



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Pocket Parks Plus: supporting parks and public spaces where people can relax, exercise, socialise and play

Prospectus



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Contents

Introduction	5
Overview of the programme	7
Programme criteria	9
Application and assessment	13
Further information	14
Annex A: Programme criteria and weighting	15
Annex B: Application for Pocket Parks Plus Grant Funding	17
Annex C: Example letter of expectation for successful community applicants	22
Annex D: Example letter of expectation for local authorities	23
Annex E: Guide Evaluation Form	24

Foreword

It is nearly 180 years since the philanthropist Joseph Strutt created England's first urban public park. The Derby Arboretum inspired a new vision for our public spaces, as inclusive places for recreation and relaxation for people of all ages, backgrounds and ability.

In the decades since, our parks have been at the heart of our communities, giving respite and relief in an increasingly busy world.

Inclusive Community Spaces are one of four key components of my Communities Mission Statement, and at the heart of our aim to create thriving, liveable and resilient places – with no place left behind.

The benefits of green spaces - no matter their size - are well-known. Even some of our smallest 'pocket parks' can help people overcome social isolation, break down barriers and give a sense of belonging in the places we call home.

It was with this in mind that we launched our Pocket Parks Scheme in 2015. It gave local communities a chance to build and own public spaces, working in partnership with local authorities, voluntary organisations and businesses.

Since 2015, the scheme has been supporting communities to create new pocket parks, and we have proudly funded the creation some 86 pocket parks.

Our new Pocket Parks Plus Scheme takes this a step further, not only creating new pocket parks but also funding the refurbishments of parks or parts of parks of any size.

I'm excited to see the scheme grow and look forward to hearing from communities about their creative plans to shape and improve our neighbourhoods for the decades to come.

The Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP
Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government

Introduction

Headline message

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) invites applications from communities to apply for funding to support them with establishing new pocket parks, creating safe and usable green spaces, and for helping to restore and renovate existing parks which have fallen into disrepair, bringing them back into public use.

We seek applications from communities that can provide evidence of a local need that can be addressed through the creation or refurbishment of a park.

What is Pocket Parks Plus?

The scheme provides grants to community-led bodies working in partnership with their local authority with the aim of creating new pocket parks or bringing existing green spaces up to a safe, usable standard and ensuring long-term support for those initiatives.

For the purposes of this scheme we will define a pocket park as a piece of land of up to 0.4 hectares (although many are around 0.02 hectares, the size of a tennis court) which may already be under grass, but which is unused, undeveloped or derelict.

Why is this support available?

Building safer, stronger communities and creating places which are 'owned' and valued by everyone within local communities are key to the aims of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

We know that communities value the green spaces around them and their positive impact on social well-being and physical and mental health is well documented. This programme will focus on providing spaces that are tailored to address the needs of a local area. Providing spaces where people can enhance their wellbeing, have access to healthy exercise, meet other people and find companionship are vital in addressing issues such as increasing health costs, loneliness and division within local communities. Parks and green spaces provide a wealth of opportunities to get closer to nature, meet up with friends, play, take physical exercise, walk the dog or even just have some quiet time in the fresh air with a cup of coffee from their local high street. They could also be used to hold community events such as street parties or music events which support local retailers.

Parks can also contribute to wider government outcomes, including delivering a quality natural environment and increasing opportunities for people to overcome isolation and engage with their communities.

To help achieve these aims we will prioritise our support to communities who can provide evidence of local needs that can be addressed through the creation or refurbishment of a green space.

Pocket parks – locally identified, smaller areas of green space ultra-local to where people live and work – can provide those wellbeing opportunities, as well as helping to improve community integration, community pride and social action, especially where communities are involved in the upkeep and development decisions of the park.

In this scheme we will consider projects for refurbishment of a park or part of a park where this will bring those currently in a state of disrepair back into public use for the long-term and provide a safe accessible place for people in the local community to use. This could include improving access for those with limited mobility or building or refurbishing a children's play area, enabling the park to be a focal point for young families. This does not include funding of general maintenance or repairs which remains the responsibility of the local authority.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is therefore providing a **£1 million** fund to support the development of new pocket parks and to refurbish existing parks that have fallen into disrepair where their restoration could have a significant positive impact on the local community and address a specific local need. This funding will help put communities and their partners in a position to take on the management of green spaces of value to them, and contribute resource towards upgrading spaces so that they are in good condition and communities can focus on managing them for the future.

