

Lowther Gardens



Management & Maintenance Plan
2018 - 2023

LOWTHER GARDENS MANAGEMENT PLAN 2018 - 2023

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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. Parks and green spaces are a fundamental part of the fabric of the Fylde. Our parks and gardens provide attractions for visitors from local, urban and rural areas, and are also important at local level for tourism.

Lowther Gardens is one of the borough's major parks and is situated adjacent to Lytham Green in the centre of Lytham and is owned and managed by Lowther Trust. Visitors and residents are attracted to the gardens to enjoy its pleasures, as it is one of Fylde's premier outdoor leisure facilities. The site comprises of mature gardens and contains a range of passive and active leisure facilities for all age ranges. The gardens are an example of horticultural excellence and are maintained to an incredibly high standard.

The gardens appeal to residents and tourists young and old alike who can play bowls, tennis, crazy golf, play in the kiddies play area, enjoy a walk in the immaculately maintained gardens or simply sit in idyllic surroundings to enjoy the peace and quiet. The site also contains a theatre and café where visitors can enjoy a wide range of refreshments.

In 2003 the site gained its first prestigious Green Flag Award, a first for the borough and has retained this status since. The Trust, 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 community involvement. The Friends of Lowther Gardens have community ownership and are excellent at gauging community needs.

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

This plan will remain a "live" document; indeed the need for it to evolve is fully recognised. To achieve this, robust mechanisms for monitoring and reviewing have been developed. This revised document reflects the first formal review undertaken and the comments received through the Green Flag judging process.

Sue Fazackerley
Leader of the Council

Tim Lince
Lowther Trust Chairman

Name of Site: Lowther Gardens
Managing Organisation: Fylde Council
Green Flag Award 2018 F

Desk Assessment Feedback

Criteria	Strengths	Recommendations	Responses
Presentation	Well presented, clear, understandable and relevant.	Keep updated annually with appendix for GF application and for practical use in line with targets, achievements, obstacles and innovations.	Agreed. This information is reflected in the action plan.
Health, Safety & Security	Health safety and security thoroughly implemented with checks and controls in operation in all areas, including CCTV for monitoring public safety and anti-social activities Pesticide controls in place.	Maintain standards as required	Standards will be Maintained.
Maintenance of equipment, buildings & landscape	Comprehensive maintenance programmes covering all aspects of Park. Volunteers providing valuable contribution to landscape & horticulture maintenance. Equipment maintenance schedules in place. Infrastructure maintenance schedules and costs included.	It would be helpful if the Action Plans indicated who responsible for delivering each action point and realistic delivery dates. Infrastructure maintenance schedule should provide detailed timeline/ deadline/review to ensure projects are not constantly moved on.	This information has been updated in the action plan. This has been amended.
Litter, cleanliness, vandalism	Policy in place. Regular monitoring. Litter recycling facility	Maintain current high standards Recycling bins placed on bend in road with double yellow lines	Standards will be maintained. This will be looked into and action taken if required.
Environmental Sustainability	As last year policy in place. Wider sustainability of fleet as well as on site measures. Green waste re-use. Peat & pesticide use reduction. Materials re-use. Tree work schedule and re-planting programme The introduction of 3 new rangers to Parks & Coastal Services team whose remit is to develop and implement biodiversity will potentially enhance the natural environment with projects for wildlife surveys and opportunities for environmental education	The developing tree survey and the new masterplan which if complete by summer 2018 will make a substantial contribution to the management plan. Evidence of ranger benefits and funding should be included Work with the planning department and a consultant to carry out a full open space assessment of the Councils land including Lowther Gardens should be reflected in next years plan.	The full assessment can be provided on judging day, but the document is too big to be included in the management plan. Further details in regards to the Ranger Service has been added to the plan.

	<p>Work with the planning department and a consultant to carry out a full open space assessment of the Councils land including Lowther Gardens covering public need, current use, value, environmental impact, position, facilities and Green Flag criteria should enhance understanding of the gardens.</p>		
Conservation of heritage & nature	<p>Understanding of the site heritage and natural history included. Encouraging to know that the developing Masterplan will include dedicated and seasonal bedding areas for encouraging wildlife e.g. bee and butterfly friendly planting</p> <p>The vegetation master plan by Lancashire Wildlife Trust following the wildlife survey carried out and action plan being produced will form an important part of the vegetation master plan for the garden.</p>	<p>Infrastructure maintenance schedule should provide detailed timeline/ deadline to ensure projects are not constantly moved on. Details /minutes of discussions held with the Lowther Trust would be useful as an appendix. Ensure Wildlife Trust action plan is included in next year's management plan update.</p>	<p>This has been amended.</p> <p>These can be available on Judging day if required</p>
Community Involvement	<p>As last assessment good Friends group involvement with considerable achievements. comprehensive stakeholder group. Diverse provision for most sectors of the community.</p>	<p>Continue to support Friends. User surveys may be more revealing if done by Friends and the outcome recorded. New Ranger team should enhance community benefit substantially. How are volunteers 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</p>	<p>The Council will continue to support volunteers and Friends groups.</p>
Marketing Strategy	<p>Included in major marketing opportunities. On site, leaflets and social media and website coverage is good. Trust marketing strategy in place.</p>	<p>Continue appropriate marketing to include new Ranger activities.</p>	<p>The Council and the Trust will continue to market Lowther Gardens, including the Ranger service.</p>
Overall management	<p>Good management principles with committed officers. Staff training provided. Operation is integrated</p>	<p>It would be helpful if the Action Plans indicated who is responsible for delivering each action point and realistic delivery dates.</p>	<p>This information has been included on the action plan.</p>

	with stakeholder groups.	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.	This information has Been updated.
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Additional comments

If the applicant submits a management plan covering a 10-year time frame then they must ensure that a covering note or appendix is included with the plan submitted for annual assessment highlighting where current actions vary from the original document. If not, the Judges expect to see what is referenced in the original document as being current practice. This was not the case with this garden. For example, the management plan references the site supervisor as having an allocated budget. 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	<p><i>Clear, open, defined entrances allowing safe access. Colourful flower displays attract visitors into the park. Clean and tidy with boundary walls well maintained.</i></p> <p>The main entrance located off the coastal road provides good pedestrian and vehicle access directly into the car park and onward into the park. The Green Flag was flying and no access difficulties were experienced through the park. Signage was limited but appropriate to facilities and features within the park. There may be an access and safety issue relating to the car park should funding for the Pavilion not proceed due the current unevenness and erosion of hard surfaced areas.</p>	Ensure car park charges are clearly displayed.	Car parking and the advertisement of charges are the responsibility of the Lowther Trust. The Trust are Currently making changes to the layout of the car park as part of an overall site and theatre improvement plan as well as their parking fee structure. We will pass this feedback to them.

