

Ashton Gardens



Management & Maintenance Plan 2024 - 2029

ASHTON GARDENS MANAGEMENT & MAINTENANCE PLAN

CONTENTS

Section	Page Numbers
Foreword	4
Judges Feedback	5
1. Introduction	
1.1 Acknowledgments	12
1.2 Purpose of the Management Plan	12
1.3 Responsibility for the Plan	12
1.4 Site Details	13
1.5 History and Restoration of the Site	14
1.6 Legal & Estate Matters	18
1.7 Cultural & Educational Value	20
1.8 Sport & Leisure Value	20
1.9 Demographics	21
1.10 The Strategic Framework	21
1.11 Service Structure and Responsibilities	22
2. A Welcoming Place	
2.1 Welcoming	24
2.2 Good and Safe Access	24
2.3 Signage	25
2.4 Commemorative Bench scheme	25
3. Healthy, Safe and Secure	
3.1 General Health and Safety	26
3.2 Safe Equipment	27
3.3 Public Safety and Enforcement	28
3.4 Appropriate Provision of Facilities	28
3.5 CCTV	28
4. Well Maintained and Clean	
4.1 Litter and Waste Management	30
4.2 Dealing with Graffiti and Vandalism	31
4.3 Horticultural Design and Maintenance	31
4.4 Arboriculture Maintenance	32
4.5 Building and Equipment Maintenance	32
5. Environmental Management	
5.1 Managing Environmental Impact	34

6.	Biodiversity, Landscape and Heritage	
6.1	Management of Natural Features, Wild Flora and Fauna	38
6.2	Conservation of the Landscape features, Buildings & Structures	39
7.	Community Involvement	
7.1	Friends of Ashton Gardens	43
7.2	St Annes on the Sea in Bloom	44
7.3	Volunteers	44
7.4	Community Payback Services	45
7.5	The Pavilion Cafe	45
7.6	Events and Education	45
7.7	Wider Stakeholders	46
7.8	Residents Survey	46
8.	Marketing and Communication	
8.1	Marketing and Promotion	48
8.2	Communication Strategy	49
8.3	Communication Teams	50
8.4	Target Audience	50
9.	Management	
9.1	Clearly Addressing Green Flag Criteria in Management Prescriptions	52
9.2	Management Plans Must be Actively Implemented and Reviewed	52
9.3	Sound Financial Management	52
10.	Five Year Management Action Plan	53
	Appendices	
1	Annual task sheet	56
2	Risk Assessments	58
3	Friends of Ashton Gardens Leaflet	59
4	Ashton Gardens Leaflet	61
5	Master Plan	63
6	Site Location	64

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 open spaces are a fundamental part of the fabric of the Fylde, providing attractions for visitors and residents.

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. A varied demographic of people 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 framework for the site for the next ten years. It draws on previous studies, current issues and the priorities arising from community and Elected Member 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

2022 FEEDBACK

Name of Site – Ashton Gardens

Desk Assessment Feedback (Management Plan and supporting documentation)

Criteria	Strengths	Recommendations	Response
Presentation	Clear structure outlining the history and management of the site. Structure mirrors the Green Flag Award criteria so easy to follow. Lots of photos, including historic photos, and examples of how the plan is put in to practice.	Creating internal links (i.e. from the table of contents to the relevant section) can make it easier to navigate around the document.	The sections and page numbers are listed on the contents page and have been updated.
Health, Safety & Security	A succinct yet comprehensive summary of how health, safety and security are managed on the park, including first aid provision and the importance of well-maintained equipment. The site is monitored by gardeners, Rangers and there are good links with the Community Safety Partnership and local Police. Replacement of CCTV system due this year.	The site-based team is described in section 1.11, perhaps this could be repeated in this section as having site-based staff is hugely beneficial for the safety and security of a site.	This information is given in section 3.
Maintenance of Equipment, Buildings & Landscape	Clear division of labour / responsibilities with other departments. Monthly Quality meetings to keep on top of issues as they arise. Site-based staff to identify any issues on a daily basis. Use of technology to monitor play equipment.	Although this is carried out by another department, it would be helpful to have a little more detail about how the buildings are maintained, e.g. annual inspections, a rolling programme of upgrades etc, and what mechanism there is for resolving issues with other departments.	This information has been updated in the plan.
Litter, Cleanliness, Vandalism	Site litter picked daily during peak times, including a weekend rota. A clear policy for graffiti and vandalism.	Are there recycling bins on site? (answered on the site visit)	This has been included in the section.
Environmental Management	A structured approach to sustainability, including design, as well as an acknowledgement of the potential conflicts between the formal and historic nature of the site and less formal, nature friendly features. Measured changes, e.g. 20% reduction of grass cutting and 20% perennial planting in beds. Measured benefits (£) from composting.	Are there plans for LED lighting, solar panels or other 'green' measures on Ashton Gardens? (LED lighting throughout the park as seen and described on the site visit, include this in the plan). Could the groundwater supply be used as 'grey	Green measures are being considered on Ashton Gardens and information has been updated in this section and the action plan.