Applications must reach us by email at pocketparksplus@communities.gov.uk **by 5:00pm on Friday 25 January 2019**

Overview of the programme

The objective of the programme is to deliver, across all areas of England, new pocket parks and support refurbishment of parks that have fallen into disrepair where their restoration will make a significant positive impact in the local community.

We have allocated £1 million to this programme in 2018-19. We expect to allocate grants of up to £15,000 for new pocket parks and £25,000 for refurbishment of existing parks split between capital and revenue. Grants will be paid to the appropriate principal local authority that is supporting the application (under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003) so that they can be released to the community as needed to deliver the project.

Pocket parks are defined for this programme as a piece of land of up to 0.4 hectares (although many are around 0.02 hectares, the size of a tennis court) which may already be under grass, but which is unused, undeveloped or derelict.

We will support communities to develop new green spaces, or improve existing ones that are in poor condition, that provide people with better quality spaces; increasing opportunities for social mixing, healthy living, relaxation, play, food growing and contact with nature.

There is no prescription on what a pocket park should look like and we welcome both innovative and traditional proposals. We are also keen to see applications from projects aiming to improve their local town centre or high street with a community green space. The aim is to increase access to good quality green space in a sustainable and community-led manner.

Refurbishment of parks or parts of a park should lead to a significant increase in the use of the park, such as bringing a children's play area back into use, where the park has fallen into disrepair and is currently not in a safe or usable condition. The fund is not for ongoing general maintenance.

Communities may be looking at projects where there is a desire, with support, to take full or partial control of green spaces of value and importance to them. Partial control reflects that a pocket park may be part of a larger site developed with the landowner's permission. This can include social housing areas and towns and city centres where communities can demonstrate a pocket park is needed and that they are willing to manage it.

Ownership of the site of a pocket park may rest with the community, the local authority or other public sector body, or a private sector body or trust including a housing association.

All applications will need to provide evidence of agreement from the landowner to the works outlined in the application. All applications must also be supported by the relevant local authority, which must be willing to hold the grant and pass it on to the community.

We appreciate communities need help and support to deliver good quality management of green spaces, which is why we will look to support models where communities have or intend to access partner expertise whether from their local authority or relevant networks,

bodies or professionals. That support may be secured either directly by using some of their revenue funding to invite expert contributions, or by communities becoming part of existing support networks already operating amongst managers of green spaces such as local parks and open space forums.

We expect that our support will enable, for example (this list is not exhaustive):

- Capital – support to prepare a site, earth-works, landscaping, tree planting, structural works etc. and put it into a good condition for further development.
- Resource – to secure support from relevant experts (i.e. landscape architects, lawyers, horticulturalists or wider green sector experts) and/or to connect with existing green space support networks. You may also wish to use some of this element of the funding to develop the required sustainability strategy.

We will not fund work that would happen anyway. This money cannot simply top up an existing project UNLESS communities can provide clear evidence that the proposal would not have happened without our funding.

Successful applicants will be encouraged to share any learning, innovation and best practice back to the green spaces sector and all successful applicants will be required to complete an evaluation form (Annex E)

Programme criteria

We will support projects that meet the following criteria:

- Evidence of need
- Applicant
- Site
- Nature
- Match funding
- Deliverability and value for money
- Sustainability
- Evaluation

Evidence of need

- The application must be a **community-led proposal** which comes from any group with a constitution working where it can be shown that there is a need for green space to address a specific local need. Examples might include areas with a high population of older people or young families and have identified social isolation as a concern; communities that want to address issues with community cohesion or communities that have identified local people who have lower levels of physical activity.
- The application must detail areas of need within the local area and support this with evidence e.g. health inequalities, social isolation, issues with social cohesion or division, lack of green space for children's play or for young people to develop skills.

