

Ashton Gardens



Management & Maintenance Plan
2018 - 2023

ASHTON GARDENS MANAGEMENT & MAINTENANCE PLAN

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Foreword

The Borough of Fylde is situated on the Lancashire Coast and is a major tourism destination attracting some 3 million visitors per year. The parks and green spaces are a fundamental part of the fabric of the Fylde, providing attractions for visitors and local people.

Ashton Gardens is one of Fylde's premier parks located close to St. Annes Town Centre. Visitors and residents are attracted to the park to enjoy the mature gardens and a range of passive and active leisure facilities for all age ranges. Young and old enjoy a walk in the gardens or simply sit in idyllic surroundings to enjoy the peace and quiet.

The Council, together with its partners are committed to continuously improving the services and facilities offered. Essential to this aim is engaging the community to understand their needs and desires and increase their involvement.

In order to focus resources and agree priorities, this management plan has been developed to set out a comprehensive plan for the site for the next ten years. It draws on previous studies, current issues and the priorities arising from community consultation.

This plan will remain a 'live' document; that evolves and changes with the gardens. To achieve this, robust mechanisms for monitoring and reviewing have been developed.

Managing Organisation – Fylde Council

Green Flag Award 2016/2017

2018 FEEDBACK

Name of Site – Ashton Gardens

Desk Assessment Feedback (Management Plan and supporting documentation)

Criteria	Strengths	Recommendations	Responses
Presentation	Well-presented document with clear use of diagrams photo's etc., easy to read and free from unnecessary jargon	<i>Keep the plan updated with information on achievements, progress and problems through an annual appendix.</i>	Agreed. The plan is reviewed and updated annually to ensure up to date and relevant.
Health, Safety & Security	<p><i>The plan thoroughly covers all aspects required.</i></p> <p><i>the Fylde Community Safety Partnership, Fylde Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and Community Police work in partnership with the Parks Service to support safety in the park.</i></p> <p><i>Lancashire Probation Service through unpaid work carried out on safety activities has provided support to maintain the high standards in the park.</i></p>	<i>Introduce targets times rather than, 'when possible', for response to vandalism</i>	Agreed, we have added more specific and achievable targets where viable.
Maintenance of equipment, buildings & landscape	<i>The plan covers all aspects required.</i>	Maintain standards	We will continue to implement high standards of maintenance as described.
Litter, cleanliness, vandalism	<i>The plan covers all aspects required.</i>	Possible include data on collection, recycling and how this is linked to sustainability showing the impact on the park	Up-to-date tasks sheets can be provided to illustrate the operational cleansing regime/ frequencies on the park. Qualitative data on recycling is not taken.
Environmental Sustainability	The document shows a full understanding of the	Support the document with data showing impact of	The Parks & Coastal Service have a staff training plan which

	<p>impact of proactive sustainability management and the measure taken and in operation.</p> <p><i>The plan states that funding has been assigned to the improvement of the Garden's planting to be phased in over ten years working in partnership with the Town Council, Civic Society and other community groups and organisations to gain funding or sponsorship to achieve the horticultural standards throughout the whole Gardens. Delivery of an in-house training programme to gardening staff and volunteers to commence during 2015 with a view to raising horticultural standards. the apprenticeships should enable skilled, knowledgeable and sustainable maintenance,</i></p>	<p>measure taken and highlighting what has gone well and define were measures could be taken to <i>improve this area of delivery</i></p> <p><i>Show results of training and improved standards. How will funding be assured for the duration of the programme. Is there a plan if funding is withdrawn?</i></p> <p><i>What effect has the training programme had so far? Practically and motivationally.</i></p> <p><i>Has the problem of recycling plastic pots and trays been resolved with the supplier?</i></p>	<p>forms part of the staff annual appraisals and is revised and updated annually. In some areas of training, tangible results are easy to demonstrate (improved health and safety), but other areas less so. Funding for sustainable planting is sourced from internal revenue budgets and the revenue from reduced bedding schemes will be transferred to more sustainable planting schemes.</p> <p>Our current bedding supplier collects all plastic pots and trays Any leftovers will be re-used in the nursery or donated to other volunteer groups.</p>
Conservation of Heritage and Nature.	<p><i>A good understanding of the value of the heritage of the park and its conservation. The study and reporting of the wide range of flora and fauna demonstrates a concern for and value of the natural aspects of the park.</i></p>	<p><i>Clearly plan to encourage biodiversity in the planning of the park planting and maintenance schemes.</i></p>	<p>Fylde Council have established a Ranger Service who focus on park and coast conservation projects that develop and promote the ecological value of the park. Projects include tree planting, dead wood habitat, pond works reduction of bedding and inclusion or more herbaceous plants and habitat boxes. The ranger service undertake an annual programme of environmental events and have developed a new Outdoor Education Pack for schools. The priorities of the ranger service will be detailed in the management and action plan.</p>
Community		<i>How are volunteers</i>	This information has been

Involvement	<i>A range of groups are involved in consultation and activities.</i>	<i>managed. Is there a structure to their activities and a formal relationship to a member of staff? Evidence of user and public input / consultation would have been helpful</i>	included in the Community Involvement section of the plan.
Marketing Strategy	<i>Marketing activities take advantage of a range of opportunities offered by the park, community and its place in the tourist location of Lytham St Annes.</i>	Continue to market as appropriate	Agreed.
Overall management	<i>The plan demonstrates a depth of understanding of all aspects of the park and the requirements to develop and maintain a valuable public asset.</i>	It would be helpful if the Action Plans indicated who responsible for delivering each action point and realistic delivery dates. The maintenance contract was won by the Council's in-house parks and cemetery management team and started on 2nd April 2007 running for 10 years. Following expiry there is no indication of a new contract	The action plan has been amended to include this information This information has been updated in the plan.

Additional comments

If submitting a management plan covering a 10 year time frame then there must be a covering note or appendix included with the plan submitted for assessment highlighting where current actions vary from the original document. If not as in the case of Ashton Gardens the Judges will expect to see what is referenced in the original document as being current practice. This was not the case. For example, the management plan references the site supervisor as having an allocated budget. Testing on judging day evidenced a lack of clarity on how much was allocated, what it can be used for and who signs off orders. A sound principle but lacking evidenced delivery. Similarly staffing levels quoted in the management plan could not be substantiated as currently applying.

A major concern was lack of evidence of political input and sign off of the management plans at either Ward or Cabinet level. Evidence of user and public input / consultation would have been helpful

Field Assessment Feedback

Criteria	Strengths	Recommendations	Responses
A Welcoming Place	Access was clearly signed and no difficulty was experienced in safely accessing all areas.	Maintain standards	
Healthy, Safe	All of the facilities inspected	The use of sand as a safer	The junior

and Secure	were being maintained to a good standard and there was no evidence that personal safety is an issue at any time. Dog control orders are in operation and little evidence was found of non-compliance by dog owners..	surfacing in the childrens play area given lack of secure perimeter fencing and potential hygiene issues particularly with dogs having access should be reviewed.	sand based playground was designed to be sensitively landscaped into the parks overall heritage layout without hard boundaries as stipulated by the advice of the Council's Planning Department. The Council has adopted and advertised PSPO's to ensure dog controls or exclusions in sensitive areas such as playgrounds and these are enforced by Dog Wardens and the Ranger Service.
Clean and Well Maintained	The grounds were being maintained to a good standard will minimal evidence of litter Volunteers under the supervision of a Parks staff member play a major role in the operation of a small onsite nursery producing plant material for use throughout the Parks service. All trees have been surveyed and are being maintained by an in house arboricultural team. There was no evidence of poorly maintained tree stock. All buildings and in particular the Ashton Institute are maintained to a very good standard as befitting a recent HLF Lottery funded park. Evidence of herbicide use was witnessed on one occasion however judges were reassured that chemical use is kept to a minimum and avoided if at all possible in favour of mechanical control. Nursery suppliers are encouraged to use peat free compost and planting schemes are produced to illustrate climate change eg use of drought tolerant plants.	There should be an annual update so that judges are aware of changes such as Lancashire Probation Service ceasing to provide support in the park. Responsibility for Grounds maintenance service delivery was confusing as it was assumed that the function had been subjected to market testing in 2017 and while the service is currently being delivered in house nobody could confirm that this has been the outcome of market testing as referenced in the management plans.	This information has been Updated in the plan to reflect the current staffing structure, functions and responsibilities.
Clean and Well Maintained (Cont.)			
Sustainability	Nursery suppliers are encouraged to use peat free compost and planting schemes are produced to illustrate climate change eg	the apprenticeships discussed in the management plan are no longer in existence. A current appendix could have clarified	This information has been Updated in the plan.

	<p>use of drought tolerant plants. Recycling bays are used to compost material reused on site</p> <p>Friends help to maintain and improve planting in keeping with local conditions.</p>	<p>this.</p>	
<p>Sustainability (Cont) Conservation and Heritage</p>	<p>Dedicated on site staff presence supported by volunteers, Lytham in Bloom and external business groups via Lowther Trust. Volunteer team actively maintain an extensive and well stocked herbaceous border while the local community through Lytham in Bloom are funding the reinstatement and landscaping of a small war memorial. Significant tree stock is maintained in house.</p>	<p>Use new Ranger team to promote knowledge of heritage and encourage public involvement in conservation.</p>	<p>The rangers will include Ashton Gardens in their annual events and activities schedule, with heritage and conservation involvement. A new schools Education Programme has been developed and is outlined in the plan.</p>
<p>Community Involvement</p>	<p>A recently established team of three community park rangers have been tasked with engaging the local community and relevant groups including schools to increase activities on parks.</p>	<p>Maintain support of community and volunteers.</p>	<p>The Council will continue to support and liaise with volunteers and community groups.</p>

	<p>The service is in its infancy however the early indications are encouraging. The on-site nursery provides an ideal resource for community participation and environmental education as does the wider park. An active Supporters Group arrange brass band concerts during the summer together with a fund-raising Christmas Band Concert. They also undertake guided park walks. Community volunteers help in the nursery benefitting the service and their own training and development.</p>		
Marketing	<p>Promotional material presented on the day was limited to the Brass Band flyer. Perhaps this in an area for development working in conjunction with the Ranger service. On line and local tourist material helps promote the garden.</p>	<p>Make material more available in paper form.</p>	<p>The Council is corporately promoting a paperless ethos, with greater focus on electronic methods of promotional material. Our marketing strategy includes use of websites, and social media platforms.</p>
Management	<p>A good working relationship between staff on site at all levels was evident with all members able to contribute towards day to day issues.</p>	<p>A lack of clarity regarding operations delivery an For example the management plan references the site supervisor as having an allocated budget. Testing on judging day evidenced a lack of clarity on how much was allocated, what it can be used for and who signs off orders. A sound principle but lacking evidenced delivery.</p>	<p>This information has been updated in the plan to reflect the operational management of the park.</p>

Additional Comments

Additional Comments

In addition to the very competent and informative officers hosting the Green Flag assessment visit, senior management and / or Elected members need to be present at an appropriate stage during the judging process to answer high level budget / strategic queries and to demonstrate support for the Parks staff and local community involved.

A concern was lack of evidence of political input and sign off of the management plans at either Ward or Cabinet level.

Ashton Gardens was a pleasure to visit and a credit to staff, Friends and Partners. It was clearly being enjoyed by a wide range of visitors Is a great asset to Lytham St Annes.

Introduction

1.1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Fylde Council's Parks & Coastal Services Team acknowledges the essential contributions to this management plan from:

- Lytham St. Annes Civic Trust
- Sports Development Officer
- H.R Manager
- Community Safety Manager
- Risk Management and Insurance Officer
- Leisure Management
- Supports of Ashton Gardens
- St Annes on the Sea in Bloom

Thank you for your valuable contributions to the management plan.