	Generally, the park is being well cared for.		
Healthy, Safe and Secure	Adequate safer rubber surfacing in play area, supported by programmed and recorded play equipment inspections (verbally reported on day, no supporting documents) No evidence of personal safety or dog related issues. Park felt safe to walk around. Some footpath lighting and open aspect contributed to feeling of safety. Good range of passive and active facilities, well used bowling greens, lots of casual park users.	Continue improvements to path and car park surfaces. Replace faded safety signage re dog fouling.	These are included in the action plan This will be actioned.
Clean and Well Maintained	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. The Lowther Pavilion is currently awaiting formal approval and resource funding to enable major building refurbishment and upgrading of adjacent car parking facilities. There was no discussion regarding a fallback position if funding was not forthcoming.	staffing levels quoted in the management plan including trainee gardener could not be substantiated as currently applying 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. This information has been Updated in the plan.
Sustainability	Minimal peat and herbicide use. On site green waste	Support the document with data showing impact of measures taken and highlighting what has gone	Agreed.

	<p>recycling. Friends help to maintain and improve planting in keeping with local conditions.</p>	<p>well and define were measures could be taken to improve this area of delivery</p> <p>Show results of any training and improved standards. What effect has any training programme had so far? Practically and motivationally</p>	
Conservation and Heritage	<p>Park feature and buildings well maintained. 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. The same comments apply re grounds maintenance service delivery arrangements as with Ashton Gardens. Significant tree stock is maintained in house. The Lowther Pavilion is currently awaiting formal approval and resource funding to enable major building refurbishment and upgrading of adjacent car parking facilities. There was no discussion regarding a fall-back position if funding was not forthcoming.</p>	<i>Maintain standards</i>	Standards will be maintained.
Community Involvement	<p>The Ranger Service provides Lowther Gardens Walks and Talk opportunities for the public and schools and an illustrated walk and talk document was provided by a recently appointed ex teacher. Lytham in Bloom actively participate in</p>	<p>Continue to support the community groups.</p>	<p>The Trust and the Council will continue to support and liaise with volunteers and community groups.</p>

	<p>raising the profile and accessibility of the Park by supporting Parks staff in developing new landscape features for examples the planted borders at the pedestrian entrance to the Park off the coastal road while the Lowther Trust facilitated the development of a surfaced woodland walk by local business. Good volunteer involvement taking responsibility for areas of the park and undertaking the weekly maintenance of the herbaceous border. Also involved in fund raising and events.</p>		
Marketing	<p>it is hoped the Ranger Service will significantly enhance this function. Currently the garden has a number of interesting and unique features which could be a focus of additional marketing.</p>	<p><i>Continue to develop Ranger potential for marketing.</i></p>	<p>Agreed. Additional information on the Ranger Service has been included within the plan.</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>There was no discussion regarding a fallback position if funding was not forthcoming for the pavilion development.</p> <p>A lack of clarity regarding operations delivery 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.</p>

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.

Lowther Garden 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

Lowther Trust and Fylde Council in partnership acknowledge the essential contributions to this management plan from:

Friends of Lowther Gardens
Lytham in Bloom
Lytham Heritage Group
Sports Development Officer
H.R Manager
Community Safety Manager
Risk Management and Insurance Officer
Leisure Management

Thank you for your valuable contributions to the management plan.

1.2 THE PURPOSE OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

It is imperative that 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 alike.

This management plan seeks to: -

- Take a holistic approach to the future management of the park by reflecting previous studies, professional and community needs and desires and all of the aspects and issues within the park.
- Put community needs at the heart of the development and management of the park.
- Benchmark the park 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 park and successes.

1.3 RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PLAN

The Parks & Coastal Services Section of Fylde Council working in partnership with Lowther Trust, stakeholders and the community has compiled this plan. Implementation of the plan will also be led by the Parks & Coastal Services department together with Lowther Trust, with specific project leads as shown in the action plan. Likewise monitoring and review of the plan will be led by the Parks & Coastal Services department and Lowther Trust, however the friends group and other 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 Site Description

Lowther Gardens are a municipal park, situated in Lytham St. Annes on the very most South Western part of the Fylde peninsula, Lancashire.

The gardens are situated adjacent to the western part of Lytham Green, which borders the Ribble Estuary. The gardens are surrounded on the East and West side by residential homes and to the north by the Lytham cricket club. Lytham St. Annes is one of the North West's most picturesque holiday resorts and its public open spaces play a major part in the town's popularity with local residents and visitors.

The Fylde peninsula is an area of low lying land between the Ribble and Wyre rivers. Most of the district lies below 10m. The broad estuary of the Ribble forms the southern boundary of the Fylde, where the site sits. Twenty-thousand years ago, the last ice age (Devensian) was drawing to a close, the shoreline of the west coast of Britain lay far to the west of the present coast line. As the ice retreated northwards it left behind it a massive plain of boulder clay (till). The whole of the Lancashire plain was a freshwater environment of streams and lakes.

The area that the Lowther Gardens sits in suffers from large deposits of blown sand. The prevailing winds from the West have caused the formation of the extensive belt of blown sand along the present coast north of the Ribble Estuary. Bordering the Ribble Estuary is a wide track of estuarine alluvium, composed of laminated silts and fine sand. Alluvial soils are soils that have been made-up of materials deposited in moving fresh water to form sediments. Estuarine alluvium can carry a large amount of shells that have a high calcium carbonate content and, as a result, tend to make soils calcareous.

1.4.2 Location

Lowther Gardens IS situated in Lytham St. Anne's adjacent to Lytham Green at West Beach. The address being:

Lowther Gardens
West Beach
Lytham St Anne's
Lancashire
FY8 5QQ

Grid Reference (at centre of site)