Criteria	Strengths	Recommendations	Response
	Use of original groundwater supply reducing the use of potable / treated water. Links to wider climate change adaption policies.	water' in the toilet facilities? Is climate change resilience considered when planting new trees, i.e. species that will be resilient to changes in climate over the next 40-50 years.	
Biodiversity, Landscape & Heritage	Great use of technology, i.e. Arbortrack, to improve services, particularly management of tree stock. Ph1 habitat survey carried out. Key heritage features are recorded and have been conserved during various stages of work over several decades.	It would be great to see a focus on some of the species found. E.g. what could be done to support the rare White Letter Hairstreak Butterfly? I appreciate scope is limited in an urban, formal park. What wildlife friendly species have been planted? (On the site visit we discussed interpretation and this is in the forward plan) The plan describes the main heritage features, but could be improved with some information about how each aspect is managed or maintained. For example, the plan indicates the war memorial has been waxed recently, how often does this need to be done?	This information has been updated in the section and action plan.
Community Involvement	A range of community groups are involved in the site, e.g. SOAG and St Annes in Bloom who organise events and volunteer days, as well as a range of stakeholders, including the Pavilion concession and Community Payback. The Carnival Weekend brings in many other groups and the wider community. Schools and other youth groups also use the site. An annual resident's survey helps keep the council informed on public opinion.	Are the community groups involved representative of the wider community? Are new members actively recruited to ensure the long term viability of each organisation?	The community groups and volunteers represent a cross section of the community. The Council is supporting the groups to engage with harder to reach groups. The groups are constantly striving to recruit new members by holding events throughout the year to promote themselves and their activities.
Marketing & Communication	Ashton Gardens is supported in its marketing and communications by Fylde Council, including more bespoke channels such as the Fylde Ranger Service Facebook Page. There is a good understanding of the target audience and reach	The information provided is quite generic for the whole council. It would be great to have more specific information relating to Ashton Gardens, or at least the Parks Service. For example, an outline	This section has been updated with more detail.

Criteria	Strengths	Recommendations	Response
	and other key stats are monitored.	of how potentially controversial works are managed in terms of comms, e.g. tree removal. Or how the annual events programme is promoted.	
Overall Management	The management plan reflects the level of knowledge and experience held by the parks team, with a comprehensive and integrated approach to the management of this key site. Balancing the difference needs of a site – the historic design and features, modern work practices, climate change and resilience, as well as the needs of the people who visit the park – is very difficult. This plan demonstrates that a successful balance is being Ashton Gardens and I'm very much looking forward to visiting the site to see how the plan is put in to practice.	Sometimes the content of the plan can be a little too generic or borough wide, consider reviewing the plan to include more site specific information where possible.	This has been considered.

FIELD ASSESSMENT

Criteria	Strengths	Recommendations	
A Welcoming Place	Grand and welcoming entrances, all in excellent condition and inviting you in to the park. Feature bed at the St George's Rd entrance (the main entrance today). Awaiting planting for this Summer but the photos show it's a showpiece at the entrance to the park. Wide and well maintained paths throughout, lighting throughout the park, including uplighters on the main avenue. A variety of entrances and exits. Good accessibility throughout the majority of the park. Some limitations due to the landscape and heritage design of the park, e.g. steps down to some 'rooms' within the park. Signage at the entrance with an up to date noticeboard, map and key information about the park. Green Flag proudly flying in a central location near the play areas, café and bowling greens.	None.	
Healthy, Safe & Secure	Fantastic range of facilities for relatively compact town centre park, with a cohesive design across the park that has	None.	