1.2 THE PURPOSE OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

This management plan seeks to ensure that the site is conserved and enhanced in its entirety due to its wildlife and environmental importance whilst balancing the needs of visitors and residents.

This management plan seeks to:

- Take a holistic approach to the future management of all aspects of the gardens by drawing on previous studies and considering the needs and desires of professionals, the local community and visitors.
- Put community needs at the heart of the development and management of the gardens.
- Benchmark the gardens and analyse the management regimes and policies against best practice.
- Establish standards that are effective and accountable.
- Prioritise resources and action.
- Provide a clear framework for the future development utilising existing and securing future resources.
- Protect against undesirable developments.
- Provide a transparent form of monitoring the management of the gardens and successes.

1.3 RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PLAN

Fylde Council's Parks & Coastal Services team working in partnership with stakeholders and the community, have compiled this plan. Implementation of the plan will also be led by the Parks & Coastal Services team. Specific project leads are shown in the action plan. Likewise monitoring and review of the plan will be led by the Parks & Coastal Services team, however, all key

stakeholders will be engaged to ensure that the future revisions reflect a combination of views, needs and aspirations.

1.4 SITE DETAILS

1.4.1 Location

Ashton Gardens is situated in Lytham St. Anne's, adjacent to St. Annes Square. The address is:

Ashton Gardens
West Lodge
5 St. Georges Road
Lytham St Anne's
Lancashire
FY8 2AE

Fylde Borough is a major tourism destination attracting some 3 million visitors to the borough per year. The parks and open spaces play a major role offering passive and active recreation facilities to visitors and residents. The parks and open spaces make a positive contribution in delivering the Council's corporate objectives and the key actions within the community plan.

Ashton Gardens is one of the Borough's most important parks, located within easy walking distance of St Annes Town Centre.

1.4.2 Ashton Gardens in its Borough context

Ashton Gardens is one of the four main parks within the borough of Fylde. Along with the Promenade Gardens, it is one of the two main parks in St Annes; Fairhaven Lake and Lowther Gardens being the other two main sites in Lytham.

In addition to the four main parks, the borough has six community parks, six sports and recreation grounds, numerous areas of public open space and civic space throughout the borough. Lytham Green is the largest expanse of formal, public open space in the Fylde. The borough also has areas of urban woodlands and a large expanse of coastline, part of which has nature reserve status.

1.4.3 Summary of Attractions and Facilities

In summary the gardens offer the following attraction and facilities:

- A broad tree lined avenue leading to the cenotaph
- Rock and water garden
- The Pavilion Café
- Two gate lodge buildings
- Two bowling greens
- Two bowling pavilions

- Public toilets
- Rose garden
- Floral displays
- Infant and junior play areas
- Skate park and youth area

1.5 HISTORY AND RESTORATION OF THE SITE

1.5.1 Site Details

Ashton Gardens is located in the borough of Fylde and covers an area of 5 hectares. The gardens are located approximately 150m from the seafront, adjacent to St. Anne's Square which forms the centre of the town.

1.5.2 History and Development

Ashton Gardens was originally established as St George's Gardens by the Land and Building Company in 1874. The park was designed as part of the town to provide an attractive recreational area for residents and visitors. Gardens like this were developed to provide the "green lungs" of towns and cities and considered an important part of town planning.

The gardens were located within a rectangular plot of land, connected to St. George's Road, and running parallel to St. Andrew's Road. The site is approximately 150m from the seafront and originally had views across the sand dunes. Views to open sea would have been prevented around 1893 due to a housing development along North Promenade Road.

The garden was originally laid out, as far as possible, to retain the topography of the natural sand dunes. It remained largely unchanged until 1914 when Lord Ashton gave a donation to acquire the gardens for the people of St Anne's. He also bought another strip of land which connected the gardens to Clifton Drive North.

Later in the same year the Council ran a competition for the redesign of the gardens, which was won by a local man: Mr F. Harrison. The gardens were redesigned to incorporate a greater diversity of spaces. Large areas of ornamental planting replaced the native sand dune vegetation, although the undulating topography was retained in most areas and can still be seen today. Ashton Gardens was formally open on the 1st July 1916.

In the years since, the garden has seen the addition of a rose garden and a rock and water garden. Both were constructed and planted by Messrs Pulham & Son who specialised in the creation of picturesque ferneries and rock gardens.

1.5.3 HLF Refurbishment

The aim of the restoration scheme was to restore the character of the gardens to the period around 1916 whilst respecting how it was currently used and to find sympathetic ways of integrating new facilities.

The centrepiece in the restored gardens is the Ashton Institute Building, located on the St George's Road entrance between the two gate lodges. Fronting Ashton Institute is a courtyard, which is used and managed as part of the Institute building. The area of soft landscape round the courtyard was funded as part of the HLF bid. The lodge buildings were restored externally with the reinstatement of the chimneys and a full external render, along with the reinstatement of the perimeter railings and refurbishment of the entrance gates. The intention was to reinstate the original layout and features to create an entrance which was more in keeping with a primary entrance to a public garden during the early 20th century.

The gates at the primary entrance on Clifton Drive North were fully restored and the railings along the garden's frontage reinstated. The main drive and footpaths were resurfaced, and surface dressed. Works to the war memorial included: removing paint from the bronze sculpture; re-pointing; replacement of a bronze relief and feature lighting.

The children's play area was improved in 2011. An large scale, open aspect junior adventure play area was installed as well as a small, fenced infant play area.

The Rock and Water Garden was refurbished and restored with the help of funding from the Local Strategic Partnership in 2013.

In terms of soft landscaping, a considerable number of originally planted screening trees were removed to open up views and vistas and to allow the under-story to be diversified and improved. The horticultural elements within the park have been developed and improved to create a more diverse range of habitats and plants.

1.5.4 Historic Landscape Restoration

The garden's collection of trees, shrubs and herbaceous perennials were diversified by removing a considerable amount of the decorative planting to develop a pallet of plants that are in keeping with a newly restored Edwardian Garden. The in-house arboriculture team thinned the tree collection by up to 70% in some areas to recreate historic views and vistas throughout the gardens and to enable the under storey to be re-established with plants that have horticultural merit. Young plants were purchased and grown on as specimen plants in the nursery area on site; this strategy allowed plants to be hardened off to the difficult climatic conditions of the gardens.

The Council devoted funding to the improvement of the garden's planting to be phased in. We worked in partnership with the Town Council, Civic Society and other community groups and organisations to gain funding or sponsorship to achieve the horticultural standards throughout the whole gardens.

1.5.5 Listed Buildings and Historic Structures

The war memorial to the centre of the park is Grade II listed. It was donated by Lord Ashton and erected in 1924 to commemorate the lives lost during World War I.

The entrance lodges, the main entrance gates and the water fountain are not listed but are all original features from when the gardens were remodelled in 1916. Though not officially recognised as being of historical interest, they make an important contribution to the historic character of the gardens and contribute to it being Grade II listed.

The new Ashton Institute building is based on the original architecturally striking Institute building that was added when the gardens were remodelled in 1916. The original institute was later destroyed in a fire.

1.6 SITE OWNERSHIP, RIGHTS OF WAY AND DESIGNATIONS

1.6.1 Ownership

Ashton Gardens are in the ownership of Fylde Borough Council and various buildings within the gardens are leased as described below.

1.6.2 Lease and Covenants

The buildings within the gardens which the Council lease include the East lodge: No.7, St. George's Road, is leased to Age UK for a period of five years. This is due to expire on 31st March 2021. The West lodge: No. 5 St Georges' Road has been occupied by St Anne's Town Council for many years under a short term Licence. We have now agreed term a 7 year lease commencing on 1st May 2020.

The Pavilion Café in the Ashton Institute is currently leased for an agreed period of time.

This plan has considered the implications of the following legislation appropriate to the park:

Local Government Acts
Fouling of Land Act 1996
Environmental Protection Act 1990 and subsequent additions
Public Health Acts
Health and Safety Legislation (Various Acts)
Local bylaws

The gardens are of national importance which is recognised by its inclusion on the English Heritages' Register of Historic Parks and Gardens in 2001.

1.7 EDUCATIONAL VALUE

As a result of its heritage and culture, the educational value of the gardens is significant, not only for children and young people but for the wider community.

The Park's and Coastal Services Ranger Service team lead on the promotion of the park to the location community through a varied programme of activities. This includes the delivery of an annual outdoor events programme and an Outdoor Schools Education Programme, which promotes and educates the sites ecological and heritage value. as well as activities and events for the public during the holidays. These have included planting and potting events, either for the development of the park or nearby Fylde Sand Dunes project; as well as fun, family, educational orienteering events which can introduce younger visitors to the Gardens to navigation skills. The gardens are ideal and have been used for Easter egg hunts, and calving pumpkins for Halloween. There is also good potential for using the Gardens for taught school groups that may choose to learn in the park, this has already been delivered to a local school with more planned. The Rangers have written and developed an Outdoor Educational Brochure that can be downloaded from the council website so Schools and the public can see what is available. The Rangers also promote all park activities on social media so the public know what events are coming up in the mark.

1.8 SPORT AND RECREATIONAL VALUE

The gardens are used by young and old alike. Those of all ages use the gardens for walking and relaxation. The bowling greens are used predominantly by those over the age of 55; the skate park by teenagers and the playgrounds are used by younger children and toddlers often with their parents/carers. Many residents use the gardens as a link between their home and work or shopping areas in the town. School children and their teachers often can be seen using the gardens as an outdoor classroom in the spring and summer months.

The gardens are situated in a highly accessible location with unrestricted pedestrian access points on each side. There are also ample parking facilities within in easy walking distance of the park in St Anne's town centre. The gardens contribute greatly towards local tourism and its associated economic benefits, but are also an extremely important amenity resource to the local community. This amenity value has a significant impact on the quality of life for local residents.

Community outreach sessions are delivered within the park that focus on engagement of youths between the ages of 14 – 24. These session are delivered through a partnership approach where partners come together to deliver sport and physical activity sessions. The pavilion café is used once a month as a youth club setting.

The Ranger service is planning to utilise the gardens further for a one off sports day which will be open for the public to attend. This will allow children and families alike to try sports such as short tennis, badminton, football and cricket. This has been successful within other local parks and it brings people of all walks of life to play cricket together, make friends, have fun and keep fit.

1.9 DEMOGRAPHICS

An essential reference for compiling this management plan is the demographic information for the local area around St Annes and the wider community of Fylde. This information has assisted the authors in determining current and potential future community needs in conjunction with the consultation.

Below is a link to the research, which details the information for Fylde borough.

<https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/lancashire-insight/area-profiles/local-authority-profiles/fylde-district/>

1.10 THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

1.10.1 General

This management plan is a site-specific document compiled within the framework of a wider suite of strategic documents existing for the Local Authority and the local community of Fylde. In order to ensure appropriate synergy with these, all strategic documents have been researched and consultation undertaken as appropriate. A summary of the links between the management plan and other strategic documents is given below.

1.10.2 The Fylde Local Plan

The Local Plan provides an important protective framework for the site to assist in ensuring that it cannot be developed on for alternative use, and the habitats within it are recognised and managed accordingly. This management plan takes account of these designations and seeks to ensure that the varieties of environments in the site are protected appropriately. There are several policies within the Local Plan, which have direct effect on the site. The most relevant have been considered and the management plan supports the Local Plan Framework in the following ways:

Nature Conservation

Ashton Gardens is an urban park primarily surrounded by residential housing. The gardens provide valuable green space in an urban setting that can be utilised by a variety of urban species.

Tree & Woodland

The site has a good tree cover mainly along the perimeter boundaries of the gardens.

