and future aspirations

### Issues to consider:

- + The extent and depth of this plan should be appropriate to the type of site. For example, a major heritage attraction drawing visitors from across the globe would have a very different marketing plan to that relating to the grounds of a housing association or campus, small local park or recreation area, a sensitive nature site, or an active cemetery or crematorium
- + It could be part of a larger organisational strategy, but there should be specific detail on this particular site – understanding the site and it's current and potential users
- + Events are not always the best idea. There might be better ways engage visitors. It may be best to take expertise out of the site, for example into schools or local groups, especially those that would otherwise hesitate to engage, perhaps because of age or culture

Judges will be looking to see that the marketing approach is logical and well understood by managers and in evidence on the ground.

## Further Information

Information on marketing and draft communications templates are available from national operators. [www.greenflagaward.org](http://www.greenflagaward.org)



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## 25 Appropriate Information Channels

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Knowing your main audiences – current and intended – use appropriate vehicles for providing information to them. Two-way interaction is even better, so managers should aim to maintain channels for feedback and problem reporting, including means for instant contact on site signage and offsite materials. Methods will vary depending on the type of site and the type of audience. The management plan or referenced marketing strategy should provide more information on the strategy you employ, maybe include some examples, and judges should be satisfied from visiting the site and talking to staff and visitors that adequate and appropriate information methods are in place.

### **There are a range of methods for marketing green spaces, which might include:**

- + Publication and distribution of annual reports and management plans (have these available to leaf through in the cafe, reception or other public buildings)
- + Online visitor information sites; those with facility for reviews and comments make a good monitoring tool
- + Social media
- + Events calendars – on notice boards, online, in newsletters
- + Local and free press
- + Local radio
- + Well trained and approachable staff – rangers, contractors or other staff, all of whom should be clearly identifiable

- + Printed media – posters, banners, leaflets, flyers or reverse sides of parking/bus tickets
- + Links to Green Flag – use your achievement of a prestigious international award to promote the site. Fly the flag and use the Green Flag Award website to promote the site; a free, fully updatable web page is available for every winning site
- + Share others' communication channels, for example those of the managing organisation, and partner organisations
- + Local noticeboards – physical and online
- + Sometimes, marketing is done practically by taking the experience of the site to others – for example taking plants or animals, giving talks on growing vegetables or wildflowers, or on the history of the site, to schools or local groups rather than them coming on to site
- + The marketing of cemeteries and crematoria has to be carried out in a very sensitive way and might comprise a leaflet detailing the history of the site and any interesting historical features. It should also contain useful numbers – where to go for support after a bereavement, how to register a death and a list of local Funeral Directors, for example. This could be completely financed by an Undertaker
- + Sensitive sites that are actively seeking to control visitor numbers, for example to protect the environment, could decide their marketing strategy was to approach schools or other groups to arrange scheduled visits and promote events taking place at other sites

Once the methods of communication have been selected, it is vital that the message is clear in wording and design (use infographics and multiple languages as appropriate), and is made available at the appropriate time. Once the material is out of date it must be removed from circulation.

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## Further Information

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**Green Flag guidelines for the use of the logo are available on the website**

[www.greenflag.org](http://www.greenflag.org)

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## 26 Appropriate Educational and Interpretational Information

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There is enormous opportunity for green spaces to be centres for learning about and experiencing ways of enjoying and understanding built heritage and nature, its diversity and its fragility; healthy living, diet and exercise; developing a positive mental attitude; understanding where food comes from; and appreciating that we all live together on one planet.

In this sub-criterion, Judges would like to see consideration in the management plan of how the site could be used for educational purposes, now and in the future, and that this is evidenced on site, in the materials provided, the overall marketing approach and in the relationships established. The range of educational interpretation will very much depend on the type of site. This could range from interpretation panels to onsite classrooms and extensive education programmes which may be provided on sites such as Country Parks.