OS National Grid Reference: SD 496 305 GB Grid

Nation Grid Reference: 350313, 431916

Area

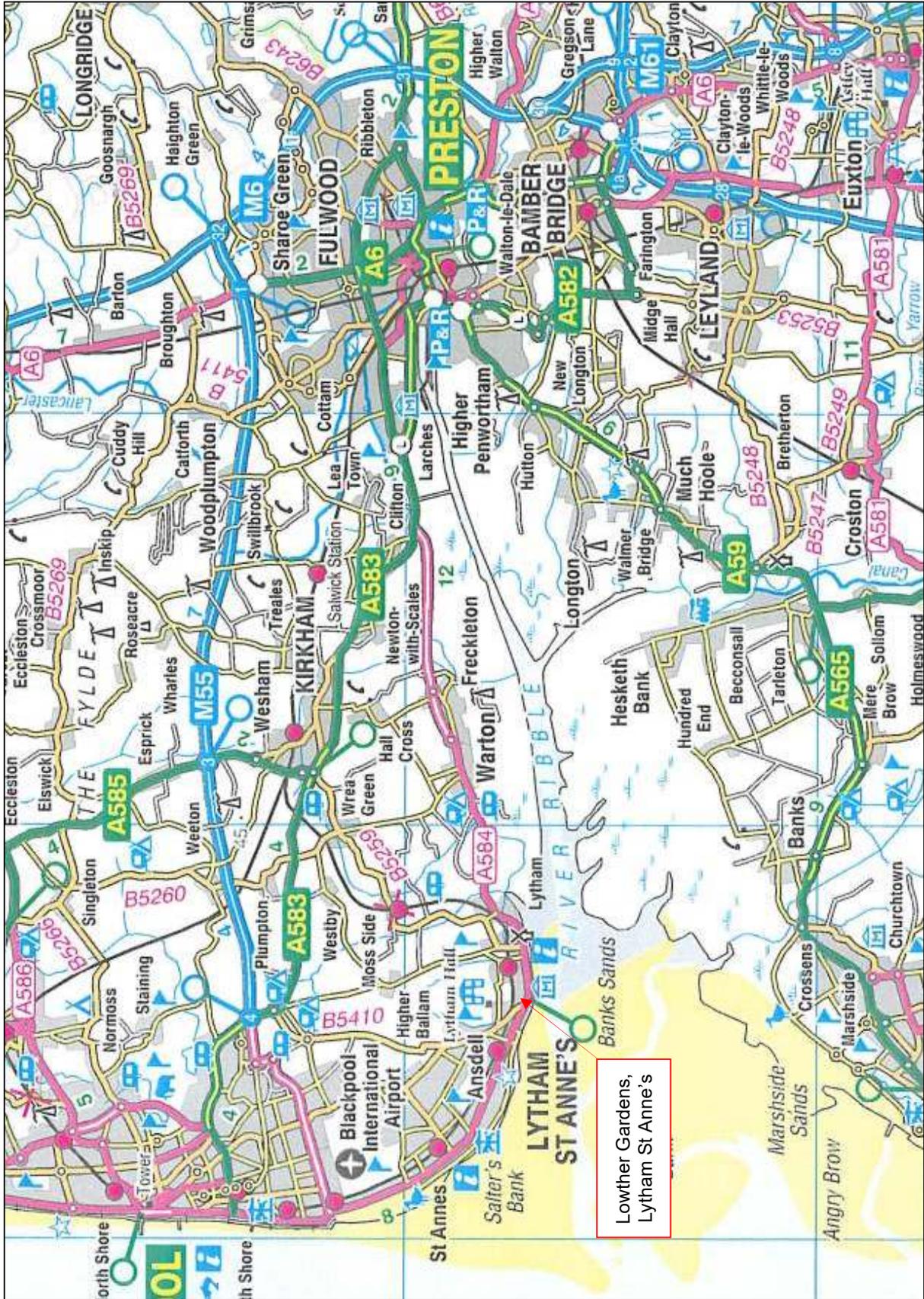
Acres: 12.5

Hectares: 5.1

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 alike. The parks and open spaces make a positive contribution in delivering the Councils corporate objectives and the key actions within the community plan.



Lowther Gardens is one of the borough's most important parks located at West Beach within easy walking distance of Lytham town centre. The gardens are bounded by the Woodville Terrace to the west, Church Road to the north, Lowther Terrace to the east and West Beach to the south. For a map showing the location of the gardens in their wider context, please see the next page.



Lowther Gardens,
Lytham St Anne's

1.4.3 Lowther in its Borough Context

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

In addition to the four main parks the borough has 6 community parks, 6 sports and recreation grounds, numerous areas of public open space and civic space spread throughout the borough. Lytham Green is the largest expanse of formal, public open space in Lytham, but does not provide the range of facilities that are provided at Lowther Gardens. The borough also has areas of urban woodlands and a large expanse of coastline, part of which has nature reserve status.

1.4.4 Summary of Attractions and Facilities

In summary the park offers the following attractions and facilities: -

- Formal gardens
- Trees
- Children's play facilities
- Café
- Lowther Pavilion
- Putting course
- CG bowling
- Hard surface Tennis courts
- Floral displays
- Picnic area
- Rose garden
- Aviary
- Sharmen shelter
- Toilets
- Car park
- Crazy golf
- Theatr

1.5 HISTORY OF THE SITE

Lowther Gardens is the oldest park in Lytham St Anne's. The gardens cover an area of 5.65 hectares and were provided by Squire J Talbot Clifton in 1872 in honour of his wife, Eleanor Cecily Clifton (of the Lowther family in Cumbria) and in memory of her father, who died in 1868. The Squire gave the gardens to the then Council for the people of Lytham and their friends. They were designed and laid out under the supervision of Mr Tomlinson who worked on the Clifton Estate for the benefit of the inhabitants and visitors to Lytham on what was previously poor grazing land known as Hungry Moor.



The gardens were conveyed to the Council in 1905 and transferred to Lowther Trust in 2012, and the Ordnance Survey Map of 1908 illustrates the layout. Most of the original design has been retained with the addition of the first pavilion in 1922, new entrances and car parking in 1936 and construction of the aviary dates back to 1934. The pavilion was



replaced in 1981. The bowling greens, sports pavilion, tennis courts, play area and toilets have all been added, date unknown. More recently, the bowling greens have been upgraded and an irrigation system installed. The rose bed between the rose garden and the pitch and putt, was replaced with an herbaceous border in 1999, and the rose

garden was re-planted in 2002 with 1100 roses, in beds sponsored and named with a pictorial plaque. The rose garden has undergone further improvements with a number of rose beds being replanted and restocked.

It is interesting to note that the Squires of Lytham, the then owners in the 19th Century were intrepid world travellers and regularly brought home seeds of exotic trees to be sown in the Hall parks and gardens. Many did not survive but it encouraged other tree planting and this led to the town being known as 'leafy Lytham'. This tree cover is still in evidence today.

1.6 SITE OWNERSHIP, RIGHTS OF WAY AND DESIGNATIONS

The ownership of Lowther Gardens has been transferred from Fylde Council to the Lowther Trust, who have ownership and responsibility for the gardens and the Pavilion. The board of the Trust is made up of Fylde Council and members of the local community.

The site sits within a conservation area. Conservation area status gives the Local Authority additional powers to ensure that development is in keeping with existing styles and the character of the area and to prepare schemes of enhancement for such areas. The boundary wall is the only listed structure within the gardens.

Whilst conservation areas may contain Listed Buildings, the Trust will be concerned to protect, as far as it can, the total environment and all elements that contribute to it, including: buildings, walls, railings and other means of enclosure, open spaces and trees etc. It is equally important that land uses which would disrupt or prejudice the character of the area are not allowed.

Though individual buildings or structures may not be particularly important in themselves, they may make a contribution to the overall character of an area. As such, demolitions can have a serious effect on a conservation area and the Trust considers that it is important to control demolition properly.

In this respect the Trust will generally seek to retain buildings or other structures which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area. Demolitions will only be allowed where the building or structure does not positively contribute to the character or appearance of the area, where it is beyond reasonable economic repair or where replacement proposals would make a greater environmental contribution. Even where demolition is appropriate, consent will not be given unless acceptable and detailed plans for a redevelopment or restoration scheme has been approved by the Trust and a contract for the carrying out of those works has been entered into.

Lytham conservation area is the largest and the most varied in character in the borough of Fylde, extending to embrace the commercial core of the town, surrounding residential areas and the Lowther Gardens. Originally designated in 1974, it was extended in 1977 and again in 1980. The visual focus is undoubtedly the restored Windmill on the Green, but the area also includes many listed buildings, a number of fine Victorian terraces and attractive smaller cottages.