Tourism & Recreation

The coastal resorts of Fylde have for many years attracted large numbers of tourists and visitors. The areas parks and green spaces provide important amenity benefits for local residents, assists in meeting the leisure and

recreational needs of locals and visitors to the borough and contribute to the visual quality of the environment. For these reasons the Council will seek to protect them from any development.

1.10.3. Corporate Plan

The role that parks and green spaces play in delivering the Fylde Council's corporate objectives is recognised throughout the Council via the following arrangement.

The Corporate Plan is the council's main strategic document, it outlines the council's vision for a range of local services, together with the steps that it will take to achieve that vision. From this, Departmental Service plans are then developed and lead to individual staff personal development plans. The corporate plan contains a range of policies relating to the environment, community involvement and health and well-being.

The Corporate Plan is divided into 5 themes

- Value for money
- Clean & green
- A vibrant economy
- A great place to live
- A great place to visit

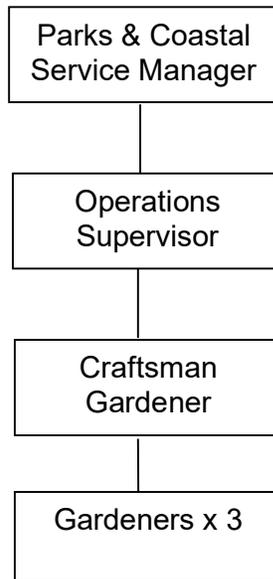
The Parks & Coastal Services team comes under the Clean and Green theme.

1.11 STAFF STRUCTURE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Council's Parks and Coast Service is ultimately responsible for managing the borough's parks and open spaces. The Parks and Coastal Services Manager encourages people to work in partnership with one another to provide an effective and responsive service. The Parks and Coastal Service deliver a holistic service which includes grounds maintenance, playground inspections and maintenance, arboriculture management, ranger service, conservation management and coastal patrol.

Ashton Gardens is maintained by a dedicated site-based team of skilled gardeners, who undertake all grounds maintenance and cleansing duties as well as the operation of the plant nursery. The team is managed by a Parks Operations Supervisor, who manages a range of operational teams across the borough and reports directly to the Parks and Coastal Services Manager.

Ashton Gardens Staff:



The Tourism and Culture Service is responsible for parks development and works in partnership with the Parks and Coastal team to deliver park design and improvement schemes, floral display design and procurement as well as facility and infrastructure development and liaison with community and special interest groups.

1.11.1 Staff Training and Appraisals

Staff appraisals are undertaken as one of the Council's Performance Management Framework and the Fylde Competency Framework which is necessary to ensure that every employee is fully aware of their role and is able to clearly understand their contribution to the authority and how they make a difference.

Every employee at Fylde must have an appraisal at least once a year. The employee appraisal is valuable in identifying the skills, knowledge and experience of every employee and represents an opportunity for the employee to review their own performance, set new targets for the future and discuss openly their strengths, ambitions and aspirations. Appraisals are essential to career development and are used by employees to ensure they have the opportunity to develop, to access training, to learn and to progress. The discussion must be recorded on the corporate format and signed off by both parties.

The Parks & Coast Service have developed staff training plans which lists both mandatory and task based training for each individual member of the team, to ensure that the team skill base is kept relevant and up-to-date as well as to allow personal growth within the organisation. Training includes but is

not exclusive to: corporate procedures and policies (iPool), IT, manual handling, health and safety, driving, operating machines and project management.

1.12 MISSION STATEMENT

“Ashton Gardens are to be managed and maintained to meet the needs of the residents and visitors to a quality of which all can be proud. The gardens will appeal to wide range of the community and visitors, with a diverse range of backgrounds who can share its pleasures, its sounds and its colours, its light and shade, its contrasts of tranquillity and liveliness. This is a place where happy memories are made and stored, spirits are refreshed and nature can be enjoyed.”

Welcoming Park



2.1 WELCOMING

Coming into the gardens from the main entrance on St George's Road or Clifton Drive North, the formality of the gardens is immediately apparent. They are well laid out and maintained to a high standard. The northern side of the site is more informal and has a relaxing feel with the rock and water gardens. The entrances at the rear of the gardens are mainly used by residents often as a through-way to the town centre. The variety of activities usually going on, gives a sense of vibrancy and safety, but at the same time certain areas still provide for relaxation.

2.2 GOOD AND SAFE ACCESS

The site has seven entrances and exits, and is situated in a highly accessible location near St. Annes Town Centre. There are car parks situated near to the gardens and they are easily accessible for pedestrians.

All the facilities are easily accessible to all including disabled users. The public toilets in the gardens are at the side of the Institute building, including a disabled toilet, and have good access.

The wide range of facilities and events ensure that the gardens are busy and popular with a good mix of age groups. Despite the large numbers of users, the gardens retain a peaceful atmosphere and there are very few issues with vandalism or antisocial behaviour.

2.3 SIGNAGE

The park has an appropriate suite of signs which are clear, informative and educational, as well as suitable for the period style of the site. Additional signs

containing historical and environmental information. The site benefits from external tourism signs. All signs are checked by the gardeners and cleaned/descaled as and when needed.

2.4 EQUAL ACCESS FOR ALL

All entrances to the gardens are flat and well maintained to allow good access for people with pushchairs and wheelchairs.

Car parking is available from both the NCP car park on St George's Road and the car parks in St Annes Square. All have provision for disabled parking.

The main byelaws affecting Ashton Gardens are available upon request.

2.5 COMMEMORATIVE BENCH SCHEME

Fylde Council has placed commemorative benches in peaceful areas throughout the borough. They are made from quality materials such as cast iron and recycled plastic and are embellished with a brass memorial plaque commemorating the names of those loved ones now departed.

The scheme is advertised on the Council's website, where it describes the benches. There are two styles of commemorative seats used in Ashton Gardens.

The seat used along the main Avenue is the 'Riverside' Seat. The type in the rose garden is the 'Stanford' which also surrounds the water gardens. All were chosen for their appearance, suitability and durability. The cost for a Riverside seat is £1000 and £990 for a Stanford. This covers the cost of the seat and the plaque and any installation and administration costs. The scheme is non-profit making but allows us to replace benches.



Healthy, Safe and Secure

3.1 GENERAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Fylde Council's Health & Safety Manual details the organisation's responsibilities and arrangements. It is a working document which is always under review and amended to comply with any new legislation or other health and safety requirements. This document can be inspected upon request.

Copies of the manual are available to staff at all major offices and depots. The folders contain risk assessments, COSHH Assessments, Safe Systems of Work, and full details of the Council's procedures. Example risk assessments are provided within the appendices.

3.1.1 Risk Assessments

There are a number of steps taken to ensure that the Council has an effective and consistent approach to health and safety and risk assessment across the Parks and Coastal Service.

Risk assessments are carried out for all maintenance activities within Ashton Gardens. This involves the identification of risk and then the development of safe working procedures that will reduce the likelihood of the risk. These are incorporated within the Council's Health and Safety Manual.

Event organisers are required to complete a risk assessment form, before the event in question. The initial form is submitted to the Parks Operations Supervisors.

3.1.2 Staff (general)

Extensive work has been undertaken to prevent staff suffering from H.A.V.S.; annual screening of permanent staff, screening new staff and seasonal workers prior to starting work, toolbox talks, work rotation, purchasing policy of buying low vibration equipment and annual renewal of higher vibrating equipment such as trimmers, and annual servicing of other equipment.

HSE leaflets INDG126 "Health Risks from Hand-Arm Vibration" and the pocket cards for employees "Hand-Arm Vibration Syndrome" have been distributed to employees.

Every member of staff, including management, has been trained in manual handling. It is a requirement that every seasonal member of staff is trained before starting the job. As the physical side of the job can be very strenuous, it is seen as essential that the work force is fully conversant with the theory and practice of safe lifting and handling of loads.

All manual workers are provided with basic H&S training which covers legislation e.g. Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, Risk Assessments and

Correct Lifting Techniques. Training usually takes one day and is provided by Blackpool Borough Council who are our over-arching H&S provider.

The Parks and Coastal Services team has a policy to protect the hearing of workers exposed to high noise levels. Grounds maintenance machinery can reach high noise levels which cannot be screened out, a time limit for working with these machines is set.

There are control measures that we employ to protect workers as far as possible;

- A purchasing policy to provide quieter equipment.
- Risk assessments to identify which operations pose a risk to hearing.
- Employees exposed to noise are screened annually.
- Hearing protection is provided to staff exposed to noise.
- Training for staff is provided to staff exposed to noise.

3.1.3 Depots

A first aid box is supplied and kept in the mess room. At least one gardener is fully trained to use the kit and he is the responsible person for the use and maintenance of it. This can also be used by park users if necessary.

Accident/Incident forms are available in the mess room. The person affected by the accident/ incident completes the form, where possible. Failing this, the Craftsman Gardener will complete the form and forward to the Parks Operations Supervisor for further investigation. Once the investigation is complete, the findings are recorded on the Accident/Incident form which is then sent the Parks and Coastal Services Manager and H&S Department for review.

All staff welfare facilities and depot area are regularly inspected by an Parks Operations Supervisor and the Craftsman Gardener. These inspections form part of the risk assessment policy for the site. Any specific risk assessments are undertaken at this visit, and the facilities are inspected for cleanliness, health and safety to staff and site users. All results are recorded and actions carried out appropriately.

3.2 SAFE EQUIPMENT

3.2.1 General

The children's play facilities meet both British and European Safety Standards. Gardeners carry out basic daily visual inspections and remove any hazards found. Fully qualified Play Inspectors undertake full operational inspections on a weekly basis. The results of the inspections are entered into a play safe management system via a PDA so that the safety of the equipment can be formally recorded, assessed and any defects dealt with.

The playground is popular, with a functional range of equipment, safety surfacing and seating. Perimeter fencing and a gate around the infants play area allows controlled access and prevents dog fouling in this area. An

emergency contact number is displayed on a notice at the children's play area.

3.2.2 Inspections

The site is subject to daily visual safety inspections by the site gardeners as they undertake their daily tasks. Any defects are reported to the Craftsman Gardener. Formal safety inspections are undertaken weekly by a qualified play inspector. Any defects will be recorded on a site inspection form, via a PDA, and remedial works are prioritised and programmed.

It is also important that officers and operatives constantly liaise with other partners such as user groups, concessionaires, other Council departments and the Emergency Services to create a coordinated approach to site safety and security.

3.3 PERSONAL SAFETY IN THE GARDENS

Grounds maintenance staff are the first point of contact for users and they can easily be identified by their uniforms and name badges. They are trained to assist people with their enquiries in a helpful and friendly manner. The Ranger Service also undertake weekly, uniformed patrols to provide a sense of personal safety for park users, liaising with the public and providing guidance or information.

The 2018 to 2021 Community Safety Strategic Assessment has been produced following a detailed audit and partnership consultation. The Community Safety Action Plan concentrates on several priorities such as anti-social behaviour with an over-arching aim to reduce crime and disorder, which includes parks and open spaces and provides positive and diversionary activities for young people. A partnership approach to deal with incidents within parks is overseen by the Community Safety Partnership.

The local Police Community Beat Managers, who have responsibility for the gardens, also meet with the Partnership team on a regular basis to ensure that park security is being maintained.

3.4 DOG CONTROLS

Dog walking is a popular activity within the gardens. Ashton Gardens is covered by a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) that prevents owners from letting their dogs foul and exercise their dogs off their leads in sensitive areas such as playgrounds or sports areas. Where this becomes a problem, the Dog Wardens or Rangers are brought in to deal with the situation. Dog fouling, however, tends not to be a problem in the gardens.