### Ideas could include:

- + Signage and interpretation boards on site and online information detailing the social and built heritage and unique biodiversity features of the site
- + Nature walks, green gym programmes, healthy activities, creative conservation, or links with local history or other interest groups
- + Welcoming or providing Forest Schools or equivalent outdoor learning experiences for local schools
- + Promoting growing your own food – allotment provision or healthy eating areas or guidance on growing at home
- + Establishing links with local groups for people with disabilities

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## Further Information

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### Incredible Edible Network

<http://incredibleediblenetwork.org.uk/>

# Section 8: Management



# Section 8

## Management

This section evaluates how well the management plan is implemented on site. Green spaces commonly represent significant and valuable assets within any Managing Organisation's portfolio, and as such, should be professionally managed. Therefore, the Green Flag Award requires the establishment of an active management plan based on a deep understanding of the community that it serves and its aspirations, believing that this is important to ensure the proper funding of these assets with financial, staff and volunteer resources. It also provides a document that enables everybody involved in that green space to be clear about what is being achieved and their role in achieving it.

## 27 Implementation of Management Plan

Applicants need to have a management plan and be using it. Judges will be looking for evidence that it is used in practice. They will be interested to know how familiar people are with the management plan and may ask members of staff and community representatives, as well as assessing overall how well-run the site appears to be.

There is no set format for this document – it does not have to be based around the Green Flag Award criteria, although an assessment against these criteria could provide a useful starting point. Applicants might find it helpful to put within the management plan a cover note to help the judges to find the information that they need to assess the

criteria. Most important is that the management plan is integral to the running of the site. It should be in regular use and not simply written for the award application and put away for the next year. At its best, anyone should be able to pick up the management plan and know what is important about managing the site now and in the future.

Future aspirations are important. Judges will be looking to see that the management plan is regularly updated and also that there is a response to the previous judges' assessment.

**Broadly, the management plan should take this kind of approach:**

### Where are we now?

- + Introduction to the site
- + Historical and social context
- + Site description

### Where do we want to get to?

- + The vision
- + Assessment and analysis – strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
- + Aims and objectives

### How are we going to get there?

- + Reference to relevant policies
- + Work and action plans and timetable
- + Finance and resource allocations

### How do we know we have arrived?

- + Monitoring and review process

There are a number of other, often larger and more detailed, strategies, procedures and policies mentioned throughout this manual that should be referenced in the management plan. Judges will be evaluating how they are interpreted and make a difference to the way that the site is managed in practice. For example, they do not want the full detail of an Environmental Policy, but do want to see what happens on the ground because of it.

**Copies should be made available to judges on site if they request them:**

- + Analysis of users – current and potential
- + Links to wider or overarching strategies – planning, nature, natural resources, heritage, transport, environmental management systems and audit, procurement, etc
- + Facilities maintenance and safety
- + Risk assessments for staff and users
- + Noise and pollution assessments
- + Dog management strategy
- + Litter, waste and antisocial behaviour management and maintenance
- + Equipment maintenance schedules
- + Grounds maintenance/horticultural/ arboricultural contract or schedule and chemical use strategy
- + Conservation Management Plan (if appropriate)
- + Marketing Plan
- + Some applicants have used the management plan as an umbrella document to draw together and make sense of the relationship between the many operational policies and procedures
- + They should be clearly presented (this is scored in the desk assessment) and include a main named contact, page numbers, contents pages, a timetable for future plans and a list of actions completed in the last year. It is good practice to work to a rolling timescale, for example three, five or ten years

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**Part 4**

# Appendices

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- + Appendix 1: Green Flag Community Award
- + Appendix 2: Green Heritage Site Accreditation



# Appendix 1: Green Flag Community Award



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## What is it?

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As well as the Green Flag Award, the Scheme also offers the Green Flag Community Award. This is aimed at sites that are managed by volunteers, or by community groups or organisations made up of volunteers.

Sites must be solely managed by the community group – this means that all decisions, including financial ones, regarding the site are made by the organisation responsible for its management and maintenance – although certain aspects of the site's maintenance may be undertaken by other bodies, for example the local authority.

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## What is eligible to enter?

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Any type of green space is eligible to enter, as long as the site is freely accessible. Often, applications are received from:

- + Community Gardens
- + Parks, recreation grounds and open spaces
- + Village greens
- + Community-managed section of a larger site e.g. walled garden in a formal park
- + Churchyards
- + Woodlands
- + Pocket Parks
- + Allotments (as long as they are managed as a community garden)

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## What are the judges looking for?