1.7 EDUCATIONAL VALUE

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

The Coast and Conservation Ranger Service aims to utilise the gardens in the coming years to best fulfil its potential. The Rangers have and continue to plan and deliver outdoor educational sessions 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 park.

1.8 SPORT & RECREATIONAL VALUE

The purpose of the park is very much about informal recreation, recreating how the park would have been used when it was originally conceived, strolling, taking in the views and vistas and decorative planting. It also tries to balance the needs of modern day users and includes bowls, tennis, crazy golf, children's playgrounds and picnic area. Not only does this serve the local community of Lytham St. Anne's as a major park, but also attracts a large number of visitors to the area.

In 2019 there was a 5-day project delivered which was a partnership between the coast and countryside team and the sports development team for all ages and included environmental educational themes and sports activities such as short tennis, badminton, football and cricket.

This management plan seeks to ensure that the park not only retains its historical integrity, but provides wherever possible the demonstrated needs of the local community and its considerable number of visitors.

The park assists greatly in contributing towards local tourism and its associated economic benefits, but is also an extremely important amenity resource for the local

community. This amenity value has a significant impact on the quality of life for local residents.

1.9 DEMOGRAPHICS

An essential reference for compiling this management plan is the demographic information for the local area around Lytham 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 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 variety 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

Although the site is on the edge of an SSSI, the Ribble Estuary an internationally important area for the conservation and study of birds, Lowther Gardens is an urban park primarily surrounded by hotels and residential housing. The gardens provide valuable green space in an urban setting that can be utilised by a variety of urban species.

Trees & Woodland

Trees are a notable feature within the borough of Fylde, areas within the gardens are formal and the structured landscape in which the trees provide and framework, highlight this as well. These trees provide much needed shelter from the prevailing winds which gust across the site.

Tourism & Recreation

The coastal resorts of Fylde borough have for many years attracted large numbers of tourists and visitors. The area's 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 contributes 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

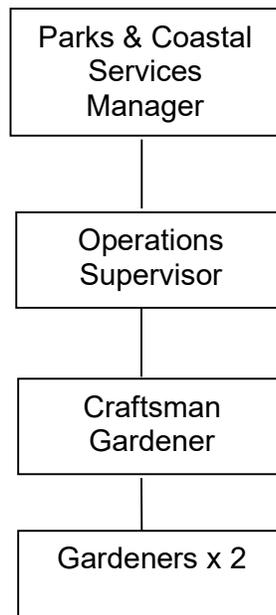
The Parks & Coastal Services team sits under the Clean and Green theme.

1.11 STAFFING STRUCTURE & 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.

Lowther 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.

Lowther 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 & Coastal 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 LOWTHER TRUST

Lowther Gardens was registered as a charitable trust in 2006, with the Council as a sole trustee. A number of independent trustees were appointed in the summer of 2010 with the newly formed Lowther Trust taking full ownership of the site in 2012. There are presently eight independent trustees. The Council remains as a trustee, and is represented at trust meetings by the Chairman of the Tourism & Leisure Committee.

The aims of the Trust are to:

- Increase the awareness of the park & gardens
- Increase the use of the pavilion & the gardens
- A culturally diverse mix of programming that celebrates our local societies, schools and community groups whilst providing first class professional work for locals and tourists alike.

The Trust's plans are to place the Lowther Pavilion & Gardens firmly at the centre of the community and thus give a greatly increased cultural offer to all and to use and develop the space more effectively.

The services the Trust want to continue to provide are:

- The maintenance and development of Lowther Gardens and the pavilion as a cultural community facility, for the benefit of residents and visitors to the borough.
- The provision of a balanced and diverse programme of performing arts and entertainment, including dance, drama, music, musical theatre, variety and comedy; encouraging innovation through the use of new technology and the support of new writing and performing talent.
- The development of new audiences and encouragement of existing audiences to visit more frequently, building participation in the arts and gardens locally; accessible to all sectors of the community through programming, marketing and community engagement work.
- The promotion of the performing arts in Fylde, supporting and developing local amateur groups, volunteers and the wider community.

1.13 AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH OF GARDENS

The aerial photograph below gives a good impression of the current layout of Lowther Gardens.



1.14 PICTORIAL PLAN OF THE SITE



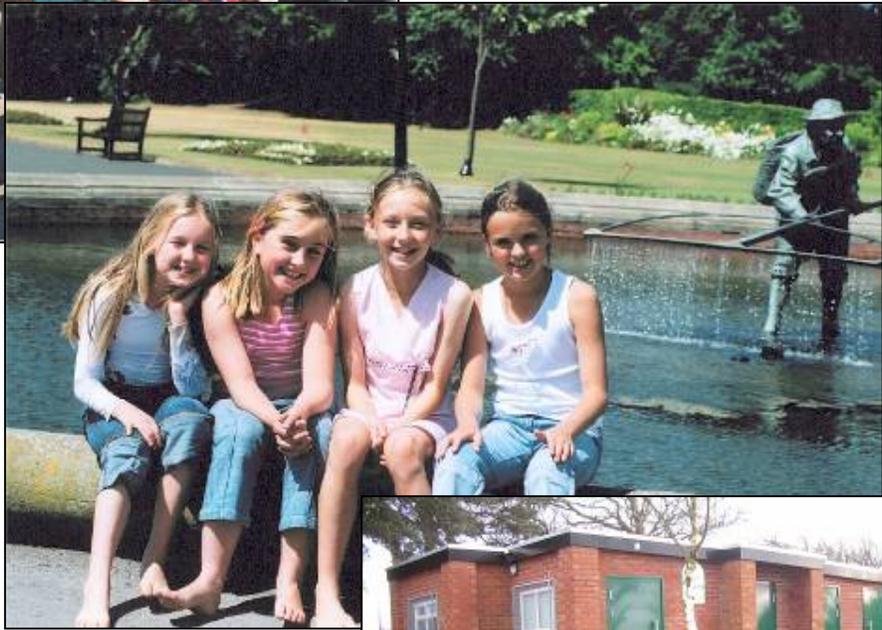
The following attractions in the gardens are:

1. Children's play facilities
2. Aviary
3. Lowther Pavilion
4. Putting greens
5. Hard surface tennis courts
6. Crown green bowling
7. Crazy golf
8. Café
9. Formal pond and water feature
10. Rose garden
11. Mosaic clock
12. Herbaceous border
13. Sharmen shelter
14. Car parking
15. Public toilets

1.15 MISSION STATEMENT

“Lowther 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 park will appeal to a 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

Lowther Gardens has a 'natural welcoming feel', as one enters the gardens. The gardens are well signed with clear access points. The gardens are well used by local people and visitors, and users are seldom alone. The variety of activities usually going on, gives a sense of vibrancy and safety, but at the same time certain areas still provide a relaxing feel, where users can relax and 'chill out'.