Applicant

- By community we mean a group of people who have come together such as a friends' group, a tenants' group, community gardeners' association etc. The group will need to have a constitution.
- Communities will need to show that they have engaged their local authority to secure their support. At a minimum the local authority must be willing to act as the accountable body for the funding and a supporting letter signed by the community and local authority that confirms that the latter is willing to do so will be required with applications.
- Applications will need to detail the partners the group is working with and / or networks they have already established to take forward the project.
- Within their application, communities will therefore need to submit:
 - Details of their group and how it is constituted.
 - Confirmation of their local authority's agreement to host the funds.
 - Details of the partners and networks that they will work with and draw support from (such as advice and good practice).
- Any grant awarded will be provided to the local authority partner under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003. By making an application to MHCLG for funding, communities agree to be willing to accept any terms or conditions their local authority

may wish to place on the funding. Applicants may wish to discuss this in advance of their application with their local authority partner.

Site

- For new parks the site must be no bigger than 0.4 hectares (and can be much smaller) which is unused, undeveloped or derelict, or not used to its full potential by the community. We are also asking for an explanation of how this project adds to the provision of quality green space within the area.
- Refurbishment of existing, underused parks can relate to parks, or parts of a park, of any size providing the impact of the funding and work will make a sustainable long-term difference addressing local needs and allowing the park to be brought back into regular use.
- We will consider all ideas that meet the criteria. Particular features that we will look for in applications include:
 - New sites must be called a pocket park and be branded as such.
 - It must address a specific local need.
 - It can be a new site or an existing site and all or part of a site.
 - It needs to be accessible and available for the community who wish to use it and ideally openly accessible to all.

Nature

- Pocket parks should aim to provide a green, open space that offers both habitat opportunities and opportunities for people to connect with nature. As such, schemes that value and make use of existing landscape and natural features will score higher.
- We are also keen to see the addition of trees providing benefits such as improving air quality, providing shade for people, shelter or nesting sites for wildlife. We will welcome proposals that provide more trees and/or make the most of those that are already there.

Match funding

- Communities are required to obtain match-funding towards the grant awarded and we expect applicants to provide evidence that a minimum of 30% of the grant applied for has been secured.
- Communities will need to explain what match funding has been secured and by when. It can be from local authorities, charitable bodies or foundations, from community events, crowd-funding, local business and/or elsewhere. MHCLG's funding is expected to be used to start delivery and establish the site and its core features, putting it into a good sound condition that the community can then add features as they secure further resource to do so.

Deliverability and value for money

- All proposals must deliver a pocket park or refurbishment of a park that is fit for purpose and of value to the community addressing local needs.
- Within their application, communities need to tell us what they plan to do. We will expect applications to:

- Explain what they will provide on the site with the grant money.
 - Include a timescale that shows what they will deliver and when.
 - Confirm that they have permission of the owner to develop the site as a pocket park or refurbish a park or area of a park.
 - Attach a plan of the site now and another that shows what it will look like after the grant is spent.
- In their application, communities will need to set out their plan and timeline for delivery. We anticipate funding will be transferred to local authorities in early March 2019 and the expectation is that the money will be spent by end March 2019. They will need to show it will deliver value for money by highlighting how development is addressing local need, the benefits they believe can be achieved, including for example detail on how many people are expected to have improved access to the space, and show how they have considered the challenges ahead and risk to delivery.
 - The proposal must be realistic and achievable, logical and well-constructed with the outputs and benefits achievable clearly identified. We will also look for evidence that the challenges and risks to success have been properly considered and are understood.

Sustaining delivery

- The ability to sustain delivery is important. We appreciate our funding may simply support the start of work to establish a pocket park or upgrading of an existing park or part of a park. We will want to see evidence of how communities and their partners plan to continue the work, through to opening the park and beyond into keeping it open and well managed in the years ahead. In particular, communities will be expected to:
 - Ensure they have put in place a **robust maintenance and sustainability plan** demonstrating how the site will be managed over at least the next 5 years.
 - Apply for and achieve the **Green Flag Community Award**, the free to enter national quality standard for green spaces, within the 2019 or 2020 judging rounds and maintain that for at least 5 years;
 - Secure the pocket park for the future by registering it as **an Asset of Community Value** and under **Local Greenspace Designation**. They are also encouraged to consider dedicating it for use as a green space for use by the community in the future through schemes such as Field in Trust designation.
 - Develop links with the local/regional Friends of Parks Forum enabling them to connect with other parks across the country and access support and guidance. www.natfedparks.org.uk

Evaluation

- In their application, communities will need to tell us how they plan to sustain development and delivery of the new or refurbished park beyond the grant period. If their application is successful, they will be expected to provide by 31 March 2019 a detailed sustainability plan that sets out how they plan to sustain the development and ongoing management of the park.