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Every green space will be judged on its own merit by an independent judge. An Award will be given to any green space that reaches the Green Flag Award standard. To ensure that your green space stands the best chance of receiving an Award, you may like to consider the issues that our judges will be looking for:

### **A Welcoming Place**

First impressions are all too important and the site should look inviting. Issues that must be considered are: good and safe access, welcome, signage and equal access for all. The site should be freely accessible to the public. However, we are fully aware that sites may well have to be locked at night for security reasons or that access to the site may be restricted to regular, advertised open days, with a designated member being the key holder.

### **Healthy, Safe and Secure**

It is of paramount importance that the site is safe. Issues such as personal security, safe equipment and facilities, appropriate level of facilities and control of dogs, and dog fouling must be considered. Sites should encourage people to live healthy lifestyles through the facilities, activities and events provided.

### **Well Maintained and Clean**

There should be an appropriate standard of maintenance throughout the site and effective management skills to combat issues including: litter, fouling and waste management, as well as graffiti and vandalism.

### **Environmental Management**

Judges will examine environmental issues such as peat and pesticide use, sustainable material use, waste and its minimisation.

### **Biodiversity, Landscape and Heritage**

Each green space is unique and has its own character. The judges will be looking at how the natural and historic features are identified on site, and what measures have been taken to enhance them where appropriate.

### **Community Involvement**

This is a key criterion for the Green Flag Community Award as it looks to how well the site relates to and encompasses the local and wider community.

### **Management/Achievements**

Here judges will be looking at what you have achieved, not only in terms of managing the green space, but also what funding and resources you have secured and how you have used them. How creative and innovative you have been with projects on your site will also be of interest.

Judges score each green space against a detailed checklist based on the above criteria.

Any site that achieves a high enough score will receive an Award. There is no separate scoring of the management plan, although management documentation and overall management is assessed in the management/achievements section.

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## Documents to Submit

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The following documents are required in order to allow the Green Flag Award staff to be confident that the site is managed by a legitimate group, which is adequately insured and has the landowner's permission to operate.

### **Your application must include:**

- + Organisation's constitution
- + Lease or agreement with landowner
- + Management or maintenance plan
- + Financial statement
- + Insurance details
- + Plan of the green space
- + Hazard identification and risk assessment

### **The following information is also required for all sites:**

- + Location map and directions to the site – please make sure these are clear and precise so that your allocated judge will be able to find their way to your site
- + Publicity statement – for the Green Flag Award website
- + Photographs – three high quality images of your green space

### **What Happens Next?**

Applicants will be notified by email when their result is available to view online.

Applicants will also receive a feedback report explaining the judge's decision, highlighting the strengths of, and recommendations for, your green space.

### **Winning an Award**

Winners will be publicly announced and will receive a flag and a certificate. These must be displayed on site for a period of one year from the date the Award is presented.

Winning sites may use the Green Flag Community Award logo on stationary, promotional literature, etc. for the awarded period. Information regarding the logo can be found on [www.greenflagaward.org](http://www.greenflagaward.org)

If standards in an award-winning site are found to have fallen to unacceptably low levels, the park or green space management will be notified.

Applications are made through the Green Flag Award website [www.greenflagaward.org](http://www.greenflagaward.org)

# Green Flag Community Award Score Sheet



0/1	2/3/4	5/6	7	8	9	10
Very poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Exceptional

Name of green space	
Managing organisation	
Judge(s)	
Date of field assessment	

## Scoring

- + Please score each category out of 10
- + Work out the average score and multiply by 10 to obtain the final score
- + If it is 66 or above, you are recommending the green space for a Green Flag Community Award
- + Comments and recommendations must be included against each category in the feedback sections. They should be detailed enough to provide constructive information to applicants

## Strengths and Recommendations

- + Comments and recommendations must be included against each category in the feedback sections. They should be detailed enough to provide constructive information to applicants

Total		Green Flag Community Award Achieved? (Yes/ No)	
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## Field Assessment

