

Swaby Gardens Management Plan 2009 – 2014

Index
Timetable
Site description
Wandsworth Open Space Study
Current management
Future management
Action plan

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

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

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

Site Description:

Site Name: Swaby Gardens

Location: Swaby Gardens is bounded to the north by Leckford Road; to the east by Aldridch Terrace; to the south by a Lidiard Road and to the west by Swaby Road.

Map showing location is shown on the following page.

Grid reference: The grid reference of the site is TQ2636.7288

Council Ward: Earlsfield Ward, Elected members for this area are:
Cllr Mrs Angela Graham (Cons)
Cllr Marc Hope (Cons)
Cllr Charles McNaught - Davies (Cons)

Site Area: The area of the site totals 1450 square metres (0.145ha /0.35 acres).

Tenure: The site is owned by Wandsworth Borough Council.

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

Designations: The council has adopted planning policies, which aim to protect and enhance the quality of life, and improve economic and social opportunities. They are the basis for promoting and controlling development in the borough. The current statutory development plan for the borough comprises the Wandsworth Unitary Development Plan (UDP), adopted August 2003.

The gardens are designated as “Dog Ban” under the Councils Dog Bye Laws

History:

The public green was designed as part of the Openview Estate, laid out by Wandsworth Council in the 1920s. The Estate was laid out with symmetrical groups of houses with Swaby Road Recreation Ground as a small rectangular of public open space. Two streets, Lidiard and Leckford Roads, run off at 45 degrees from the recreation ground providing longer roads than an orthodox street grid would.

During the nineteenth century land between Magdalen Road, Burntwood Lane, Garratt Lane and Wandsworth Common was owned by Magdalen College Oxford. The Magdalen Park Estate was planned in the early twentieth century as a Garden Suburb designed by E P Warren. Only the roads at the top of the hill between Lyford Road and Ellerton Road were developed and any building stopped with the First World War.

The roads between Garratt Lane and Swaby Road had been built before the First World War. Post war there was great demand for land for housing with the 'Homes Fit For Heroes' campaigns. In the 1920s Wandsworth Borough Council purchased the area between Swaby Road and Open View for the Openview Estate, and in the 1930s the area between Fieldview and Ellerton Road for the Fieldview Estate.

During the 1960s, this open space and the one by Godley Road had been permanently locked shut due to vandalism. The gates were re-opened and the facility of public green space was again made available to local people. A playground was installed in Swaby Road.

Site Features:

Swaby Gardens is a small, enclosed area containing two separate play areas. There is a small area of mown grass with trees and shrubs at the edges of the site.

Original metal railings and gates, with all spikes removed, form the boundary to the park

There are two pedestrian gates, with no separate service gate for vehicles.

There are 6 seats and 1 litter bins. Seats are of differing types.

There is no internal lighting and the park is not locked at night.

The overall impression is of a small, bland open space, predominately taken up with play equipment

Safe & Secure:

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

There are several thorny shrubs near the playgrounds

Welcome:

Signs at the two entrances have recently been replaced as part of an ongoing programme to replace signs with more welcoming ones. Further signs are needed at the gates to reinforce the “No Dogs” rule, and at the play areas where play specific information is needed

The dense canopy of trees results in some very shaded areas in the summer. Grass growth under these trees is very poor.

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

Clean and well maintained:

The grass is mown regularly to maintain a short dense sward. Shrub beds are weeded regularly, and plants trimmed as needed. There is a regular litter collection programme.

Occasionally, drugs paraphernalia is found in some parks. A system has been devised to ensure safe removal and recording of each incident. This helps to ensure staff and park users are protected, and Metropolitan and Parks Police informed. Steps to minimise drug use in parks can then be undertaken using this information. Drugs paraphernalia has not been found at Swaby Gardens.

Seats and litter bins are in fair condition, although the four metal seats may need replacing as the legs are liable to corrosion.

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

Health and well-being

Swaby Gardens has both a toddler and a junior play area, which provide for play and exercise of children.

Due to the small size of the park and it's layout, there is limited scope for activities other than in the playgrounds.

Community involvement:

There is no known community involvement currently.

Service delivery:

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

Structural maintenance of paths and railings is the responsibility of the Premises section of the Leisure and Amenity Department. Maintenance of the playgrounds is the responsibility of the Play Services section of the Childrens Services Department.

Staff skills & knowledge:

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

Sustainable approach:

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

Weeds are occasionally controlled with glyphosate.

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

Finance:

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

There is no separate budget for this site within the Parks Service.

Maintenance of the Playgrounds is met from Childrens Services budgets.

Current Management:

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

Playgrounds:

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

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

Trees:

This site contains 15 large mature trees as well as several smaller trees. There is a mix of native and non-native tree species with a good age class diversity. Routine tree inspection and maintenance is undertaken on a three-year rotation, with trees being in general good health at the last inspection. There is no significant Pest or Disease problem and no evidence of recent vandalism.

Ornamental planting:

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

Seats:

There are 4 metal seats, manufactured by Macemain plc and a further 2 wooden seats, all in fair condition.

Bins:

There is 1 litter bin, model HG66, manufactured by Earth Anchors plc in fair condition.

Hard / paved surfaces:

Footpaths are surfaced with black tarmac and are in reasonable condition

Lighting:

There is no lighting within the park.

Fencing:

Original iron-railings and gates are in reasonable condition. There are two gated entrances to the park, with no separate service gate.

Services:

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

Future Management:

Safe & Secure:

Routinely prune shrubs and trim hedges to maintain views through the site.
Replace thorny shrubs in any future refurbishment.

Welcome:

Design and install further signs at the entrances and at the play areas to supplement the new entrance signs and provide further information.
Consider measures to improve the grass under trees.
Investigate options to improve planted areas in the park

Clean and well maintained:

Continue routine horticultural maintenance, including hedge trimming to maintain sightlines into the park.
Ensure ground fixings to metal seats are sound – replace seats if necessary

Health and well-being

Consider features which might promote more activities in the park

Community involvement:

Investigate whether any local groups exist.

Sustainable approach:

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

Swaby Gardens Park Management Plan 2009

ACTION PLAN

Code	Aim	Objective	Action / task	Target date	Who
SG101	To make Swaby Gardens a place where people feel safe and secure	Ensure users can readily see all areas	Maintain routine pruning and hedge trimming.	Ongoing	Parks Service
SG102		Reduce potential hazards	Remove thorny shrubs	March 2010	Parks Service
SG201	To make Swaby Gardens welcoming and define a sense of place	Improve information signs	Design and install supplementary signs to support the new entrance signs	As part of wider signage review of parks and open spaces (partial completion by April 2009)	Parks Service Graphics Parks Police
SG202		Improve visual appearance	Investigate options to improve grass growth under trees	March 2010	Parks Service
SG203			Replace plants as appropriate	Ongoing	Parks Service

Swaby Gardens Park Management Plan 2009

Code	Aim	Objective	Action / task	Target date	Who
SG301	To provide a clean and well maintained Park	Improve use of seats and bins	Clean or replace seats and bins	March 2010	Parks Service Premises section
SG401	To provide a park which contributes to the health and well-being of all who use it.		Consider additional facilities	Ongoing	Parks Service
SG402		To increase cycle facilities to and within parks	Investigate the potential for cycle parking	March 2010	Parks Service Technical Services Dept
SG501	To effectively engage with, and involve, the community in decisions made relating to Swaby Gardens	To carry out consultation with different user groups to influence the enhancement of this park	Contact any local residents associations and schools etc		Parks Service