- All successful grant applicants will be expected to carry out an evaluation after 12 months and submit this to MHCLG by 31 March 2020. This should include:
 - Photographs of the site before and after and then again at the 12-month period
 - Details of how the funding has been spent
 - impacts of the park have been on local need e.g. sustainability, supporting integration, helping health and wellbeing.
 - Proposals for the future development of the space

- A guide evaluation form template is at Annex E.

For further details including weightings that will be given in assessment of applications, see Annex A.

Application and assessment

We are inviting applications from community groups interested in establishing a pocket park or refurbishing an existing park or part of a park. An application form (Annex B) is available to download at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pocket-parks-plus-supporting-parks-and-public-spaces>

Applicants will need to complete the form, collate the required supporting documents, and then scan these electronically and return their applications to us by e-mail to pocketparksplus@communities.gov.uk by **5:00pm on Friday 25 January 2019**.

Applications will only be accepted on the form provided by MHCLG and returned to us by email.

We require one application per site, but community groups and their partner councils can submit applications for as many sites as they wish.

When finalising your application, please refer to the **programme criteria** as set out in this document and check your application has responded to them all as best as possible.

Assessment of applications

Applications will be assessed by MHCLG against the criteria and weightings set out in the **Programme criteria and weightings** section of this prospectus (Annex A). The Department reserves the right to ensure an equal geographical spread.

Those considered to meet the criteria will go forward to a panel of sector experts brought together from organisations with experience in green space delivery and management. This panel will advise MHCLG on which projects should be supported. The final decision on which projects are supported rests with MHCLG. Applicants will be notified of the results by the end of February 2019.

Given the short window of opportunity and scale of the funding MHCLG's decision will be final.

Award

MHCLG will inform successful applicants by the end of February 2019.

Communities and local authority partners will be expected to sign a letter of expectation that sets out what they will receive from MHCLG and what will be expected from them in return. Examples of these are attached as Annex C (letter of expectation for communities) and Annex D (letter of expectation for local authorities). Once these are signed and returned to MHCLG, local authority partners will be immediately contacted to arrange transfer of the grant to them, so delivery can proceed.

Further information

E-mail: pocketparksplus@communities.gov.uk

Web page: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pocket-parks-plus-supporting-parks-and-public-spaces>

Annexes

- A. Programme criteria and weighting
- B. Application for Pocket Parks Plus Grant Funding
- C. Example letter of expectation for successful community applicants
- D. Example letter of expectation successful for local authorities
- E. Evaluation Form

Annex A: Programme criteria and weighting

CORE CRITERIA	Sub criteria	Examples of evidence likely to score highly	Weighting % of score (of 100%)
Evidence of need	Community-led proposal	Statement from community	20
	Access to Green Space poor	Planning assessment, GS strategy, ANGSt analysis, map showing GS in the city/town	
	Specific local needs	Evidence from local authority, local health and social care providers and voluntary and community sector bodies, IMD score	
Applicant	Local authority committed to partnership and willing to act as accountable body	Local authority details and statement/letter confirming willingness	15
	Support partners and networks identified	List of relevant partners inc. any costs	
	Established community body	Constitution; supportive partner testimonial	
Site	New area or in need of improvement	Description, photos and map/plan of before and intended after	15
	Accessible to the community who wish to use it and ideally openly accessible to all	Statement from community or responses from a survey of community who will use it	
Nature	Will be a green open space	Map/plan and/or survey of site	10
	Proposals make use of natural features	Plan and/or description	
	Plans include trees or tree planting	Plan and/or description, including number of trees	
Match funding		Logical and realistic plan; statement of support from funder setting out details of amount and type of support	15
Deliverability	Realism, fit to brief, innovation, impact, risk, value for money	Clear and sound project plan with milestones, (and detail that confirms money will be spent by end March 2019), outputs and outcomes. Realistic explanation of innovative idea. Statement of risk and mitigation.	15