<b>A welcoming place</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Biodiversity, landscape and heritage</b>	<b>Score</b>
1. Welcome 2. Good and Safe Access 3. Signage 4. Equal Access for All		16. Conservation of Landscape and Historic Features 17. Conservation of Biodiversity	
<b>Healthy safe and secure</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Community involvement</b>	<b>Score</b>
5. Appropriate Level of Facilities and Activities 6. Safe Equipment and Facilities 7. Personal Security 8. Control of Dogs/Dog Fouling		18. Promotion of Green Space / Project 19. Links to the Wider Community 20. Involvement in Decision Making 21. Involvement in Operations 22. Appropriate Provision for the Community	
<b>Well maintained and clean</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Management / achievements</b>	<b>Score</b>
9. Litter and Waste Management 10. Overall Standard of Maintenance 11. Graffiti and Vandalism		23. Innovation and Creativity 24. Resources Secured/Used	
<b>Environmental management</b>	<b>Score</b>	Average (total divided by 24)	
12. Sustainable Materials Use 13. Waste Recycling and Minimisation 14. Chemical Use 15. Peat Use		Score (average x 10)	



# Appendix 2: Green Heritage Site Accreditation

Supported in England by:



Historic England



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## What is it?

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Green Heritage Site Accreditation is awarded to green spaces that are managed to Green Flag Award standards and also actively understand, identify, manage and promote the elements of their heritage that make that site unique. A Green Heritage Site must also hold the Green Flag Award (although it is possible to apply for both even in the first year).

Green Heritage Site Accreditation promotes the value of, and best practice in, the care and upkeep of parks and other green spaces. Sites do not have to be on a National Register of Historic Parks and Gardens but, except in exceptional circumstances, would normally be at least 30 years old. Green Heritage Site Accreditation is sponsored in England by Historic England.

Any site that is of local or national historic interest, or contains features of historic interest, can apply. This especially applies to any site that has received Heritage Lottery Funding. There does not have to be standard 'archaeological features' present to make a place historically important. Every place is defined by its particular physical, social and cultural history which has shaped it to the present, and which will continue to shape the future.

There is an interesting story to understand, preserve and develop, and to share with those that spend time there – through work or as a recreational user.

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## Application and Assessment

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Application is through the Green Flag Award website [www.greenflagaward.org](http://www.greenflagaward.org). Trained heritage judges will carry out Green Flag Award Assessment and Green Heritage Site Accreditation at the same time. The judging process is similar to that for the Green Flag Award assessment, with a desk assessment followed by a site assessment.

**To achieve Green Heritage Site Accreditation, applicants have to demonstrate that they:**

- + understand the heritage value of their site
- + acknowledge this heritage value
- + share the value; and
- + conserve, enhance and help people to enjoy, the heritage value of the site

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## Stage One: Desk Assessment

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In the first stage the judges will assess the application and supporting papers. The supporting papers should consist of:

- + a conservation plan for the site, or at the very least a conservation statement
- + a management plan (this can be the Green Flag Award management plan as long as the conservation elements are suitably embedded)
- + evidence of how the site's historic value is promoted (which may form part of the management plan)
- + a statement of no more than 250 words indicating why the site is special in terms of national or local historic importance

This section is worth 30 out of 100 points. The average score is calculated and multiplied by 3 to give a score out of 30. At least 15 points are required to gain the accreditation.

**Prior to their visit, judges will assess your documentation using the following criteria:**

Presentation of conservation plan or statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>+ Is it readable and clear?</li><li>+ Does it clearly state the heritage significance of the site and give supporting details and information?</li><li>+ Clear links into the overall management plan</li></ul>
Strategic and policy background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>+ Does it acknowledge the relevant formal heritage status and show how this should be managed?</li><li>+ Does it provide evidence of strategic support from within the Managing Organisation and other relevant agencies?</li><li>+ Does the management plan translate the objectives of the conservation plan into an achievable programme?</li></ul>
Community involvement and marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>+ Are all users and potential users identified and engaged?</li><li>+ Is there evidence of specific marketing of the heritage features?</li></ul>
Integration of heritage management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>+ All staff, volunteers, advisors, trainers and others involved in managing the site should be aware of the conservation plan and understand the significance of the heritage interest on the site</li></ul>

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## Stage Two: Site Assessment

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The second stage will comprise a site visit where the judges work through a checklist to decide if the Green Heritage Site criteria have been met.

This section is worth 70 out of 100 points. The average score is multiplied by 7 to give a score out of 70. It must score at least 42 points to gain the accreditation.