2.2 GOOD AND SAFE ACCESS

The site is situated in a highly accessible location, being between both Lytham and St. Annes town centres. It has its own car park and is easily accessible for pedestrians.

All the facilities are easily accessible to all including disabled users. The entrance to Lowther pavilion is ramped for wheelchair and pushchair access. The public toilets at the front of the gardens have been recently refurbished with good access.

The gardens are well laid out with wide footpaths bordered by lawned areas which provide a sense of openness and good circulation throughout the park. The wide range of facilities and events ensure that the gardens are busy and popular with a good mix of age groups. The theatre often holds events in the evening; the car parks and main footpaths are all provided with lighting. Despite the large numbers of users, the gardens retain a peaceful atmosphere and there is very little evidence of vandalism or abuse.

There are stretches of paths in the gardens that are in need of repair. The responsibility of this is with the technical services team who inspect all pathways throughout the borough and prioritise works that arise. The parks and greenspace team work closely with technical services to ensure that, where necessary, the pathways in Lowther remain a priority.

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. 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 wide, flat and well maintained to allow good access for people with pushchairs and wheelchairs.

Car parking is available on site from the West Beach entrance with provision for disabled parking. A corporate decision to make the car park a 'pay and display' facility has been implemented. Bus stops serve the gardens with stops on West Beach and Church Road.

2.5 COMMEMORATIVE BENCH SCHEME

Fylde Council has placed commemorative benches in peaceful areas throughout the borough. The bench chosen for Lowther Gardens is the Blenheim seat, made from quality hardwood and embellished with a bronze memorial plaque. Lowther Trust administer the commemorative bench scheme within the gardens.



Healthy, Safe & 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 seen on request.

Copies of the manual are available to staff at all major offices and depots. The folders contain Risk Assessments, COSHH, Safe Systems of Work and booklets, HSE leaflets etc. Example risk assessments are given in 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 all of the parks and green spaces and Lowther Gardens in partnership with Lowther Trust.

Risk assessments are carried out for all maintenance activities within Lowther 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 the generic risk assessment form, before and during the event in question. The initial form is submitted to the Parks Operational Supervisor.

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 hedge 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, are 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.

The training covers legislation e.g. Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, Risk Assessments and Correct Lifting Techniques. Training usually takes one morning and is provided by a qualified trainer.

The Parks & Coastal Services Service 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.

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
- 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. The Craftsman gardener is fully trained to use the kit and is the responsible person for the use and maintenance of it. This can also be used by other site 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 Operational Supervisor for further investigation. Once the investigation is complete, the findings are recorded on the Accident/Incident form which is then sent through to our H & S section for any further action.

All the staff welfare facilities and the depot area are regularly inspected by an officer and the Craftsman gardener. These inspections form part of the risk assessment policy for the site. Any specific risk assessments will be undertaken at this visit, and the facilities will be inspected for cleanliness, health and safety to staff and site users. All results will be 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 do 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 assessed and any defects dealt with.

The playground is popular, with a functional range of challenging and inclusive equipment, safety surfacing and seating. Perimeter fencing and a gate allows controlled access and prevents dog fouling in this area. Signage is provided at each access point which displays general information about the play area and emergency contact numbers.

3.2.2 Inspections

The site will be informally inspected for safety issues on a daily basis by the site based team as they undertake their daily tasks. These informal inspections will cover public and workplace safety, identifying and prioritising remedial works. Any defects will be reported to the Craftsman Gardener. Formal safety inspections will be undertaken weekly by a qualified play inspector. Any defects will be recorded on a site inspection form, via a PDA, and remedial works will be 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. A public telephone is located in the foyer of the pavilion building.

As well as the physical safety features of the gardens the Fylde Community Safety Partnership is pro-actively involved in reducing the already low levels of crime, anti-social behaviour and fear of crime within the gardens and surrounding area. 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 CONTROL

Dog walking is a popular activity within the gardens. Lowther 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 will ensure that Lowther Gardens provides the right facilities to the community by a series of user and non-user surveys, demographic

information, constant partnership management and regular stakeholder meetings.

Public expectation and request for facilities will be outlined in the numerous user and non-user surveys. This information will be collated and used to lead the stakeholder group on future facility provision. These requests will be put onto the action plans.

The Parks & 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

We have a small network of cameras around the borough which are classed as 'rapid deployment' cameras which record 24/7. They can be moved around when required and footage can be downloaded by the Police from the two CCTV Vans they operate.

Well Maintained & Clean



4.1 LITTER AND WASTE MANAGEMENT

The general cleanliness of Lowther Gardens is of a very high standard. Cleansing activities such as litter picking, sweeping paths and emptying of bins is programmed as a priority on the teams work sheets, described below. The site-based team are on site daily and ensure that the gardens are kept clean. Litter bins are numerous in the gardens and are well used by the park users. The site is litter picked daily, the bins are emptied daily and the paths swept weekly. There is a robust weekend rota for litter picking and bin emptying during the season (May-Oct).

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

All litter, cans, glass and detritus are disposed of in Euro bins and recycling bins that are housed on site near the car park, and are emptied by the cleansing team on a regular basis.

The management of the green waste and arisings is fully described in the environmental management section. All green waste is kept on site, composted and used as soil conditioner in the gardens.

4.2 HORTICULTURAL DESIGN & MAINTENANCE

Fylde Council's Parks & Coastal Services team undertakes all the operational maintenance tasks in Lowther Gardens – including grounds maintenance.

The site based grounds team follow detailed monthly task sheets which specify the maintenance to be undertaken and frequency. 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.

Lowther Gardens supports a significant range of horticultural displays including informal shrubberies to year-round formal bedding and floral containers. The seasonal bedding displays include spring and summer displays of plants and bulbs.

There are significant horticultural features in addition to the seasonal flower borders within the park including the rose garden, herbaceous border and shrub borders and the newly installed 'Wicker man' bed which is a recreation of the Silver-Gilt winning entry at the 2014 Tatton Flower show display. More recently, planted beds have been designed specifically to increase the range of horticultural interest through all seasons.

The herbaceous border is maintained throughout the year by a group of volunteers, who continually weed, dead head and refurbish the border to keep it at a very high standard of horticulture.

Lowther Gardens is now annually entered into the Local Authority Park 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)

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

4.3 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 Coast Service.

The Council has recently developed a Trees and Woodland Strategy which sets out key corporate aims and objectives for the protection and 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 2019 through adopting arboriculture specific software and handhelds to make the process more efficient and reliable.

4.4 BUILDING & INFRASTRUCTURE MAINTENANCE

Lowther Gardens contains a range of public facilities with associated equipment including, children's playgrounds (infants and junior), bowling greens and tennis courts.

All park play, sport and recreational facilities are inspected and maintained by a dedicated Play Inspection Team within Parks & 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.

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

4.5 EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE

4.5.1 Play Equipment

The park contains a range of play facilities, serving children from toddlers to teenagers. These include:

- Fixed play equipment for toddlers
- Fixed play equipment for juniors
- Tennis and multi-sports area
- Crazy golf

All these facilities are the responsibility of Lowther Trust and are managed on their behalf by the Parks and Coastal Services Department. The play equipment is inspected by a Playground Inspector. The majority of repairs are carried out by the play area team, with any specialist repairs undertaken by an external contractor. The equipment is painted annually to protect against corrosion due to salty sea winds.