The Dog Warden Service undertakes the Council's statutory obligations:

- Stray dogs
- Enforcement
- Aggressive dogs

Any complaints about dogs will be responded to as quickly as possible, but always within two working days.

3.5 APPROPRIATE PROVISION OF FACILITIES

We ensure Ashton Gardens provides the right provision of facilities to the community by a series of user and non-user surveys, demographical information, constant partnership management and regular stakeholder meetings.

Public expectation and request for facilities are outlined in the numerous user and non-user surveys. This information is collated and used to lead the stakeholder group on future facility provision.

The Parks and Coastal Services management team understand and feel responsible for ensuring that any proposals regarding future provision are what the users want and that they suit the style of the gardens.

3.6 CCTV

In Ashton Gardens there are two monitored cameras which are controlled and monitored from the Wyre CCTV Studio at Poulton Civic Centre.

Well Maintained and Clean



4.1 LITTER AND WASTE MANAGEMENT

The general cleanliness of Ashton Gardens is kept to a very high standard. Cleansing activities such as litter picking, sweeping paths and emptying of bins is undertaken by site based gardeners in line with the frequencies shown in the site weekly task sheet. There is an excellent provision of litter bins throughout the park and these are well used by the park users. The site is litter picked and bins emptied daily and the paths air broomed weekly. There is a robust weekend rota for litter picking and bin emptying during the season (April-September). There are also recycling bins at the Clifton Drive entrance to the park.

Furniture is regularly inspected and will be cleaned by the team when necessary.

The management of the green waste and arisings is fully described in the Environmental Management section. All green waste is composted and used as soil conditioner in the gardens.

4.2 DEALING WITH GRAFFITI AND VANDALISM

The level of graffiti and vandalism is recorded and shows that it is very low in the gardens. A summary of our removal/ repair policy is given below:

Vandalism and graffiti will be reported as soon as offences are discovered and any necessary action taken according to the seriousness. All obscene graffiti is removed within 24 hours by the gardening staff. Non-obscene graffiti is removed within 48 hours.

Vandalism, again, is dealt with by gardening staff if they are able to do so e.g. smashed glass, upturned litter bins etc. Matters of a more serious nature are reported to the relevant person e.g. broken windows to Technical Services who then have someone on site as soon as possible to repair or make safe any damage.

4.3 HORTICULTURAL DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT

Fylde Council's Parks and Coastal Services team undertakes the maintenance of Ashton Gardens.

The gardeners follow detailed monthly task sheets which specify required jobs and frequencies. The Craftsman Gardener and Supervisor ensure the quality of operations are undertaken to a high standard as well as to the correct frequency. A sample monthly task sheet is provided within the appendix.

Ashton Gardens supports a significant range of horticultural displays including informal shrubberies to year-round formal bedding. The seasonal bedding displays include spring and summer displays of plants and bulbs. The garden has several compartment areas, each of which has a different planting style; chosen to suit the conditions of that area.

A nursery area within Ashton Gardens is used to grow, nurture and harden off plants. The growing base consists of a greenhouse and two polytunnels, plus raised beds and hard standing space. It provides an area for volunteers and Council gardeners to propagate and grow on plants, shrubs, fruit & vegetables and hanging baskets for parks and town centres across Fylde.

Ashton Gardens is now annually entered into the North West in Bloom Local Authority Park Award Category, where it has been awarded a Gold Medal Award and a National Certificate of Distinction for Parks by the RHS for the last two years (2018 and 2019).

Ashton Gardens is one of the main horticultural features and sites in St Annes' North West in Bloom submission, who have regularly received Gold award's in the annual North West in Bloom competition in the Best Large Coastal category.

4.4 ARBORICULTURAL MAINTENANCE

The Parks and Coastal Service team is responsible for managing and maintaining the Council's tree and woodland stock, with the exception of highways trees which are under the management of Lancashire County Council.

Key staff include a Tree Officer in the Planning Service and an operational team of two arborists within the Parks and Coastal Service.

The Council has recently developed a Trees and Woodland Strategy which sets out key corporate aims and objectives for the protection, management and development of trees from 2018 – 2024. An operational action plan will be developed alongside the strategy in 2019 to ensure its delivery. The action plan will include tree planting and woodland development proposals as well as proactive arboriculture maintenance to protect and enhance the existing tree stock.

The operational arboriculture team undertake annual tree surveys, record tree condition and grade risks. The outcome of the surveys feed into a proactive annual arboriculture work programme in which they deliver at the appropriate times.

The Council wants to improve our tree inspection and work programme in 2020 through adopting arboriculture specific software and handhelds to make the process more efficient and reliable.

4.5 BUILDING AND EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE

Ashton Gardens contains a range of public facilities with associated equipment including, children's playgrounds (infants and junior), skate park and multi-use games area.

All park play, sport and recreational facilities are inspected and maintained by a dedicated Play Inspection Team within Parks and Coastal Services. The team consists of two qualified play inspectors who inspect all equipment weekly, record findings on handheld devices, give findings a risk rating and set work programmes for repairs and proactive maintenance. Independent

ROSPA playground inspections are organised annually to serve as a quality benchmark for staff. Play, sport and recreational facility design and developments – including the refurbishment of playgrounds - is led by the Parks Development Team.

Ashton Gardens also contains a range of heritage buildings and structures including bowling pavilion and shelters, pavilion café, cenotaph and numerous depot buildings. All buildings and structures are inspected and maintained by the Council's Technical Services Team on an annual basis.

Environmental Management



5.1 MANAGING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The Council has an Environmental Policy which is available to view upon request. The policy document outline key ways in which the Parks and Coastal Service team can minimise its environmental impact in the delivery of its operations:

- The promotion of environmental issues through the Fylde in Bloom Initiatives, such as tree & bulb planting with local community groups.
- Minimising water consumption by the use of baskets and planters with reservoirs, and automatic irrigation systems for fine sports turf and hanging baskets.
- Minimising energy consumption by ensuring our fleet is well maintained and utilising the appropriate choice of fuels. This also reduces pollution from our activities. Carry out 'Green Fleet' assessment.
- Recycling initiatives such as composting and recycling all green waste.
- The creation and protection of wild flora and fauna habitats, through thoughtful management and sympathetic maintenance regimes.
- Minimising the use of herbicides, through utilising other methods of weed control.

- Protecting the environment through for example Tree Preservation Orders and tree replacement programme.
- Minimisation of waste and litter through appropriate management regimes. All green waste to be shredded and composted.
- The strategy will encompass an initial 5-year period. In order to ensure success is continuous and sustained an annual review will be undertaken.
- Increasing environmental awareness of all staff.
- Increasing environmental interpretation and access to information through informative signage, leaflets and website.
- Continue to work in partnership with environmental partners and stakeholders such as the RSPB, Lancashire Wildlife Trust, English Nature and schools etc.
- Recycling of timber and bark chippings from arboriculture works.
- Ensuring that all other green waste goes to the green waste station in Blackpool and not to landfill.
- Christmas tree recycling scheme in partnership with the Waste Minimisation Officer.

All activities in grounds maintenance operations have been re-evaluated with a view to make our actions more sustainable including:

- *Composting.* Compost bays were constructed in the depot area within the Gardens in line with the overall development of the nursery. We have doubled our composting bay provision (January 2020) through the construction of a further 3 bays. All green waste is shredded and mixed into the compost bays and a balance of greens and browns are maintained and the compost turned every few days. Greens will include grass clippings, spent bedding plants, flowers etc and browns will include leaves, shrub prunings, spent perennials etc.



- *Shredding.* Bulky green waste is shredded to reduce the amount of material down from 10 to 1. This material is either spread on to shrub beds as a mulch or used in the compost bays where it decomposes at a far quicker rate.

- *Composted materials.* These are used as a soil conditioner in the gardens.
- *Recycling non-compostable materials.* Separate euro bins are on site to take non-green waste such as glass, tin cans, litter etc. These are emptied on a two week cycle.
- *Peat usage.* Minimal use of peat (see below)
- *Water usage reduction.* The two bowling greens have an automatic irrigation system. This reduces the amount of water needed when irrigated through the night. A large water storage tank is to be installed to harvest rain water run-off from the greenhouses, this will be used in irrigation.
- *Minimal herbicide use.* (see below).
- *Control of weeds:* Invasive weeds and other weed species are managed and controlled. In particular, docks, thistles and ragwort need controlling to prevent them crowding out other plants. However, our Phase 1 Habitat survey recommended that not all weeds should be eradicated, e.g. ragwort is a food source for Cinnabar and burnet moths and a range of invertebrates. Weeds are therefore left in certain areas to support biodiversity.
- *Differential mowing.* Regimes to reduce grass cutting are in place e.g. a wild flower area has been introduced. Amenity grassland is managed as species rich grassland where possible.

The vehicles and large plant will form part of the 'Green Fleet' assessment. All smaller machinery has now been put onto a regular replacement programme. For example, the number of trimmers has been reduced and the remaining ones are replaced annually. This ensures less pollution and makes them safer to use.

The following are examples of new initiatives being undertaken at Ashton following trials over the last year, as written by the Nursery Propagator at the Ashton Gardens Nursery:

Green Waste And Composting

The compost bays now produce around 50 tonnes of good quality compost per annum. Each tonne of compost has a "value" of approx. £50. This is a saving on "bought-in" mulch and the avoidance of paying per tonne in waste removal charges. Green waste in landfill generates the "greenhouse gas" Methane (CH₄). On-site composting has reduced the environmental impact of the waste stream at Ashton Depot, and has allowed for considerable savings in buying-in mulch.

There are plans to construct 3 more compost bays in 2019-2020.

Autumn Leaves

Around 40 tonnes of leaves are collected from Ashton Gardens each autumn. Once they were routinely dumped in areas of the park which were little used by the public. However, as the park is progressively cleared of overgrown areas, these "dumping grounds" have been disappearing.

Shepherd Road Allotments Society have asked for leaves to be sent to their site. Reports back from Shepherd Road suggest that the amount of leaves sent there, (approx. 20 tonnes), was less than the demand for them as a

component of soil-improver.

Loam Production

All the turf “scalpings” from path edges in Ashton Gardens get stored at the Depot. This material cannot be added to a “hot composting” operation, (as the inert material content in the turf can act as a “fire-extinguisher” in the compost heap). However, handled separately this material eventually produces high quality loam.

“Off-Mains” Water

The original groundwater supply to Ashton Gardens and Depot has been restored and expanded to include the nursery facility. The water features in the park are supplied throughout the year from a well under the Depot. The nursery is supplied with the same from March to October, but reverts to mains water when there is a risk of frost. There have been significant savings in the water bills at Ashton Depot, and because potable water has an associated energy cost, water operations in the park and Depot now have a “greener” footprint.

St Annes In Bloom use the Depot to replenish the bowser they use to maintain their floral displays around St. Annes.

Sand Dune Grasses

Fylde Council is engaged in a project to bolster “soft sea defences” at the north end of St. Annes. Ashton Depot is now involved in a small-scale trial to assess the viability of the various means propagation (and on-growing) of *Ammophila* and *Leymus* to address a shortage in the external supply of these grasses.

5.2 CHEMICAL USE

Fylde Council adheres to guidelines currently outlined in the UK Pesticide Strategy (HSE) in utilising pesticides safely and within legislation as well as regularly review our products against the Pesticides Register of Authorised Products. Pesticides will only be used where it will result in tangible benefits and will not cause irreversible environmental damage. Pesticides are also only used when there is no viable, cost effective, less harmful alternative.