**When they visit the site, the judges will be assessing the following criteria through questions and through observation:**

Good conservation standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>+ Relevance of the conservation and management plans to what they see evidenced</li><li>+ Practical conservation work carried out to high standards (e.g. repointing)</li><li>+ Staff, contractors and volunteers understand the conservation standards and work to them</li></ul>
Historic features given prominence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>+ Historic features are a celebrated part of the landscape, whether that be subliminally or overtly</li><li>+ Historic features are regarded as an integral part of the site operation as a whole, not boxed off or hidden</li></ul>
Restoration / recreation of landscape features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>+ Evidence that what has been identified in the conservation plan has been put into practice on the ground in accordance with the plan</li><li>+ Good quality outcome – demonstrated through the finish, use of materials, reflection of original design features</li></ul>
Historic features intact and in use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>+ Architectural features, detailed design elements and buildings (for example, sporting features, fountains, drinking fountains, bandstands, bedding displays) should still be in use and not derelict</li><li>+ Where adequate maintenance is impossible, records should be kept of their existence and measures put in place to retain the essence of what was there. For example, rather than trying to retain large areas of poor bedding displays, it would be better for some areas to be recorded and grassed over, and reduced but strategically located areas of bedding maintained. Future aspirations should be recorded in the conservation plan</li></ul>
Information available and evidence that historic features are enjoyed by the public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>+ Lists of events and relevant interpretation information should be made available</li><li>+ People can be seen actively enjoying the historic features</li></ul>

Relevance of historic landscape design integrity understood and interpreted

- + Evidence that staff know the importance of original features even if they are not currently useable or visible – for example, views, avenues and water features, as well as it being documented in the conservation plan
- + It is important to understand what was once there to inform long term management. For example, many sites have trees growing in the wrong place that cannot currently be felled, but it means that when the tree is eventually lost, another will not be replanted there and the vista renewed

Horticultural displays contribute to historic character

- + Displays should be in keeping with the character of the site and can reflect multiple periods in its development
- + People should be able to understand why displays are as they are

Recognition and appropriateness of historic tree and plant collections

- + All collections should be recognised, maintained, and enhanced
- + What is in the conservation plan should be evidenced on site

New and replacement features conserve or enhance the historic character and appearance

- + Judges are interested in the process of consultation and decision-making undertaken rather than offering personal opinion on the look of the features themselves

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## Next Stages

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The judge may offer some informal feedback on the day. The judge will complete their report and submit it to the Green Flag Award Scheme. You will receive notification at the same time as you are notified about your Green Flag Award.

# Green Heritage Site Assessment Sheet



0 / 1	2 / 3 / 4	5 / 6	7	8	9	10
Very poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Exceptional

Name of green space	
Managing organisation	
Judge(s)	
Date of desk assessment	
Date of site visit:	

## Guidance

- + Please score each category out of 10
- + Work out the average score for the desk assessment and multiply by 3 to get the score out of 30
- + Work out the average score for the site assessment and multiply by 7 to get the score out of 70
- + Add the two together to get the total score
- + If the overall score is 66 or above, you are recommending the green space to be a Green Heritage Site

## Strengths and Recommendations

- + Comments and recommendations must be included against each category in the feedback sections. They should be detailed enough to provide constructive information to applicants

Desk Assessment Score = 30%	
Site visit score = 70%	
Overall score 66% or above	



.....

## Your Overall Comments

.....

Strengths:	
Recommendations:	
Overall Comments:	

.....

## Desk Assessment

.....

		Score	Strengths	Recommendations
1	Presentation of Conservation Plan or Statement			
2	Strategic and Policy Background			
3	Community Involvement and Marketing			
4	Integration of Heritage Management			

Total =	
Average (total divided by 4) =	
Total desk assessment score = (average score x 3)	

.....

**Site visit**

.....

<b>Condition of Historic Features</b>		<b>Score</b>	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
1	Good conservation standards			
2	Historic features given prominence			
3	Restoration/re-creation of historic features			

<b>Use and Enjoyment of Historic Features</b>		<b>Score</b>	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
4	Historic features intact and in use			
5	Historic features integrated into the life of the site			
6	Information available and evidence that historic features are enjoyed by the public maintaining historic character and appearance			

<b>Maintaining historic character and appearance</b>		<b>Score</b>	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
7	Relevance of Historic Landscape design – integrity understood and interpreted			
8	Horticultural displays contribute to historic character			
9	Recognition and appropriateness of historic tree and plant collections			
10	New and replacement features enhance or conserve the historic character and appearance			

Total =

Average (total divided by 10) =

Total desk assessment score = (average score x 7)



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