Criteria	Strengths	Recommendations	
	successfully incorporated a range of modern uses (e.g. play areas, skate park etc) alongside the heritage features and horticultural areas of interest such as the rose garden. All equipment and facilities in excellent condition, providing a safe environment. The park feels very safe and today, on a week day afternoon during term time, there were many people of all ages enjoying the park, making it feel very safe. No dog fouling was seen on the site visit and this is managed very well through the site team, Rangers and Fylde Council enforcement officers when necessary.		
Well Maintained & Clean	The park was very clean and tidy, with bins throughout the park. The beds were immaculate and though at various stages of planting for the Summer, it was clear that the team take pride in maintaining high standards of horticulture. Some traditional bedding remains, but many beds have moved to more herbaceous and perennial shrubs, though with design and planning that ensures interest and colour throughout the year. The park has many trees and they're all in good condition. The team strike the balance of maintaining the trees as part of the heritage design whilst ensuring they are safe with great success. The buildings are all in excellent condition. They have been restored with National Lottery Heritage Funding, however, this was several years ago and standards have been maintained. The equipment was all kept in excellent condition. The management plan shows that a huge amount of work has been done over the last couple of years, e.g. sand in the play area, park bin refurbishment, bowling green bumper boards, resurfacing, repainting – perimeter railings, lamp posts, war memorial waxing etc etc, and this is clear on inspection.	None.	

Criteria	Strengths	Recommendations	
Environmental Management	Improvements such as the new compost bays are in use, minimising waste from site. The nursery and depot make use of a historic well on site, using non-potable water to save on tap water use. The nursery is well managed to maximise financial as well as environmental benefits, for example, buying in plug plants / seedlings and growing them on (reducing the carbon footprint from transport when buying, as well as saving money buying younger plants and growing them on). The team are experimenting along the avenue with bedding designs with plants that can survive in dry, shady beds (under the avenue of trees). Finding plants that can cope with adverse conditions will be important for the long term design of beds across the borough to ensure they are resilient to potential impacts of climate change – warmer wetter winters and hotter, dryer summers. LED lighting is used throughout the park for street lamps and uplighters. There was no evidence of chemical use on site, so the team are clearly following their policy.	Consider rain water harvesting to further conserve water. Do you know how much water is available from the well and where the water come from? How much water is available and how much can you use without affecting its long term supply? Are there any opportunities for solar panel on the depot buildings? How feasible would it be to introduce electric vehicles?	This information has been updated.
Biodiversity Landscape & Heritage	As well as being managed for horticultural interest and colour throughout the year, many of the bedding and border plants have been chosen to benefit wildlife, particularly insects. Differential mowing is utilised, particularly in areas where spring bulbs are planted. Bird boxes and bug hotels are placed around the park. The park provides plants for the ‘in bloom’ schemes, and Lyme and Marram grasses for the Dune project. The park retains its original overall design and features, including the pavilion, lodges, 19th bridges, rose garden, and Japanese Garden, as well as the war memorial. Linking with the maintenance work, these aspects of the park are managed successfully.	Linking to comments on the desk assessment, it would be beneficial to have some more detail on future plan or overall strategy for nature within the park. This could tie in with the next wildlife survey On the site visit we discussed the plans to refurbish the Japanese Gardens.	This has been updated in the action plan.

Criteria	Strengths	Recommendations	
Community Involvement	The park is clearly well used and loved by the local community. Even though this is a town centre park, there is a good range of local community groups and stakeholders involved in the park. There are good relations between the parks team and the café concession, as well as involvement from the bowling clubs in maintaining the areas around the greens. The Supporters of Ashton Gardens (SOAG) are very proactive and run events and activities throughout the year. The plan describes a range of inclusion and engagement activities, e.g. with young people, tackling loneliness and combatting anti-social behaviour. Integrating volunteers with the nursery team provides huge benefits for everyone involved. The plants grown on are used within the park, in the town centre and on the dune project, so having volunteers adds a lot of capacity to the nursery team, whilst those volunteering learn new skills and have a real impact on their local area. This the site can utilise the available budget to its maximum.	How sustainable are the key groups and committees? On the visit I asked about new members and the response was that it's hard to recruit new members. Recruiting new members is essential for the long term sustainability of Friends / Support groups. Is there capacity to support SOAG in recruiting new people? Do you keep a record of how many people attend volunteer days and events, volunteer hours, numbers of bookings and people using the facilities? This can be great for calculating the number of volunteer hours spent on the site (with an economic value, e.g. £10 per volunteer hour). It's also good for grant applications and getting press and media coverage.	The Council will continue to support the groups in recruiting new members. The groups are constantly striving to recruit new members by holding events throughout the year to promote themselves and their activities. Records of volunteer hours in the park and nursery area are available on request. Event information can be obtained on request.
Marketing and Communication	Events and activities are promoted in the noticeboard and through the Fylde Council communications channels. People using the site were aware of the regular activities, e.g. the Ranger team and band concerts.	See comments in desk assessment.	This section has been updated.
Management	The positive relationships and proactive team spirit came across throughout the site visit. It's clearly a dedicated, flexible and supportive team to work in, so every credit must go to the management team for developing and maintaining this. There is clearly a drive for constant improvement, despite the challenges of balancing the needs of parks, coastal sites and town centre schemes. The action plan for the park demonstrates how much has been achieved over the last few years, and it's very much apparent in the	The team are doing an amazing job, remember to take time to celebrate your achievements and reflect on what you've achieved. It's very easy to keep you head down and just move on to the next thing without pausing for breath.	A thank you event was held for the staff and officers to celebrate the successes of the teams.