We have developed departmental pesticide best practices in the maintenance of our parks and green space. This includes:

- Protecting users and workers by minimising exposure to pesticides
- Protecting residents and bystanders by minimising exposure from spray operations
- Reducing water pollution caused by pesticides
- Reducing the impact of pesticides on biodiversity
- Minimising the risk to users and the environment
- Encouraging the introduction of cost effective, more sustainable alternative approaches and greater use of integrated pest management (IPM)

We have evaluated what controls are really required and factors such as site location, soil type, frequency and type of use influence the level of management and inputs such as pesticides and fertiliser used are considered.

5.3 PEAT USE

The Council is actively seeking ways of reducing the use of peat, or products that contain peat.

“Peat should not be used in landscaping, horticultural or gardening work carried out by the Council where suitable alternatives are available”. (Environmental Strategy, Fylde Council).

The Parks management team understand the need for peat minimisation, and are actively managing the reduction in the use of peat throughout the service.

Biodiversity, Landscape & Heritage



6.1 BACKGROUND

The historical development of the town of St Anne's closely corresponds to the development of its coastline. St Anne's was established by the Land & Building Company of St Anne's (itself established in 1874) which laid the foundation stone on March 31st 1875. It was prompted by the growth of the holiday trade developing in the neighbouring resorts of Blackpool and Lytham.

As with most resorts of the era, there was a strong emphasis on the health advantages to be gained from a visit to a coastal resort, due to the fresh air and clean water (differing greatly from the congested industrial towns). At the town's inception it was decided that St Anne's would cater for the wealthier and more genteel of the holiday makers, by providing expensive but high quality accommodation and services.

6.2 MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL FEATURES, WILD FLORA AND FAUNA

Ashton Gardens' architectural style blends formal landscape with informal naturalised areas. This helps make it a very appealing park for local wildlife and enables the development of wildflower areas.

The gardens support a variety of wildlife including birds, mammals, insects and invertebrates as documented in a Phase 1 Habitat Survey carried out by Lancashire Wildlife Trust. In total 104 different species of plant were recorded. The survey also identified 12 species of fauna including Sparrowhawks and the rare White letter Hairstreak butterfly. It is likely that Ashton Gardens supports a breeding colony for this rare butterfly which favour Elm trees. Habitat surveys often include target notes. Target notes describe features of ecological interest from a biodiversity, ecological and wildlife perspective. The rock and water gardens are a major feature and provide shelter for small creatures such as frogs, toads, newts, hunting spiders and bumblebees along with the larger resident populations of mallard and various species of fishes. We could have a much better understanding of the ecology of the site and further wildlife surveys need to be programmed by the Ranger Service to ensure that the data behind this plan is kept up to date, relevant and informs the management of the site.

6.3 CONSERVATION OF LANDSCAPE FEATURES, BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

The gardens have been a feature of St. Annes since the town was conceived. The majority of the original design has been retained. The gardens are designated as a conservation area in the Local Plan and have been included on English Heritages' Register of Historic Parks and Gardens since 2001 and been given a Grade 2 Listed status.

Features of particular conservation importance include:

- Ashton Institute
- War Memorial
- Lord Ashton Monument
- Bowling Pavilions
- Gate Lodges
- Gate entrances, piers and railings
- Rock and Water Garden
- Rose Garden

The buildings and structures in the gardens are managed and maintained by the Councils Technical Services Team.

6.3.1 Ashton Institute

Between 1914 and 1916 The Ashton Institute was described as "A games pavilion, equipped with billiard table and verandah which overlooks the tennis courts" However, the original Institute was destroyed by fire. Ashton Institute was fully restored within the HLF programme and forms a central café and toilets for the park at the St George's Road entrance.

6.3.2 War Memorial

A fine impressive and dignified memorial and the only park structure individually listed. It was constructed in 1924 to commemorate the loss of life in the Great War. Lord Ashton paid for W. Marsden of South Kensington to produce the sculpture which was placed prominently on the axis from the long Clifton Drive entrance which it faces and which it dominates. The memorial stands as it was first built, except that plaques have been added in memory of those killed in World War II and later conflicts. The memorial was restored as part of the HLF refurbishment programme.

6.3.3 Lord Ashton Monument

The Rose Garden became the setting for the Drinking Fountain, now known as the Lord Ashton Monument, which bears the following inscription: "These Gardens were presented by The Right Hon Lord Ashton to the inhabitants of St Anne's on the Sea 1914." The Supporters of Ashton Gardens secured a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to fully restore the Monument. This was completed in December 2011.

6.3.4 Bowling Pavilions

The Gents Pavilion first appears on the OS map of 1932 with the Ladies Pavilion recorded as having been added in 1974. The Gents is a contemporary of the Ashton Institute and was constructed in time for the opening of the Ashton Gardens in 1913. There is a presentation photograph of 1934 showing the Gents Pavilion to have the same verandah colonnade design as that shown in the post card of the Institute. Written reports indicate that the building was built under a slate roof with timber posts.

Following the restoration in the Park, the Gents Bowls Pavilion has been set centrally to the Green. This required the removal of the Ladies Pavilion and the two were combined into an extended Gents Pavilion. The veranda was restored and despite the written evidence, the 1934 photograph indicated a plain clay roof tile.

The Gents Pavilion was restored to its original elegant form and extended in a sympathetic way by adding an awning to each side of the pavilion. This maintained the buildings symmetry and enhance the setting of the Bowls Pavilion.

6.3.5 Gate Lodges

It seems that these two buildings were the original lodges for the St George's Gardens and they are probably the same buildings that are shown on the 1893 map, and each version in sequence. They are typical late 19th Century villas, and they have obviously been subject to a series of ad-hoc alterations. The lodges have been restored within the HLF programme and the maintenance plans are shown in the appendices.

Both buildings are currently occupied, one as previously mentioned by Age UK. The other houses St Annes Town Council Officers and is a venue for Council meetings.

6.3.6 Entrance Gates, Piers and Railings

Railings and gates were installed by the Bayliss, Jones & Bayliss company, and found around the entire boundary of the gardens, except where adjacent buildings negated the need for them. The St George's Road entrance is the main entrance into the gardens for access to the café and the gardens. The layout of the entrance and restoration of gates and railings, improvements of the Lodges were addressed in the HLF programme. The layout and sense of a grand entrance to a significant space is greatly improved. The entrance from Clifton Drive North is a distinctive feature of the gardens and is composed of a semi-circular paved area leading to decorative gates.



Historical records indicate that the water features were constructed shortly after 1914. It appears that no major layout changes to the water features have taken place since the original construction.

Restoration of the Rock and Water garden was completed under the HLF:

- Restorations of the rock work, the steps and paths.
- Replanting of the islands and surrounding areas reflecting the rock and water garden design intent.
- Restoration of features and the bridge.
- Resurfacing of the footpaths.

6.3.7 Rose Garden

The Rose Garden was an addition of the Ashton Gardens original design. It replaced the fruit garden of St George's Gardens and contained a lily pond with nymph statue. This reference to the fruit garden was made in the Council minutes for the time when it was being removed and no further information has been found regarding its content or design.

The Rose Garden was constructed and planted by Messrs Pulham & Son. The footpaths were flagged and the low terrace wall contained seats, and was backed by an ornamental rose fence made from oak.

The restoration of the rose garden included the following works, which are completed:

- Thin tree canopy cover and number of overshadowing trees.
- Reinststate timber palisades for climbing roses, on the terraces around the garden, as per historical photographs.
- Reinststate urns on top of steps, repair pond and reinststate nymph statue
- Repair footpaths, retaining walls and steps.

Community Involvement

7.1 SUPPORTERS OF ASHTON GARDENS

7.1.1 General

Supporters of Ashton Gardens (SOAG) formed after a protest rally in 1998 was organised to prevent a local supermarket from purchasing part of the gardens. "Save Ashton Gardens" became the 'Supporters of Ashton Gardens', and turned to fund raising for improvements in the gardens. SOAG is a voluntary not-for-profit, membership-based group dedicated to protecting, preserving and enhancing Ashton Gardens. The group's committee meets at least four times every year and has an AGM in April. The group hold regular coffee mornings at the Ashton Pavilion to raise funds to help undertake their work in the gardens. They also organise Summer Brass Band concerts in the park to help raise awareness of the Park.

SOAG completed the restoration of the Lord Ashton Monument in the rose garden for which they secured £49,000 of Heritage Lottery Funding. They also produced a leaflet "Ashton Gardens – A Brief History" a copy of which can be found in the appendices.



All the work the group has achieved has led to them winning an Outstanding Its Your Neighbourhood Award at North West in Bloom Awards for the last 5 years.

7.1.2 Aims

The aims of SOAG are;

- To rally and encourage support for our purpose through advocacy, promotion and information.
- To raise awareness of the importance, benefits and historic significance of Ashton Gardens.
- To collaborate with other individuals and organisations to achieve our purpose.
- To raise funds for uses in connection with our purpose.
- To encourage and involve a broad spectrum of the community in SOAG and its activities.

Access to the SOAG website can be gained by using the following link:

<http://www.ashtongardens.org.uk/>

7.2 St Annes on the Sea In Bloom

Ashton Gardens contributed to the St Annes on the Sea 'In Bloom (SAIB) success in achieving Gold in recent years for 'Best Large Coastal Resort' at the North West in Bloom Awards. In 2018 and 2019 they also won the category for 'Best Large Coastal Resort'.

SAIB have a growing number of volunteers who are willing to tackle planting, weeding, watering and dead heading tasks within the garden.

The group works with local businesses, homeowners and Fylde Council to encourage:

- Litter free gardens and open spaces
- Reinstating traditional planting
- Well maintained garden
- Vibrant bee friendly garden
- Sustainable planting

SAIB meet monthly to discuss current topics and projects and possible funding opportunities.

7.3 Volunteers

In addition to the Supporters of Ashton Gardens (SOAG) and St Annes in Bloom, Ashton Gardens has a number of regular volunteers who either come independently to work in the gardens or are from local organisations that support adults with learning disabilities.

Some of the volunteers prefer to work in the park and carry out activities such as weeding, watering, litter picking and leaf collecting. Whereas others work in the growing area of Ashton Gardens sowing seeds, taking cuttings and potting on plants.

All the volunteers benefit from learning horticultural skills from Fylde Council staff and enjoy helping to improve local parks and green spaces. The gardens benefit from having a pool of enthusiastic people who attend regularly and provide a well-cared for park and plants.

The Parks Development Officer administers the current volunteer scheme; processing applications and being a main point of contact. The Craftsman Gardener will liaise with the Parks Development Officer on a regular basis to discuss any health and safety issues or training needs that are identified for volunteers.

The Ranger Service is also in the process of establishing a number of structured volunteer opportunities, one of which will be a Volunteer Ranger Scheme.

7.4 The Pavilion Café

The Pavilion Café is the hub of the park and is currently leased to a private concessionaire. The terms of the lease include a covenant to engage with the local community. The current lessee is very proactive and holds a number of events, live music concerts and food fairs in the courtyard area of the Institute throughout the year. In addition, they provide a community gallery space for schools, charities and local artists with a new artist each month.

7.5 Events, Education and Activities

Local clubs and societies in St Annes join together during the second weekend of July each year to organise the St Annes Carnival weekend. The aim of the weekend is to raise funds for local charities. Ashton Gardens plays a central role in this celebration. The weekend starts with a Saturday morning procession through the town that finishes at Ashton Gardens with the crowning of the rose queen. The gardens play host to a large number of visitors who are able to enjoy entertainment and a range of stalls offering games, local produce and food. Further details of the Carnival can be found at: <https://visitstannes.info/recreation-entertainment/events-featured/st-annes-carnival/>

Two local primary schools regularly use Ashton Gardens as a curriculum resource for pupils. Mayfield Primary school pupils visit the park to observe and record the flora and fauna as part of their Web of Life project. Heyhouses school also use the park for curriculum linked field trips as part of their Forest School and Eco-Warriors programs. During their outdoor lessons the pupils participated in the construction of a bug hotel within the wildflower area in the gardens, teaching them the importance of declining bee populations and the need to protect habitats.