CORE CRITERIA	Sub criteria	Examples of evidence likely to score highly	Weighting % of score (of 100%)
Sustainability		Statement of intent, including outline sustainability and maintenance plan	10

Annex B: Application for Pocket Parks Plus Grant Funding

1. LEAD APPLICANT FROM THE COMMUNITY

Community group name	
Name of project lead	
Address	
Email	
Phone	

2. LOCAL AUTHORITY PARTNER DETAILS

Name of Authority	
Lead contact (name and role)	
Address	
Lead contact E-mail	
Lead contact phone no.	
Is the Authority willing to hold grant funding for you	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (Please tick) A letter or e-mail confirmation of this is attached <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

3. OTHER PARTNERS YOU WILL WORK WITH

Partner name and lead contact	Contact phone no	Contact e-mail	How will they support you?

4. WHAT LOCAL NEEDS WILL BE ADDRESSED OR SUPPORTED BY CREATION OR REFURBISHMENT OF THIS PARK? (UP TO 300 WORDS)

5. YOUR NEW POCKET PARK OR REFURBISHED PARK

Proposed name/Existing name	
Address inc. postcode	
Size in hectares	
Owner (name, address)	Do you have the owner's permission to apply? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> A letter or e-mail confirmation of this is attached (tick) <input type="checkbox"/>
Is it already a green space?	No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Name of site now:
	It is the whole site: <input type="checkbox"/> It is a part of the site: <input type="checkbox"/>
Are there other green spaces within a 5 minute walk?	No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> If yes, please explain what additional benefit this project will bring forward

6. WHAT DO YOU PROPOSE TO DO TO ESTABLISH YOUR PARK OR HOW DO YOU INTEND TO REFURBISH THIS SITE? (UP TO 500 WORDS)

7. WHAT WILL THE MHCLG FUNDING SUPPORT? (UP TO 500 WORDS)

8. HOW WILL YOU SPEND THE MHCLG MONEY?

Item	Total

Please add rows as necessary	
Will you spend all of the MHCLG money by end March 2019?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> (Please tick)

9. WHAT MATCH FUNDING DO YOU HAVE OR PLAN TO SECURE?

Source	Amount	Secured or to be sought?

10. HAVE YOU RECEIVED ANY RECENT FUNDING IN RELATION TO DEVELOPMENT OF PARKS OR GREEN SPACES. IF SO, PLEASE PROVIDE DETAILS BELOW

Yes/No
Details:

11. PLEASE SET OUT YOUR TIMELINE (SHOWING SUCH AS WHEN DELIVERY WILL START, WHEN DELIVERY USING MHCLG MONEY WILL BE COMPLETED, AND WHEN THE PARK/REFURBISHED PARK WILL OPEN)

What will happen?	When

12. HOW WILL YOU SUSTAIN THE MANAGEMENT OF THE SITE?

Secure Green Flag Community Award	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> (Please tick)
Register your site as an asset of community value	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
Seek Local Greenspace Designation	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
Dedicate (such as a Field in Trust)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
Build links with the Local Friends of Parks Group	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>

Please explain any further approaches you will consider **(300 WORDS)**

13. PLEASE FEEL FREE TO PROVIDE ANY FURTHER INFORMATION THAT WILL SUPPORT YOUR APPLICATION (UP TO 300 WORDS)

Check list of added material to attach:

- Letter or e-mail from Local authority confirming willingness to hold grant
- Constitution or terms of reference of your group (if available)
- Map showing site and any green spaces within 5 minutes' walk (ideally 1:25 scale)
- Plan of site now
- Plan of what the Pocket Park/refurbished park will look like
- Any other items you feel will support your application (please list below)

Item	Format	What does this show

Please return your application to us by e-mail to pocketparksplus@communities.gov.uk by **5.00pm on Friday 25 January 2019**

Thank you for your application.