Criteria	Strengths	Recommendations	
	overall high quality of everything about this park. There are also lots of ideas for future improvements, so I'm sure the park will continue to go from strength to strength.		

Introduction

1.1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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

- St. Annes Town Council
- Lytham St. Annes Civic Trust
- Technical Services
- Tourism and Leisure Corporate Services
- St Annes on the sea In Bloom

Thank you for your valuable contributions to the management plan.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

This management plan seeks to ensure that the park is conserved and enhanced in its entirety due to its historical and environmental importance, whilst balancing the needs of customers and stakeholders.

This management plan seeks to:

- Take a holistic approach to the future management of all aspects of the park by drawing on previous studies and considering the needs and desires of professionals, local community and visitors.
- Put community needs at the heart of park development and management.
- Benchmark and analyse 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 and Coastal Services are the strategic owner of this plan, ensuring continuous, annual monitoring of encompassing aims, objectives and actions - as well as strategic communication with stakeholders. However, several corporate-wide services and external partners will be responsible for the

implementation of the plan. Responsible council services, stakeholders and their specific responsibilities can be found later within the document.

1.4 SITE DETAILS

1.4.1 Location

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

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

Fylde Area

The Borough of Fylde is within the County of Lancashire in the Northwest of England and fronts onto the Ribble Estuary and the Irish Sea. To the north is the Borough of Wyre, to the Northwest is the resort town of Blackpool and Preston adjoins to the East. It has an area of approximately 62 square miles (160 square kilometres) and a population of 75,750.

The coastline is one of the dominant features of the borough and is the setting for most of its urban areas. The largest towns, Lytham and St Annes, together have a reputation as high-quality resorts with their significant visitor attractions along with their distinctive seafronts and an internationally famous championship golf course. With a total of 3.067 million tourism visits worth more than £214 million in 2014, equating to 5% of all tourism visits to Lancashire (Ref Local Plan), the Fylde area has a strong and consistent visitor offer that includes a variety of major events. Part of this offer is the natural environment including the expansive beach, Fylde Sand Dunes, Ribble Estuary, Lytham Green and surrounding rural areas which appeal to walkers and cyclists.

Fylde boasts a rich and varied built environment including sites and buildings of historic and architectural interest. Heritage assets make a valuable contribution to economic and social wellbeing, as well as provide a focus for heritage led regeneration and tourism development. The historic development of the Borough is the result of economic, social, cultural and environmental factors which have resulted in its built heritage, including a significant variety of high-quality buildings.

Within the Borough there is a market town and Victorian and Edwardian seaside resorts with vibrant town centres, together with rural settlements some of which date back to the Middle Ages. Fylde contains attractive planned residential suburbs evoking the spirit of Victorian, Edwardian and interwar development. Historic attractions such as Lytham Hall, the Victorian Pier, St Annes Promenade, iconic Lytham Windmill and Green provide a strong identity and character for Fylde, complementing the thriving town centres which include a variety of quality independent dining and shopping opportunities. The choice and quality of

accommodation stock continues to grow to meet the demands of visitors and contributes over £124 million to the local economy.

1.4.2 Ashton Gardens in Context

Ashton Gardens is Grade II listed and one of four strategic parks within Fylde. Along with the Promenade Gardens, it is one of the two main strategic parks in St Annes.