The Ranger service utilise the park as a venue in order to fulfil their annual events schedule. With the prominence of Ashton Gardens in St.Anne's town centre, one of the largest towns in the Fylde borough, the increased footfall as well as safe, open spaces make it an obvious location for events. In their first year in post, the Ranger service had hosted three family events in Ashton

Gardens. These included a springtime potting event, summer teddy bears picnic and Halloween event during the autumn half term which ran in conjunction with the Pavilion café. For the second, and future years, the Ranger service aims to build on the successes from the first year and host more events in the park year on year.

7.6 WIDER STAKEHOLDERS

It is recognised that for any park to be successfully managed it must respond to the needs of the local community, and this means that a park service must actively engage and involve the local community in the development of the park or green space.

An organisation involved with Ashton Gardens, representing user groups is St. Annes on the Sea in Bloom Trust.

The key stakeholders involved with the gardens are:

St. Annes on the Sea in Bloom	Fiona Boismaison
Supporters of Ashton Gardens	Jon Harrison
Ward Councillors	FBC Elected Members
Leisure & Tourism Committee Chairman	Councillor Cheryl Little
Police	
FBC Parks & Coastal Services Team	All Staff
FBC Tourism & Leisure Team	Tim Dixon
FBC Technical Services Team	Darren Bell
Pavilion Café Tenants	

These groups have all signed up to this Management and Maintenance plan and been actively involved in its production. The site management plan will be fully signed up by officers, gardeners, the community and elected members, through a series of meetings and consultation.

7.7 AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

Further methods to increase visitor numbers are proposed by the report carried out by Graham Barrow Research & Consulting Ltd, which the Council intends to pursue:

- Enhanced interpretation

- Increasing the educational use of the gardens
- Better links with youth
- Making the gardens more attractive
- Greater involvement by local groups in management and maintenance
- Regular monitoring of the use of the gardens
- Ease of use for the disabled
- Promotion of the gardens
- Provide for education and horticultural advice
- Link the Gardens with other heritage attractions in the Borough

The Audience Development Action Plan can be viewed on request.

Marketing & Communication

8.1 GENERAL

St. Annes is a major tourist attraction for visitors to the Fylde Coast and the North West. The Council actively promotes Ashton Gardens as a tourist attraction to provide a quality of life and boost the local economy, as set out in the corporate plan.

It is the aim of the Council to provide and encourage the best use of Ashton Gardens to meet the leisure needs of residents and visitors to the borough through:

- Providing opportunities for informal leisure activities and promote conservation within the gardens
- Providing a safe and attractive environment for play and recreation within the appropriate British Safety Standards and other relevant national and European legislation, as these become law
- Developing links with voluntary organisations
- Coordinating tourism matters to help economic development throughout the gardens
- Providing disabled access
- Providing a range of catering in our facilities to meet customer's needs
- Motivating and encouraging people to take part in recreational activities within the gardens by creating opportunities for those who are not currently participating
- Set charges for recreational activities that ensure inclusiveness for the whole community

8.2 INFORMATION AND VISITOR MANAGEMENT

The area of St. Annes is a focus for visitors from far and wide who come to enjoy this traditional coastal town, which is currently undergoing a regeneration scheme. Ashton Gardens forms a major phase of the scheme.

Other phases of the scheme include the regeneration of the Promenade Gardens and the newly landscaped Square. The Square has just seen its forth phase completed, linking the town centre to the Promenade.



Objectives of Publicity

- Inform existing customers
- Attract new customers
- Develop and maintain loyalty
- Stimulate enquiries

This is achieved in a number of ways. We will constantly update the dedicated Ashton Gardens page on the Council website including information on:

- Facilities
- Activities
- Events
- Current management and maintenance plan
- Provide links to Partners

We will also:

- Distribute the existing Ashton Gardens leaflet; TIC, local hotels, Ashton Gardens Pavilion, St Annes Town Council offices.
- Update all social media outlets on a regular basis.
- Work towards all signage being part of a corporate style that is relevant to the site, it must be informative and educational.
- Ensure that the gardens always flies a 'Green Flag' with pride. Flag poles will be kept clean and in good working condition
- Provide interpretation for the Green Flags and the Green Flag Scheme

8.3 MARKETING METHODS

Marketing Activity	Audience	Comment	Frequency
Event programmes	Current and potential visitors to the Fylde area	Detail forthcoming events.	Quarterly
Notice boards	Current and potential visitors to the Fylde area	Detail forthcoming events	As and when new items for publication
Promotional brochures	Entries in the Fylde's mini guide	Details of the gardens	Published Annually
Promotional leaflets and videos	Fylde residents and visitors www.discoverfylde.co.uk/promo	Brochure style leaflet promoting quality of gardens and range of activities available.	Published 2014
Press activity	Fylde residents and visitors. Regional, local and specialist press. Internal FBC publications	Promoting the gardens. Linked to awards such Green Flags and new features.	As and when
Website	All visitors to: www.fylde.gov.uk www.discoverfylde.co.uk www.visitlancashire.com www.greenflagaward.org.uk	Dedicated Ashton Gardens page Information on the gardens	Updated weekly.
Website	http://thepavilioncafe.org/	Information about events taking place at the Ashton Institute Pavilion Café	Updated by lessee
Website	http://www.visitlythamstannes.co.uk/	Information about the gardens, link to website, details of the carnival weekend and pavilion café.	Updated weekly
Website	www.facebook.com http://twitter.com	Information on Fylde Council, events, links to websites, news and notifications	Updated daily

8.4 DISTRIBUTION OF MARKETING MATERIALS

- The gardens are mentioned in the tourist guides for the area
- Press realises have been to all local communities via both free press and recognised local newspapers

8.5 TARGET AUDIENCE

Our existing audience is summarised below:

Internal

- FBC Staff

External

- Local residents
- Local schools
- Community organisations
- Youth groups
- Visitors
- Non-users and hard to reach groups

Stakeholders

- Elected Members
- Supporters of Ashton Gardens
- St Annes on the Sea In Bloom

Management

9.1 Clearly Addressing Green Flag Criteria in Management Prescriptions

The Ashton Gardens Management Plan and our longstanding partnerships with local stakeholders demonstrates Fylde Council's commitment to ensuring the appropriate and quality management of the site and encompassing services, addressing the criteria within the Green Flag Award scheme. The criteria also provides the method for self-assessment. Performance targets are to be set in the production and future revision of this plan, ensuring its successful long- term application.

9.2 Management Plan Must be Actively Implemented and Reviewed

The Parks and Coastal Services Manager has overall responsibility for this plan. The Action Plan provides a clear set of actions against the aims and objectives listed within the Green Flag Criteria Evaluation. The plan also identifies those parties who need to be involved and consulted. These actions are set against clear time scales and will ensure developments are completed in a professional, logical and organised manner. The plan is reviewed annually, and judge's feedback is reflected within the document.

9.3 Sound Financial Management

It is anticipated that a well-managed and promoted park will enjoy a significant increase in visitors. The increase in usage of the park will impact on the likely life expectancy of certain items of infrastructures such as footpaths, buildings, furniture, children's play equipment, and other artefacts within the park. The value and benefits of an upgraded park will only be upheld if sufficient budgets are allocated and Ashton Gardens is properly resourced. The proper funding of development and maintenance will ensure its long term future success. A site specific budget has been ring fenced for the park and the Parks and Coastal Services Manager programmes annual works accordingly and to priority.

Five Year Management Action Plan

Proposals/Actions	Responsible	Funding Source	Target Date	Progress
A Welcoming Park				
Interpretation signs	Parks Development	Revenue Budget	2018-2023	
Enforcement of dog control orders	Operational staff	Revenue Budget	Ongoing	
Healthy, Safe & Secure				
Build of new depot building	Technical surfaces	Capital budget	July 2019	Complete
Remove non-working roundabout in play area	Parks & development	Capital budget	March 2020	Complete
Install new Galleon play equipment in junior play area	Parks & development	Capital budget	March 2020	Complete
Carry out play area audit	Parks development	Revenue budget	Sep 2019	Complete
Well Maintained & Clean				
Ensure cleanliness standards are maintained	All staff	Revenue Budget	Ongoing	
Replacement of benches – commemorative bench scheme	Parks development	Revenue budget	Ongoing	
Top up the sand levels in the play area	Parks operational	Revenue budget	Sep 2020	
Install timber bumper boards around bowling greens	Parks operational	Revenue budget	2018-2020	
Complete resurfacing works in depot area	Parks development	Capital budget	March 2020	
Replant outer borders in rose garden	Parks & development	Revenue budget	Sep 2020	
Design & implement new perennial	Parks &	Revenue budget	Apr 2020	

planting for main drive beds	development			
Gap up outer border in sunken garden	Parks & development	Revenue budget	Sep 2020	
Environmental Management				
Continue to reduce reliance on chemical use	All staff		Ongoing	
Adhere to environmental policy at all times	All staff		Ongoing	
Install 3 additional compost bays in depot area	Parks development	Capital budget	March 2020	
Biodiversity, Landscape & Heritage				
Refurbish Japanese garden	Parks & Development	Revenue budget	Mar 2020 – Mar 2023	
Community Involvement				
Develop links with local schools	All staff		Ongoing	
Produce annual events and activity schedule	Parks Ranger service	Revenue budget	March 2020	
Deliver 5 day environmental educational theme & sports activities	Parks ranger service & sports development	Revenue budget	July 2019	Complete
Marketing & Communication				
Update Council website & social media	All staff		Ongoing	
Distribute Ashton Gardens leaflet	All staff		Ongoing	
Advertise in Fylde mini guide & local tourist publications	Tourism Services	Revenue budget	Ongoing	
Establish new Tourism Officer role	Tourism services	Revenue budget	July 2019	Complete
Management				
Prepare & submit capital report for budget for play equipment & depot surfacing	Parks Management		July 2019	Complete

Tender for play equipment & depot surfacing works	Parks development	Capital budget	Sep 2019	Complete
Prepare & submit capital bid to refurb existing play areas	Parks management	Capital budget	Nov 2019	Complete

Appendices

APPENDIX 1 EXAMPLE TASK SHEETS & RISK ASSESSMENT

Fylde Borough Council Private & Confidential

Period Work Schedule : Period J4

MT Contract

		CC	Pnts	Frequency	Quantity	Tick Completed
1	St Annes					
	Ashton Gardens					
				St Annes (your ref 11004547 our ref : 004547)		W1 W2 W3 W4
BD30	Bedding-Hand Weed / Hoe	MT	[1]	x4	566.00 m2	
CL13	Empty Litter Bin - Ornamental Areas	MT	[1]	x28	21.00 no	
CL17	Litter Pick High Ornamental Areas	MT	[1]	x24	46,899.00 m2	
GC11	Grass - Mow Fine Sports Turf	MT	[1]	x12	2,666.60 m2	
GC12	Grass - Mow Ornamental	MT	[1]	x4	1,885.00 m2	
GC13	Grass - Mow Amenity	MT	[1]	x2	14,192.78 m2	
GE03	Edge Off Amenity	MT		x2	400.10 lm	
GE11	Grass Edge - Ornamental, LHS	MT	[1]	x4	2,459.00 lm	
GE13	Grass Edge - Amenity Strim	MT	[1]	x2	4,001.00 lm	
HD11	Trim Hedge - Ornamental	MT	[1]	x1	120.00 lm	
HD14	Spot Treat Hedge Base- Contact Herbicide	MT	[1]	x1	120.00 lm	
PO001	Pond-Inspect & CleanseDaily	MT	[1]	x20	1.00 no	
RB11	Roses-Dead Head & Remove Suckers	MT	[1]	x4	765.00 m2	
RB16	Roses-Treatment Of Pests & Diseases	MT	[1]	x1	765.00 m2	
RB17	Roses-Cultivate & Hand Weed	MT	[1]	x4	765.00 m2	
SB30	Shrub-Hand Weed & Cultivate Ornamental	MT	[1]	x2	3,415.00 m2	
SB31	Shrub-Hand Weed/Hoe Amenity	MT	[1]	x1	2,500.00 m2	
TC001	Tarmac - Brush/Airbroom Weekly	MT	[1]	x4	10,337.00 m2	
TM113	Brush / Switch Fine Sports Turf	MT	[1]	x20	2,666.00 m2	
TM115	Verticut Fine Sports Turf	MT	[1]	x1	2,666.00 m2	
TM122	Clean Bowling Green Gutters	MT	[1]	x1	300.00 Lm	