4.5.2 Cobble Clock

The cobble clock was installed as part of the centenary celebrations in the gardens and sits within the herbaceous border. The clock is inspected informally by the site based staff to ensure that it is running correctly with any suspected faults reported to the parks development officer. The clock mechanism was originally produced by Smiths of Derby and an annual service agreement has been arranged with them. The post service report is available to view on request.

4.6 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.

Any reports of vandalism are forwarded to the Council's Community Liaison Officer, who alongside the local police take the appropriate actions.



Environmental Management



5.1 MANAGING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Lowther Trust has adopted the Councils Environmental Policy, that is available to view on 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 arboricultural 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 and recycling of green waste on site, and the reuse of this. Two additional compost bays will be constructed during winter so that no green waste will leave the site.
- Reduction in travelling to and from site.
- A new clear maintenance regime for the compost. The green waste will be mixed and shredded into the compost bays. A balance of greens and browns will be maintained and the compost will be turned every six weeks. Greens will include grass clippings, spent bedding plants, flowers etc and Browns will include leaves, shrub prunings, spent perennials etc.

- A new shredder has been bought, so that all green waste can be shredded to reduce the bulk material down from 10 to 1, to allow for total composting on site.
- The composted materials will be used as a soil conditioner on the site.
- Separate Euro bins are on site to take non green waste such as glass, tin cans, litter etc. These will be emptied on a two week cycle.
- Minimal use of peat (see below)
- Water usage reduction
- Minimal herbicide use (see below)
- Any hard landscaping materials that can be reused on the site will be reused.

To rectify the problem of the blue / green algae in the formal pond we submerge mesh bags of barley straw just below the surface of the water in early spring. We then replace them when they turn black. Chemicals released through straw decomposition inhibit algal growth. We have found this to be an environmentally friendly way to deal with the problem.

We have introduced differential mowing regimes around the perimeter of the park to reduce grass cutting.

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 strimmers has been reduced and the remaining ones are replaced annually. This ensures less pollution and makes them safer to use.

Recycling bins have been placed adjacent to the car park area to encourage public and user recycling.

An automatic watering system is in place on the bowling greens, which minimises the use of water. The system is regulated and only used when needed and when water evaporation is at a minimum.

Each year the council carries out a Christmas Tree Recycling Scheme, with a collection point at Lowther Gardens. The service is free to the general public and always receives a good response. Advertising before Christmas is carried out in the local press as well as being included in the councils recycling guide which is issued to all residents. Some of the trees are shredded and used on footpaths and others for sand dune conservation work.

5.2 CHEMICAL USAGE

The Trust has adopted the Council's pesticide usage policies. 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.

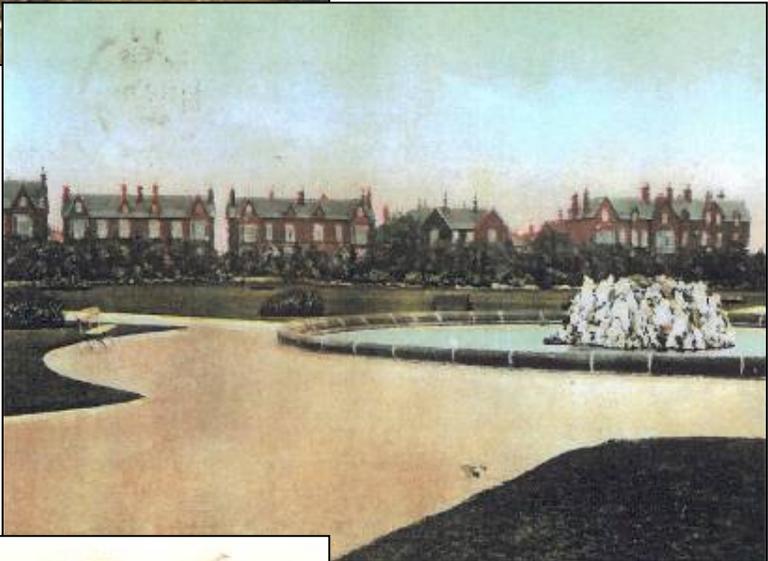
5.3 PEAT USE

The Trust 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).

Lowther Trust and Fylde Council 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

Lowther Gardens is the oldest park in Lytham St. Annes, having been laid out in 1872. The gardens are now essentially formal grounds which have been developed on what was previously pen grazing land, known as Hungry Moor, which, as its name suggests, was probably of low arable value.

6.2 MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL FEATURES, WILD FLORA AND FAUNA

The gardens are within an urban area but has linkages with the other significant open spaces throughout the Fylde area, as well as countryside and the coast and duneland, which is literally a couple of hundred metres away.

The gardens provide valuable green space in the centre of town that can be used by wildlife such as birds, small mammals and invertebrates.

The gardens are very formal and 'gardenesque', but there are informal areas. Given this and the historic importance of the landscape of the park it is not appropriate to establish extensive 'wild areas' as this would detract greatly from its formal character. However, this is not to say that the park has no value for wildlife or that its value cannot be enhanced.

The rockeries at the rear of the rose garden provide shelter for small creatures, which like nooks and crannies, such as hibernating newts, hunting spiders and bumblebees. Additionally there are three insect houses in the herbaceous border.



The Trust is currently working in partnership with local schools to develop an outreach classroom and environmental programmes for school development. The parks team also work closely with the RSPB on environmental projects, who have a local facility at Fairhaven Lake. A survey of the bird and bat boxes was included in the Phase 1 Habitat survey and a recommendation was made that bird boxes should be provided as none were observed during the survey.

Large areas of the grassland around the perimeter of the gardens have undergone a bulb planting project. The grass is now left longer, and has been planted with naturalised bulbs. The scheme is an ongoing one that has involved the planting of around 12,000 bulbs over the past three years by the gardeners and the community and will continue over the coming years.

6.3 CONSERVATION OF LANDSCAPE FEATURES, BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

The gardens were conveyed to the Council in 1905 and transferred to Lowther Trust in 2012, covering an area of 5.65 hectares. The majority of the original design has been retained, with the addition of the first pavilion in 1922. The aviary was added in 1934 and the new entrances and car park was added in 1936.

The gardens are designated as a conservation area in the Local Plan, but are not included on English Heritages' Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. The boundary walls, however, are Grade II listed, as they are constructed out of the original Lytham cobble, which can be seen throughout Lytham on various historic buildings and features.

Features of particular conservation importance include:

- The perimeter cobble walls
- Ornate and decorative entrances
- The later Lowther Pavilion
- Central ornamental pond
- Mature trees
- Original retention of the landscape
- Historic shelters
- Shrimper



The existing tree provision for the site has been added to over the many years of the sites development, giving a varied and haphazard tree structure in age, species and position.