In addition to the four strategic parks, the borough has semi-mature woodlands, community parks, sports and recreation grounds and beautiful, well used public realm areas with attractive horticultural displays which are awarded annual In Bloom Awards civic space throughout the borough. coastline, which has a number of important ecological designations including the Ribble Estuary Ramsar/ SSSI and Fylde Sand Dunes LNR/ SSSI.

1.4.3 Summary of Attractions and Facilities

In summary the park offers the following attraction and facilities:

- Cenotaph
- The Pavilion Café
- Gate lodges
- Lord Ashton Monument and statues
- Crown bowling greens
- Bowling pavilions
- Danfo public toilets
- Ornamental gardens and woodlands
- Ornamental lake and rockeries
- Depot and nursery
- Infant and junior play areas
- Skate park
- Basketball court
- Youth shelter

1.5 HISTORY AND RESTORATION OF THE SITE

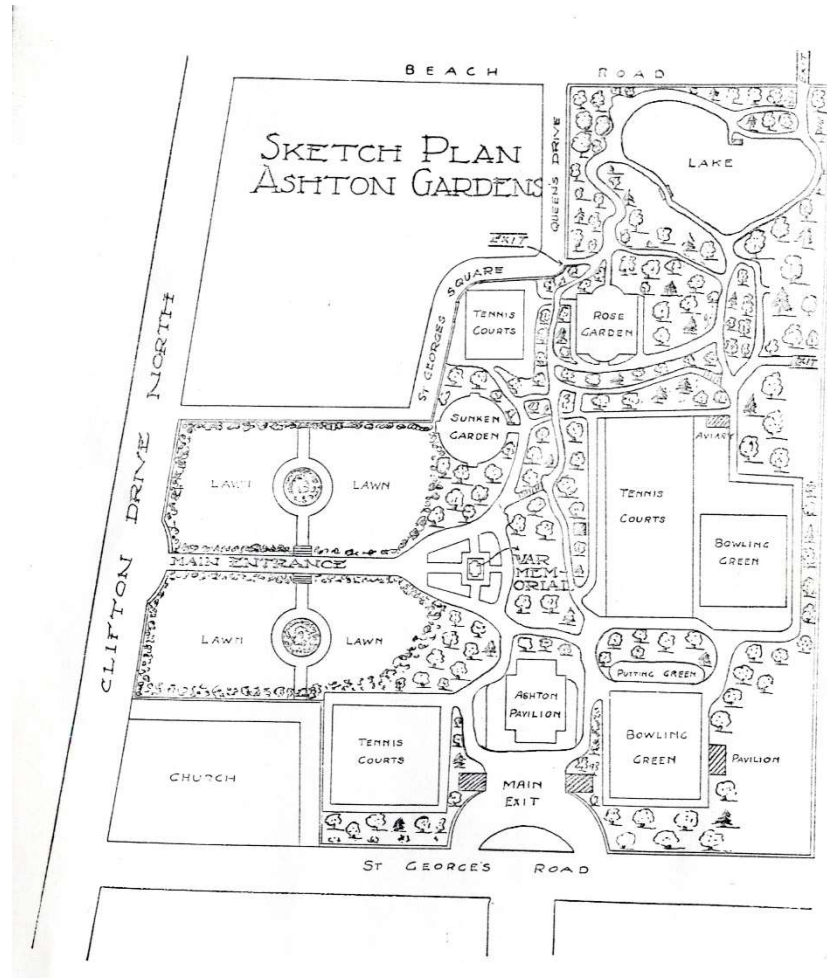
1.5.1 Site Details

Ashton Gardens is a 5-hectare site located approximately 150m from the seafront, adjacent to St. Anne's Square Town Centre.