Fylde Borough Council Private & Confidential

Period Work Schedule : Period J6

MT Contract

		CC	Pnts	Frequency	Quantity	Tick Completed
1	St Annes					
	Ashton Gardens					
					St Annes (your ref 11004547 our ref : 004547)	W1 W2 W3 W4
BD30	Bedding-Hand Weed / Hoe	MT	[1]	x4	566.00 m2	
CL13	Empty Litter Bin - Ornamental Areas	MT	[1]	x15	21.00 no	
CL17	Litter Pick High Ornamental Areas	MT	[1]	x24	46,899.00 m2	
GC11	Grass - Mow Fine Sports Turf	MT	[1]	x12	2,666.60 m2	
GC12	Grass - Mow Ornamental	MT	[1]	x4	1,885.00 m2	
GC13	Grass - Mow Amenity	MT	[1]	x2	14,192.78 m2	
GE03	Edge Off Amenity	MT		x2	400.10 lm	
GE11	Grass Edge - Ornamental, LHS	MT	[1]	x4	2,459.00 lm	
GE13	Grass Edge - Amenity Strim	MT	[1]	x2	4,001.00 lm	
HD11	Trim Hedge - Ornamental	MT	[1]	x1	120.00 lm	
PO001	Pond-Inspect & CleanseDaily	MT	[1]	x20	1.00 no	
RB11	Roses-Dead Head & Remove Suckers	MT	[1]	x4	765.00 m2	
RB16	Roses-Treatment Of Pests & Diseases	MT	[1]	x1	765.00 m2	
RB17	Roses-Cultivate & Hand Weed	MT	[1]	x4	765.00 m2	
SB30	Shrub-Hand Weed & Cultivate Ornamental	MT	[1]	x2	3,415.00 m2	
SB31	Shrub-Hand Weed/Hoe Amenity	MT	[1]	x1	2,500.00 m2	
TC001	Tarmac - Brush/Airbroom Weekly	MT	[1]	x4	10,337.00 m2	
TM113	Brush / Switch Fine Sports Turf	MT	[1]	x20	2,666.00 m2	
TM115	Verticut Fine Sports Turf	MT	[1]	x1	2,666.00 m2	
TM122	Clean Bowling Green Gutters	MT	[1]	x1	300.00 Lm	

Fylde Borough Council Risk Assessment Form 1

This Form can be used for the assessment of all organisational risks including; Health and Safety; Risk Management & Business Continuity.
 This Form must be used in conjunction with Form 2 – Agreed Actions
 For Details of Risk Ratings see Form 3

Business Unit: Community Services	Date of Assessment 1 st April 2019
Section: Parks	Assessment Team Gail Isbister and Ben McCabe
Location: All Sites	

Assessment Activity / Area / Type: **Manual Handling**
GM MT1

Do the hazards create a business continuity risk? Yes / No

What is the Hazard	What is the Potential Harm	Who is at Risk	Controls In Place	Likelihood	Severity	Risk Rating	Further Potential Controls
Lifting	Back injury, crush injuries	Operative	All operatives must have manual handling training every five years, Wear safety boots. Wear gloves when lifting objects with sharp edges. When load is heavy or large, get help from someone of similar physique. Do not lift loads onto stacks above chest level. Lift with knees bent and back straight.	3	3	9	

All Agreed Actions and Target Dates must be recorded on Form 2 (OH&SF 002)

Fylde Borough Council Risk Assessment Form 2 – Agreed Actions

This Form must be completed with the Section Manager and in conjunction with Risk Assessment Form 1

Further Control Agreed	Resource implication	Person Responsible	Signature	Target date	Completed

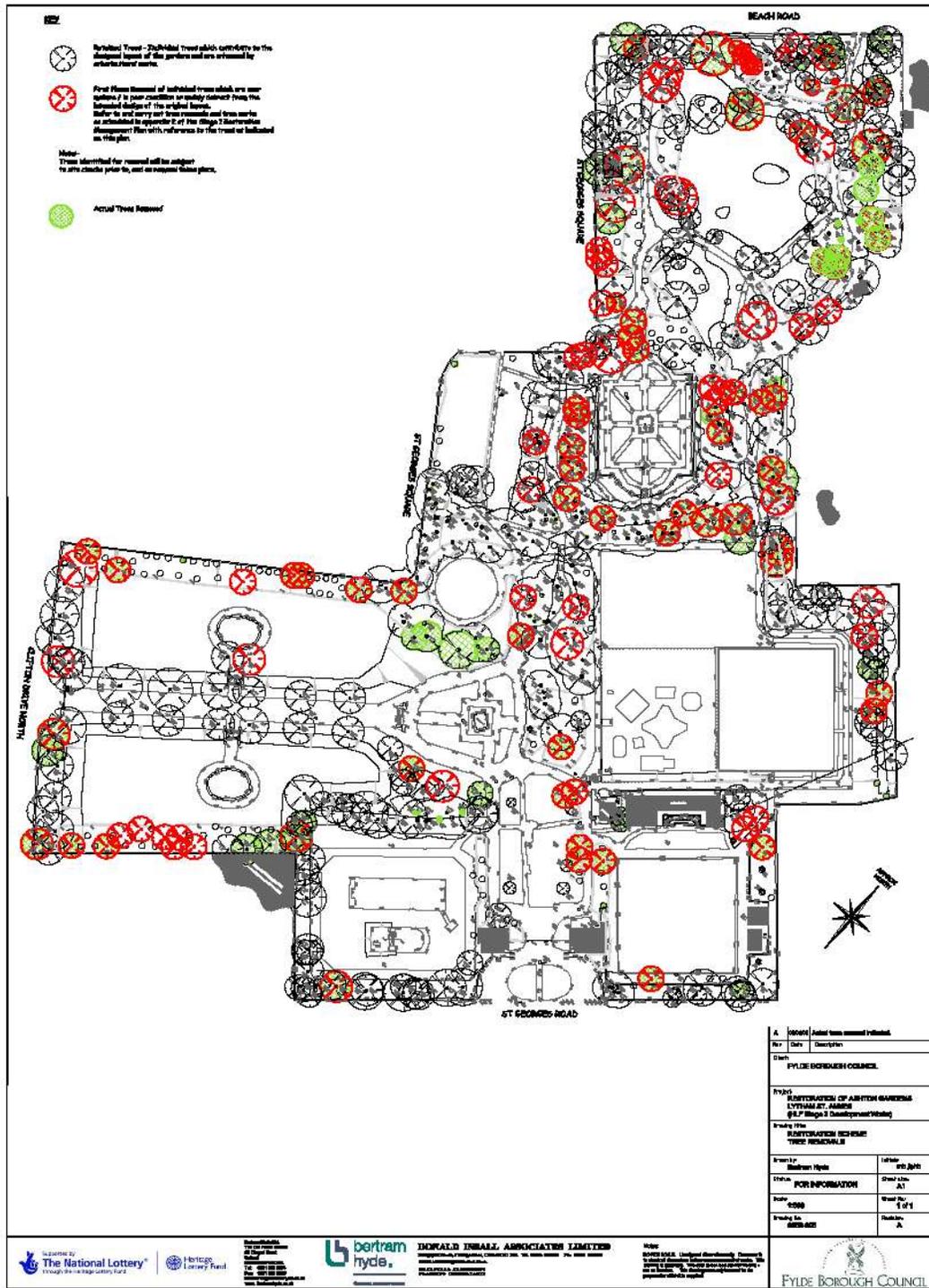
Assessment / Activity / Area / Type *Manual Handling*

Section Manager Responsible for this Action Plan.....M Wilde

Signature... *Mark Wilde* ...

Action Plan Review Date.....1st April 2019.....

Appendix 2 TREE REMOVAL PLAN



A (Insert) Actual trees removed (indicated)	
Rev	Description
Client	FYLDE BOROUGH COUNCIL
Project: SUBSTITUTION OF AIR ITEM BARRIERS SYSTEM ST. ANDREW (S&P Stage 2 Development/Works)	
Drawing Title: SUBSTITUTION BARRIER TREE REMOVAL	
Author:	Issue:
Checked:	Drawn:
FOR INFORMATION	
Date:	Sheet No.:
Drawing No.:	Scale:



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APPENDIX 3 SUPPORTERS OF ASHTON GARDENS LEAFLET

ASHTON GARDENS NOW

Located at the heart of St Anne's on the Sea, just off the Town Centre, Ashton Gardens is a quiet green oasis in a sea of built development.



The gardens offer an informal lake and tree area with ducks and squirrels; children's play facilities; crown green bowling; quiet areas for meditation or relaxing and lovely flowers. The gardens are also home to one of the best war memorials in the country, sculpted by Walter Marsden, and an excellent pavilion café.



There is something for everyone in the gardens, whether it's a space for a quiet picnic or a spot of sunbathing, or to feed the ducks, or for children to enjoy the play area.

There is no entry charge and the gardens are always open. An area for skateboarding and a hard surface games area complete the facilities.

Parking is available on close by the streets away from the town, or there is a multi story car park on St George's Road only a hundred metres or so from the gardens entrance.



We hope you enjoy your visit

Supporters of Ashton Gardens

SOAG exists to

**protect, preserve and enhance
Ashton Gardens**

Originally founded as *Save Ashton Gardens* in 1998 when the gardens were under threat, SOAG is now a not-for-profit membership organisation that supports and acts as an advocate for the gardens.

Our members worked with the Garden History Society and English Heritage to have the gardens Listed. We fundraise to effect improvements including planting and restoration works.



In 2010 we secured a HLF Lottery Grant to restore the Lord Ashton Monument.

We also researched the history of the gardens to highlight their importance.

We undertake illustrated talks about the history of the gardens.

New members are always welcome and any SOAG member can attend

committee meetings and have their own say on the matters under discussion.

Please contact our Secretary for more details:

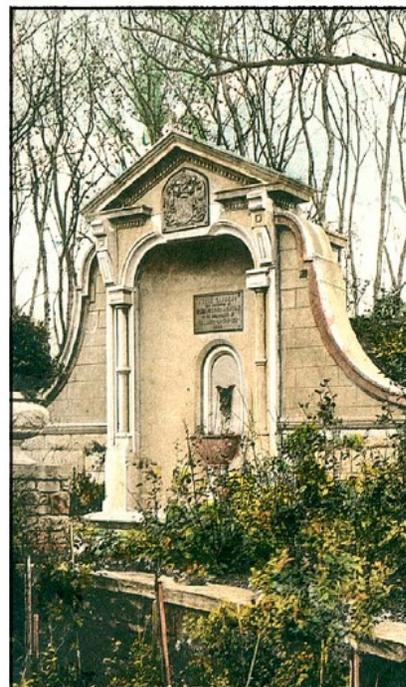
secretary@ashtongardens.org.uk

CREDITS

We are grateful for the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund who helped us restore Lord Ashton's monument and to research the history of the Gardens.