Annex C: Example letter of expectation for successful community applicants

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (the Department) is issuing a grant of (£000) to (xyz Council) under powers set out in section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003 to support the work set out in your application for the Pocket Parks Plus programme.

The Parks programme will support communities and their partners to establish pocket parks or refurbish an existing park, or part of a park, where where people can relax, exercise, socialise and play.

The Department will:

- Provide you, via your local authority partner, with a grant of £,000,
- Provide each community and local authority partnership with signposting to networks and other sources of further advice and support.
- Share the learning and good practice from Pocket Parks Plus projects widely and, in particular, amongst people interested in taking on the management of public space.

We expect you to:

- Establish your pocket park or refurbish the park or part of park as proposed in your application and deliver within the timeline you set out.
- Produce a sustainability plan for the future of the park by 31 March 2019
- Maintain effective and professional relationship with your local authority partner towards achieving delivery.
- Follow the terms of the grant funding agreement entered into with your local authority partner.
- Achieve the Green Flag Community Award by the end of the 2020 judging round
- Apply for Local Greenspace Designation and to be listed as an asset of community value, both by 31 December 2019 and confirm to the Department by then any other designations you will apply.
- Keep the Department informed of progress including spend, issues, variations and risks each month and if needed on request.
- Participate in learning and knowledge sharing opportunities, from project group meetings, partner network meetings and online fora.
- Share any media outputs with the Department before they go out, and so they can share them wider if it wishes to do so.
- Allow the Department to disseminate this learning more widely and to use these products wider including to inform further thinking on green spaces.

Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact us. We look forward to working with you.

Signed (on behalf of the applicant):

Print name:

Date:

Annex D: Example letter of expectation for local authorities

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (the Department) is issuing a grant of (£x,xxx)¹ to (xyz Council) under powers in section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003 to support the work set out in the approved applications for pocket park funding, included at Annex [z]. You have confirmed your agreement to take receipt of the approved funding on behalf of the communities which will enable you to enter into a grant relationship with the community and provide them with funding at least equivalent to the approved funding in an appropriate and timely way.

The Pocket Parks Plus programme will support communities and their partners to establish new pocket parks and refurbish existing parks where people can public spaces where people can relax, exercise, socialise and play.

The Department will:

- Provide through a Section 31 grant to your authority up to £,000, to support each project – specific breakdowns are attached at Annex A.
- Provide each community and local authority partnership with signposting to networks and other sources of further advice and support.
- Share the learning and good practice from Pocket Park Plus projects widely in particular amongst people interested in taking on the management of public space.

This grant and support provided will assist you in supporting your community to establish their pocket park as proposed in their application including within the timeline set out in that.

Your grant making processes will no doubt enable you to monitor progress of the programme and confirm that money is being used in the correct way by the community. We would encourage you to maintain an effective and professional relationship with each project and support them to deliver through any necessary local planning processes.

The Department is keen to disseminate learning from projects more widely including to inform further thinking on green spaces. We would appreciate your support to capture this learning when necessary.

Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact us. We look forward to working with you.

Yours etc

¹ Figures will reflect actual grant awarded

Annex E: Guide Evaluation Form

This form sets out the areas which we will be evaluating over the first 12 months of the project. We will provide an evaluation template to all successful applicants

This evaluation form is to be completed by 31 March 2020.

Purpose: to demonstrate how effective the funding has been in delivering the proposed project, identify any issues and set out plans for future sustainability fo the project

1. Describe brief details of the project
 - Proposal
 - Support; match funding, resources, technical and professional help
 - Costs (people and capital/equipment costs)
2. Describe impacts on the local areas; how has the project addressed the local needs identified in your application? Has there been any unexpected benefits to your community? [for this please include evidence of impact - such as any survey of users; footfall within the park; feedback on social media sites)
3. Has the project had an impact on your local environment?
4. Has the project had any integration impacts?
5. Has your park been designated under Fields in Trust designation or equivalent?
6. Have you registered the site as an Asset of Community Value?
7. Have you made application for a Green Flag Community Award?
8. Have you made contact with your local or regional Friends of Parks group? What support have they provided?
9. Detail plans for future development of the site; timetable, Green Flag Community Award; funding plans
10. Please provide photographs of the site, before and after and then again at the 12-month period.