1.5.2 History and Development

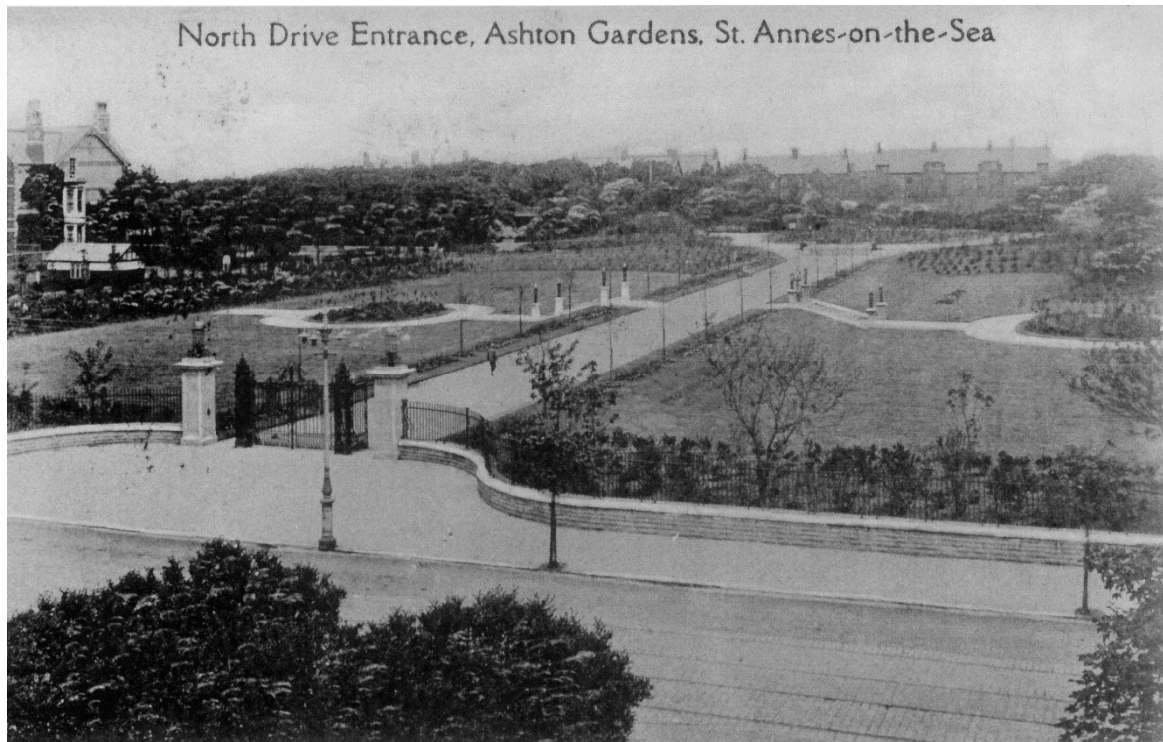
Ashton Gardens was originally established as St George's Gardens by the Land and Building Company in 1874. The park was designed as part of the town to provide an attractive recreational area for residents and visitors. Gardens like this were developed to provide the "green lungs" of towns and cities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

The park was 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



The park 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 park for the people of St Anne's. He also bought another strip of land which connected the park to Clifton Drive North.

Later in the same year, the Council ran a competition for the redesign of the park, which was won by local Mr F. Harrison. The park was 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 opened on the 1st July 1916.



In the years since, the park 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 (2005 – 2010)

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

The centrepiece within the restored park is the Ashton Institute Building, which now houses the Pavilion Cafe, located on the St George's Road entrance between the two gate lodges. Fronting the Pavilion Café is a courtyard, which is now used as an al fresco café seating area. The area of soft landscape round the courtyard was funded as part of the HLF bid.



The gate lodge buildings were also 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 park during the early 20th century.

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

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

The children's play area was improved in 2011. A large scale, open aspect junior adventure play area with natural sand and grass features was installed as well as a small, fenced infant play area. This provided a much-needed diversification of play facilities for a wide age group.

Investment to the value of £50,000 has been carried out to improve the safety surfacing and play equipment over the last four years.

1.5.4 Historic Landscape Restoration

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.

Trees, shrubs and herbaceous perennials were diversified 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 park 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.

1.5.5 Listed Buildings and Historic Structures

The cenotaph which is central to 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 and II.

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 Ashton Institute building was constructed when the gardens were remodelled in 1916. It was remodelled as part of the HLF refurbishment and is leased to a concessionaire for use as the Pavilion Café.

1.6 LEGAL AND ESTATE MATTERS

Ashton Gardens is registered on Historical England's Register of Historic Parks and Gardens as a Grade II listed. Its reference can be found here: [Ashton Gardens - Historic England](#).

1.6.1 Ownership

Ashton Gardens is within the ownership of Fylde Council and various buildings within the park are leased as described below.

1.6.2 Lease and Covenants

Leased buildings within the park include:

- East Lodge - occupied and leased by Age UK.
- West Lodge - occupied and leased by St Anne's Town Council.
- The Pavilion Café – occupied and leased by a private concessionaire.