The buildings and structures in the gardens are managed and maintained by Lowther Trust.

Fylde Council is working in partnership with the Lowther Trust to develop a sustainable overarching masterplan. Following a research and development phase and wider public consultation, the masterplan will inform all aspects of the park; its structures, vegetation and infrastructure.

Community Involvement



7.1 FRIENDS OF LOWTHER GARDENS

7.1.1 General



The Friends of Lowther Gardens are the main focus of community involvement in the park who meet weekly to discuss current issues. Lowther Trust and the Council have an excellent working relationship with the group and meet regularly to discuss issues, assist with event organisation, etc.

The Friends, apart from their routine of gardening work, are always keen to consider other attractions for the gardens to widen their popularity. The regeneration of the entrance borders, the development of the unique Apothecary garden in the rose garden and the cobble clock are all evidence of their interest.

When it was discovered that in 1905 a benevolent Squire had given the gardens he had created in 1872 to the Council for the people of Lytham and their friends, the Friends group decided that this centenary should not be overlooked. It had long been noted that the gardens needed a clock and by agreement with the Council, a centenary clock was proposed. It was felt appropriate that it should have a cobble mosaic face similar to the excellent mosaic design feature in Clifton Square. The cobble pavements and walls in Lytham are a strong feature of the town and many are listed.

The group meet at Lowther weekly and carry out general maintenance which includes weeding, pruning and planting.

7.1.2 Aims

The aim of the Friends Groups is to:

- Promote access to and positive management of Lowther Gardens and its amenities and environment.
- Take practical action to improve the gardens
- Raise the profile of the gardens
- Raise funds to improve the gardens
- Promote and maintain the site as per the environmental and aesthetic guidelines to be drawn up by the Committee and agreed with the borough Council.
- To encourage provision for facilities for recreation and amenity and to encourage a community spirit;

- For the furtherance of these objects to represent the interests of Lowther Gardens' users in consultation with the borough of Fylde and other bodies;
- To provide a single point of liaison with the borough of Fylde in order to communicate park related queries and information; and
- To promote equal opportunities by being positively committed to opposing all direct and indirect discrimination in all its activities and services.

7.2 LYTHAM IN BLOOM

Lytham in Bloom meet monthly to discuss current issues, with regard to their In Bloom submissions along with other projects and possible funding opportunities. Lowther Gardens is one of the key sites that make up the route for the judges. Previously the site has won the discretionary award of National Certificate of Distinction for Parks, as well as helping Lytham in Bloom to win the Best Small Coastal Resort category for several years.

Lytham in Bloom have a growing number of volunteers who are willing to tackle planting, weeding, watering and dead heading tasks within the garden, in particular the herbaceous border and the Wicker Man sculpture bed.

The group works with Lowther Trust, 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

7.3 WIDER STAKEHOLDERS

It is well 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.

The key partner organisations involved with Lowther Gardens are representing user groups as follows:

- Friends of Lowther Gardens
- Lytham in Bloom Trust
- Lytham Heritage Group

The key stakeholders involved with the gardens are:

Group	Lead Member	Contact No. (where appropriate)
Friends of Lowther Gardens		
Lowther Pavilion	Tim Lince	(01253) 658665
Lytham Hall Park		(01253) 738864

Primary School		
Lytham CofE Primary School		(01253) 736900
Lytham Mayfield Primary School		(01253) 789111
Ward Councillors	Local Councillors for each ward.	
Leisure & Tourism Committee Chairman	Cllr Cheryl Little	
Police	Bryan Ward (Community Safety Manager)	(01253) 658467
Lowther Pavilion Café	Robert Sherwood	(01253) 735523
FBC Parks and Coastal Services Team	All staff	(01253) 658658
FBC Tourism Team	Tim Dixon	(01253) 658436
FBC Technical Services Team	Darren Bell	(01253) 658675

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.

7.4 APPROPRIATE PROVISION FOR THE COMMUNITY

No regular monitoring of the use of the park or the public's reaction to it have been gathered to date. This is not unusual as most local authorities have not historically found the resources for this type of monitoring. It is clearly important that any regular monitoring is cost effective and not an unreasonable drain on staff or financial resources. Volunteers, such as members of the supporter's group, could assist with this monitoring. Public consultations are due to take place on the Lowther masterplans this year. All stakeholder groups will be involved in gaining user feedback and opinions on the plans.

Marketing & Communication

8.1 GENERAL

Lytham is a major tourist attraction for visitors to the Fylde Coast and the North West. Lowther Trust and the Council actively markets Lowther 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 Trust to provide and encourage the best use of Lowther 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 Lytham is a focus for visitors from far and wide who come to enjoy this traditional coastal village. Lytham's landmark windmill, displayed on the green, is just a glimpse of the heritage, which lies within Lytham. Lytham Green an attraction in itself and Lowther's close proximity to the Green means that visitors are very well catered for and the gardens are always busy.

Objectives of Publicity

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

This is achieved in a number of ways. The Trust will:

- Ensure that the gardens are included in the Trust's Marketing Strategy
- Constantly update the dedicated Lowther Gardens page on the Trust and the Council websites. It will include information on:
 - Facilities
 - Activities
 - Events
 - Current management and maintenance plan
 - Provide links to partners

The Trust will also:

- Distribute the Lowther Gardens leaflet
- Write informative articles to go into local newspapers, internal bulletins or other local marketing media
- Work towards all signage being part of a corporate style that is relevant to the site, it must be informative and educational. It will contain the following:
 - Historical information
 - Environmental information
 - Interpretation on how these affect the management of the site and its facilities
- Install two community display cabinets in the gardens at prominent points to house information from the friends group and the wider stakeholder group including events, minutes and important contact details
- Ensure that the gardens fly the '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 CURRENT MARKETING METHODS

Marketing Activity	Audience	Message	Frequency
Event programmes	Current and potential visitors to the Fylde area & local people	Detail forthcoming events. Approximately 100 events a year are held at Lowther Pavilion including theatre productions, antique fairs, concerts and demonstrations.	Quarterly
Notice boards	Current and potential visitors to the Fylde area	Detail forthcoming events	As and when new items for publication
Events	Fylde residents, visitors and Friends of Lowther	Events and activities to provide quality of life for residents and boost local economy	Annual events – Lytham Club Day, Rose Queen Festival
Promotional brochures	Entries in the Fylde mini guide	Details of the gardens	Published Annually
Promotional leaflets & videos	Fylde residents and visitors www.discoverfylde.co.uk/promo	Brochure style leaflet promoting quality of gardens and range of events.	Published in 2010
Press activity	Fylde residents and visitors. Regional, local and	Promoting the gardens. Linked to awards such Green Flags and new features, e.g. shrimper statue, cobble	As and when

	specialist press. Internal FBC publications	clock, etc	
Web site	All visitors to: www.fylde.gov.uk and www.visitlancashire.com www.greenflagaward.org.uk www.lowtherpavilion.co.uk www.discoverfylde.co.uk	Dedicated Lowther Gardens page Information on the gardens and Lowther Pavilion events. Also online booking facility via the homepage.	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 releases 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
- Friends of Lowther Gardens
- Lytham in Bloom

Management

9.1 Clearly Addressing Green Flag Criteria in Management Prescriptions

The Lowther 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 Lowther 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.