Ashton Gardens - a brief history -



CONTACT

Web: www.ashtongardens.org.uk

Email: info@ashtongardens.org.uk

Published by the Supporters of Ashton Gardens Group

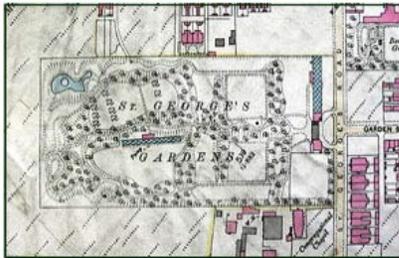
BACKGROUND

In the beginning....

Unlike most towns, St Annes did not grow organically, it was prompted by the arrival of the railway in 1882, and created out of barren sand dunes by a group of businessmen from East Lancashire.

HISTORY

The first gardens were called *St George's Gardens* and laid out by the 'Public Accommodation Company' who envisaged them as a sort of early theme park. They planned to charge admission and make the gardens a paying proposition.



The first layout was undertaken by Edward Thomas who had been head gardener at the Southport Winter Gardens and may have trained at Powys Castle.

Overseeing the layout of the town and the gardens were architects Maxwell and Tuke, famous for their seaside architecture and the designers of both Blackpool Tower and the Southport Winter Gardens.

Sadly, the Gardens could not be made to pay and were at various times leased to local nurserymen including Robert Wild, Ferguson's, and Cartmell's. However, this didn't work out, and in 1896 they were offered to the Council, who turned the offer down because the cost would increase the rates.



So Oliver Porritt took a lease on the gardens and started building in one corner. He had no interest in them as gardens and they became completely neglected and 'running to waste'.

Then in 1913, the Council changed their mind, and opened negotiations with Porritt to acquire them. Terms were agreed, but when people found out what they would cost - even though Porritt was offering them at a knockdown cost - there was a lot of anger.

The town was split in two. Public meetings were called to protest at the plan and a 'Poll of Ratepayers' (*local referendum*) was called for where all townspeople could vote on the matter.

LORD ASHTON

Into this fray stepped Lord Ashton. He had huge linoleum manufacturing businesses in Lancaster and had great wealth. But he had fallen out with Lancaster and was spending more and more time in St Annes playing golf.

Literally on the eve of the poll, he wrote a cheque for £21,350 to pay for the gardens for the people of the town. There was great rejoicing and the gardens were re-named Ashton Gardens in honour of their great benefactor.



The Council set about redesigning the gardens with local architect Fred Harrison but became distracted by the idea of including a huge concert hall. This (*wartime*) scheme became completely unaffordable and was abandoned.

Pulham and Sawdon....

To get the gardens finished, the Council engaged *Pulham and Sons* - famous London Landscapers. They also engaged a brilliant new Surveyor: *J Stanley Sawdon* who designed the buildings. Tragically he died shortly after the gardens opened in July 1916.

More recently....

Safeway supermarkets planned a new store and wanted to acquire a large part of the gardens. The *Save Ashton Gardens* group formed to campaign against the plan. The Council narrowly refused Safeway, but then sold a smaller part to match fund a heritage lottery scheme to restore the gardens as you see them today.

Save Ashton Gardens became the *Supporters of Ashton Gardens* who act as advocates, and aim to protect, preserve and enhance the gardens.

TIMELINE

- 1862 The railway arrives from Lytham to Blackpool
- 1874 The Land and Building Company is formed
St Annes town foundation stone is laid
- 1875 Public Accommodation Company founded
Preliminary work starts on the land
- 1876 Area for St George's Gardens is identified
Area sublet to James Maxwell, architect.
Gardens being laid out by Edward Thomas
- 1877 Earliest sketch layout of St George's Gardens
- 1883 Gardens not "paying their way"
- 1886 Gardens let to Robert Wild, nurseryman
- 1888 Gardens let to Ferguson's Nurseries
- 1893 Gardens let to Cartmell's Nurseries
- 1896 Gardens offered to local Council. Declined.
Porritt family buys gardens and starts building
- 1912 Gardens neglected and "running to waste"
- 1913 Council approach Porritt to donate gardens
Agreement reached to acquire gardens on lease
Big arguments about increased cost on rates
Council press ahead with redesign competition
Local architect Fred Harrison wins first prize
Plans include huge 'Winter Gardens' hall
Public discontent grows stronger
- 1914 Ratepayers meeting ends in uproar
Poll of Ratepayers (referendum) to be held
Eve of vote Lord Ashton offers to buy Gardens
Great rejoicing. Cheque for £21,000 donated
Gardens extended & renamed Ashton Gardens
Concert hall abandoned because of cost
Pulham and Sons undertake re-landscaping
- 1916 Ashton Gardens opened in July
- 1917 Rose Garden rearranged
- 1919 Lord Ashton gives £5k for war memorial
- 1920 New (second) bowling green completed
- 1947 Ladies Bowls pavilion Added
- 1959 New glasshouse unit added
- 1977 Playground donated by St Annes Rotary Club
- 1986 Gardens designated a conservation area
- 1997 Gardens become Grade II Listed
- 1998 Safeway car park want a quarter of the gardens
Save Ashton Garden Campaign secures a "No"
Lottery bid approved in principle by Council
- 2001 Local builder plans flats on a smaller area
SOAG reverts to campaigning mode
A long and acrimonious battle follows
- 2005 SOAG claims gardens were a charitable gift
- 2006 Council sell part of the gardens to developer
- 2008 to 2010 Lottery redevelopment of gardens
- 2010 SOAG awarded grant to restore monument
- 2011 Lord Ashton monument restored

APPENDIX 4 – ASHTON GARDENS LEAFLET (Printed Version is A3 size)

ASHTON Lytham St. Annes GARDENS



- Recreation**
- 1 Bowling Green
 - 2 Skate Park
 - 3 Kick About Area
 - 4 Main Play Area
 - 5 Toddler's Play Area
- Facilities**
- 6 Ashton Institute Café
 - 7 Public Toilets

- Display Gardens**
- 8 Rock & Water Garden
 - 9 Japanese Garden
 - 10 Rose Garden
 - 11 Sunken Garden
 - 12 Formal Lawns

- Historical Interest**
- 13 Lord Ashton Monument
 - 14 War Memorial
 - 15 Rustic Bridge
 - 16 St. George's Entrance Gates
 - 17 Clifton Drive North Entrance Gates

The Ashton Institute

Between 1914 and 1916 The Ashton Institute was described as "A games pavilion, equipped with billiard table and verandah which overlooks the tennis courts". However it seems that the original Institute was destroyed by fire in 1914 and was rebuilt in time to be leased to the Trustees of the Ashton Institute. The Ashton Institute has been fully restored within the HLF programme and forms a central café and toilets for the park at the St George's Road entrance.

The War Memorial

The impressive and dignified memorial, this is the only park structure that is individually Listed. It was constructed in 1924 to commemorate the loss of life in the Great War. Lord Ashton paid for W. Marsden of South Kensington to produce the sculpture.

It was placed in a prominent position on the axis from the long Clifton Drive entrance which it faces and dominates.

The memorial stands as it was first built, except that plaques have been added in memory of those killed in World War II and later conflicts.

The memorial has been restored as part of the HLF programme.

The Lord Ashton Monument

The Rose Garden became the setting for the Drinking Fountain, now known as the Lord Ashton Monument, which bears the following inscription: "These Gardens were presented by The Right Hon Lord Ashton to the inhabitants of St Anne's on the Sea 1914." The Supporters of Ashton Gardens secured a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to fully restore the Monument.

This was completed in December 2011.

The Gate Lodges

It seems that these two buildings were the original lodges for the St George's Gardens and they are probably the same buildings that are shown on the 1893 map.

Entrance Gates & Railings

The layout of the entrances give a sense of a grandness and significance to the park and these have been greatly improved.

The entrance from St. George's Road is a distinctive feature of the Gardens and is composed of a semi-circular paved area leading to decorative gates.



The main drive and footpaths have been resurfaced and the war memorial has had significant works carried out on it. Further conservation works to the gardens are planned which will take several years to complete to bring the entire gardens back to their original splendour.

The Rock and Water garden has undergone extensive repair work to restore it back to its original design. Using historical photographic references the waterfall and landscape features have been adjusted and planted to reflect these designs.

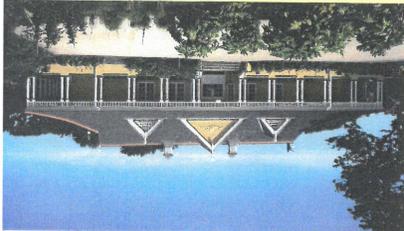
The Rose Garden has recently been restored to its original design including the reinstatement of the trellis around both sides of the garden. The rose beds have been replanted using new and existing roses and lawn edges reinstated around each bed.

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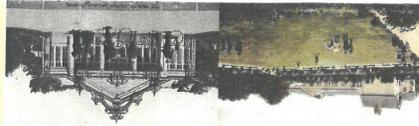
THE RESTORATION OF THE GARDENS



THE SUPPORTERS OF ASHTON GARDENS

The Supporters of Ashton Gardens are a voluntary group who aim to work in conjunction with the local authority to maintain and improve the gardens. With Lottery funding we have restored the monument (above) to Lord Ashton, our benefactor. Our plans for the future include getting the ornamental overthrows replaced on the two main entrances to the gardens and generating a centenary celebration of their opening in 2016. If you would like to contribute towards our projects in either time or money please contact me, Jon Harrison, the Chairman of SOAG, on 0771-222-7264 or by e-mail: jonharrison1936@gmail.com

We welcome new members and volunteers to our regular meetings.



Ashton Gardens is a fine example of an early twentieth century display garden and demonstrates a range of garden styles promoted by the leading designers of the day.

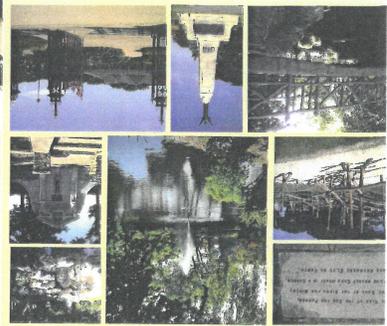
Originally established by the St Annes Land and Building Company in 1874, the gardens were formally known as St George's Gardens.

The gardens were located within a rectangular plot of land and originally laid out to retain the topography of the natural sand dunes. They remained largely unchanged until 1914 when a generous donation from Lord Ashton was given to acquire the gardens for the people of St Annes.

In the same year a competition for the redesign of the gardens was won by Mr F Harrison, a local man.

Pulham & Sons were engaged to remodel the lake area, now known as the rock and water garden, and prepare plans for a rose garden and the circular sunken garden.

THE STORY OF THE GARDENS



Ashton Gardens is one of five 'flagship' formal parks in the Fylde Borough.

Contained within 10 acres the Gardens comprise of a number of historic buildings and display gardens, bowling greens, children's play area, skate park and formal lawns.

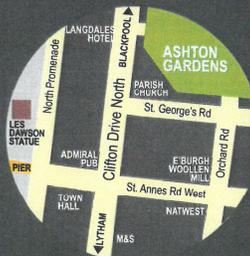
Ashton Gardens is a grade II listed garden of Special Historic Interest and holds the prestigious Green Flag status, only achieved by the best parks and open spaces.



Welcome to ASHTON GARDENS
Lyttham St Annes



ASHTON GARDENS
Lyttham St Annes



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ASHTON GARDENS
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APPENDIX 5 – MASTER PLAN