SECTION 10. ACTION PLAN

Proposals/Actions	Responsible	Funding Source	Target Date	Progress
A Welcoming Place				
Install finger posts	Parks Development	Revenue budget	2018-2023	
Update & replace rose garden sign	Parks development	Revenue budget	Mar 2021	
Install community notice board	Parks development	Revenue budget	Mar 2021	
Submit a grant application to replace entrance railing	Lowther Trust & parks development	Revenue budget	2018-2023	
Enforcement of dog control orders	All staff	Revenue budget	Ongoing	
Healthy, Safe & Secure				
Develop partnership bid with Tennis club & HLF bid	Sports development	Revenue budget	2018-2019	Complete
Carry out play area audit	Parks development	Revenue budget	Sep 2019	Complete
Carry out bench survey	Parks development	Revenue budget	Aug 2019	Complete
Repair some worn surface areas in play area	Parks operational	Revenue budget	Dec 2019	Complete
Pot hole improvements in the car park	Lowther Trust	Lowther Trust	2018	Complete

Undertake pipe scanning in rose garden & putting green	Technical services	Revenue budget	2018	Complete
Carry out drainage improvements in rose garden & putting green	Technical services	Revenue budget	2018	Complete
Carry out remedial repair works to some paths	Parks operational	Revenue budget	Mar 2018	Complete
Well Maintained & Clean				
Ensure cleanliness standards are maintained	All staff	Revenue budget	Ongoing	
Repair & repaint benches	Parks operations	Revenue budget	Aug – Sep 2019	Complete
Repaint lines in car park	Lowther Trust		2018	Complete
Improvements to entrance – turf & plant with woodland plants	Parks operations	Revenue budget	May 2018	Complete
Remove existing shrubs & hedging behind bowling greens	Parks operations	Revenue budget	Feb - Mar 2020	
Redesign borders behind bowling greens with shrubs & perennials	Parks development	Revenue budget	Feb – Mar 2020	
Replant borders behind bowling greens	Parks operations	Revenue budget	Mar – Apr 2020	
Carry out remedial repair works to some paths	Parks operational	Revenue budget	Mar 2018	Complete

Assess & create tree replacement programme	Parks operational	Revenue budget	2018-2020	
Continually improve the herbaceous border	Friends group & parks operational	Revenue budget	Ongoing	
Carry out spring bulb planting to naturalise	Friends group & parks operational	Revenue budget	Ongoing	
Carry out improvement works to the rose beds	Parks development & operations	Revenue budget	Sep 2020	
Reinstate avenue of trees down the main drive	Parks & development	Revenue budget		
Environmental Management				
Continue to reduce reliance on chemical use	All staff		Ongoing	
Community Involvement				
Develop links with local schools	Parks ranger service	Revenue budget	Ongoing	
Produce annual events & activities schedule	Parks ranger services	Revenue budget	Ongoing	
Deliver activities & events as per the annual schedule	Parks ranger service	Revenue budget	Dec 2020	
Carry out public consultation on masterplan	Parks & Lowther Trust	Revenue budget	2020-2023	

Clear vegetation around memorial in rose garden	Friends group & parks operations	Revenue budget	Mar 2018	Complete
Create & plant an apothecary garden around the memorial in rose garden	Friends group & parks operations	Friends Group	Mar 2018	Complete
Improvements to Lowther Terrace entrance	Friends group	Revenue budget & Lowther Trust	Mar 2018	Complete
Develop Adopt a tree scheme	Lowther Trust		2018	Complete
Create woodland paths with log seating areas for educational sessions & activities	Parks operations & ranger service	Revenue budget	Oct 2018 – Nov 2019	Complete
Deliver 5 day environmental educational theme & sports activities	Parks ranger service & sports development	Revenue budget	July 2019	Complete
Marketing & Communication				
Continue to update Councils & Trusts websites & social media	Tourism services & Lowther Trust	Revenue budget	Ongoing	
Advertise in Fylde's mini guide & local tourist publications	Tourism services	Revenue budget	Ongoing	
Establish new Tourism Officer role at Fylde Council	Tourism services	Revenue budget	July 2019	Complete

Management				
Prepare & submit capital bid to refurbish existing play areas	Parks management	Revenue budget	Nov 2019	Complete
Liaise with Lowther Trust to develop a landscape masterplan	Parks management & Lowther trust		Ongoing	

Period Work Schedule : Period J9

Lowther Team

All Assets (non-contract specific)

		CC	Pnts	Frequency	Quantity	Tick Completed
L Lytham Area						
Lowther Gardens		Lytham Area (your ref L1004546 our ref : 004546)				W1 W2 W3 W4
BD24	Plant Spring Bedding Bulbs	MT	[1]	x1	393.00 m2	
BD30	Bedding-Hand Weed / Hoe	MT	[1]	x2	393.00 m2	
CK001	Daily Inspect Mechanism/Time	MT	[1]	x20	1.00 no	
CK002	Clean Aviary & Feed Birds	MT	[1]	x8	1.00 no	
CL13	Empty Litter Bin - Ornamental Areas	MT	[1]	x8	14.00 no	
CL16	Turn Compost Bays (Weekly)	MT	[1]	x4	1.00 no	
CL17	Litter Pick High Ornamental Areas	MT	[1]	x8	62,871.00 m2	
GE15	Grass Edge - Half Moon Edge	MT	[1]	x1	303.20 lm	
HB11	Herbaceous-Hoe (Weed), Stake & Tie	MT	[1]	x2	323.00 m2	
HB12	Herbaceous-Cut Down Plants	MT	[1]	x1	323.00 m2	
HB14	Herbaceous - Split/Divide 1/3 Plants	MT	[1]	x1	323.00 m2	
HB15	Herbaceous-Fork Bed & Add Organic Matter	MT	[1]	x1	323.00 m2	
HB16	Herbaceous-Replant Divided Plants	MT	[1]	x1	323.00 m2	
PO001	Pond-Inspect & CleanseDaily	MT	[1]	x20	1.00 no	
RB13	Top Roses	MT	[1]	x1	846.62 m2	
SB35	Shrub-Formative Prune/Apply Mulch (Nov)	MT	[1]	x1	8,614.72 m2	
TC001	Tarmac - Brush/Airbroom Weekly	MT	[1]	x4	1,975.60 m2	
TC006	Clear Leaves Off Paths Daily	MT	[1]	x16	1,975.60 m2	
TM113	Brush / Switch Fine Sports Turf	MT	[1]	x10	2,673.00 m2	

Appendix B. Example Risk Assessment

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 1st April 2019

Section: Parks

Assessment Team Gail Isbister, 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 <i>Manual Handling</i>					
Section Manager Responsible for this Action Plan.....M Wilde			Signature... <i>Mark Wilde</i> ...		
Action Plan Review Date.....1 st April 2019.....					