Fylde Council is required to comply with a complex suite of legislation and regulation covering a diverse range of topics across the assets and services that it manages. The table below lists the relevant legislation relating to the management of parks and open spaces and must be referenced as part of any action proposed in the Delivery Plan.

Legislation or Act	Link	Description and Relevance
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Town and Country Planning Act 1990	Town and Country Planning Act 1990	Statutory framework for Planning Authorities. Ensures that the right development happens in the right place at the right time, benefitting communities and the economy. It plays a critical role in identifying what development is needed and where, what areas need to be protected or enhanced and in assessing whether proposed development is suitable.
Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981	Gives protection to native species (especially those at threat), controls the release of non-native species and enhances the protection of Sites of Special Scientific Interest.
Public Right of Way Act 2000	Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000	Provides a right of open access for people to walk freely over areas of mapped open country and registered common land. It also gives greater protection to Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and wildlife.
Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005	Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005	Provides local authorities with powers to tackle poor environmental quality and anti-social behaviour. Covers various aspects of environmental protection, such as nuisance, abandoned vehicles, litter, graffiti, waste, noise and dogs.
Land Drainage Act 1991	Land Drainage Act 1991	Sets out the rights and responsibilities in relation to land drainage. This includes private landowners, Councils, Highway Authorities and Internal Drainage Boards. The act requires that a watercourse be maintained by its owner in such a condition that the free flow of water is not impeded.
Public Health Act 1961	Public Health Act 1961	Legislative framework designed to protect and promote community health and safety. It empowers authorities to manage risks, enforce standards, and respond to health emergencies.
Antisocial Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014	ASB, Crime and Policing Act 2014	Provides powers to the police and Councils to undertake appropriate action against nuisance behaviours.
Local Government Act 1972	Local Government Act 1972	Defines the procedures, structures, duties and geographies of English and Welsh councils.
Building Act 1984	Building Act 1984	Statutory framework for the construction process, and the design and specifications for buildings and their component parts.
Building Regulations 2010	The Building Regulations 2010	Most building work being carried out in England must comply with the Building Regulations 2010. The Building Regulations are made under powers in the Building Act 1984. Protects the health and safety of people in and around buildings, they also provide for energy and water conservation and access to and use of buildings.
Health and Safety at Work Act 1974	Health and Safety at Work Act 1974	Sets out the broad duties and best practices for employers regarding the

		health and safety of the workforce. This includes a duty of care for employees, casual workers, self-employed workers, clients, visitors and public.
Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999	Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999	Introduced to reinforce the Health and Safety Act 1974. Outlines what employers are required to do to manage health and safety and is applied to every work activity. The regulations place a set of duties on employers and employees to maintain a safe and healthy workplace.

1.7 CULTURAL AND EDUCATION VALUE

A number of corporate departments work collaboratively to promote the park's cultural and heritage value including Parks and Coastal Services, Tourism and Leisure Service and Corporate Services. This includes the inclusion of site-based heritage signage to promote the parks history, the organisation of a wide variety of community and cultural events, environmental education with schools and online communications.

The Council's Ranger Service deliver an annual guided walks and events programme as well as an Outdoor Schools Education Programme, which promotes and encourages wider use of the park.

The Tourism and Leisure Service also work with a number of partners and Elected Members to organise and support a number of cultural events including a Christmas Market, Remembrance Sunday ceremonies and a Summer Carnival.

1.8 SPORT AND LEISURE VALUE

Ashton Gardens contains a small and good quality range of outdoor sport and leisure facilities.

There are two well maintained public bowling greens which are hugely popular and well used by the Ashton Gardens Bowling and Social Club, who hold regular events, matches and tournaments throughout the year.

The park also contains a concrete skatepark alongside a MUGA, basketball court and youth shelter. This is popular and well used by local teenagers and children.

St. Anne's Activity Sessions (SAS) are a diverse package of school holiday activities for primary age children aimed at creating a positive connection with physical locations (parks & open spaces, premises etc) and the residents of the town (voluntary community groups, local businesses, sports clubs, charitable organisations, councils etc). To create a sense of ownership and belonging. The scheme is funded by St. Annes on the Sea Town Council and the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner for Lancashire with support from Fylde Council, local business, and community groups. The sessions were held over the summer holidays last year, but going forward they will be run throughout the majority of the school holidays.

Activities last year included learn to cycle, art classes, learn to bowl, skateboarding, learn to play the drums.

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.

[Demographic dashboard - Lancashire County Council](#)

1.10 THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

1.10.1 General

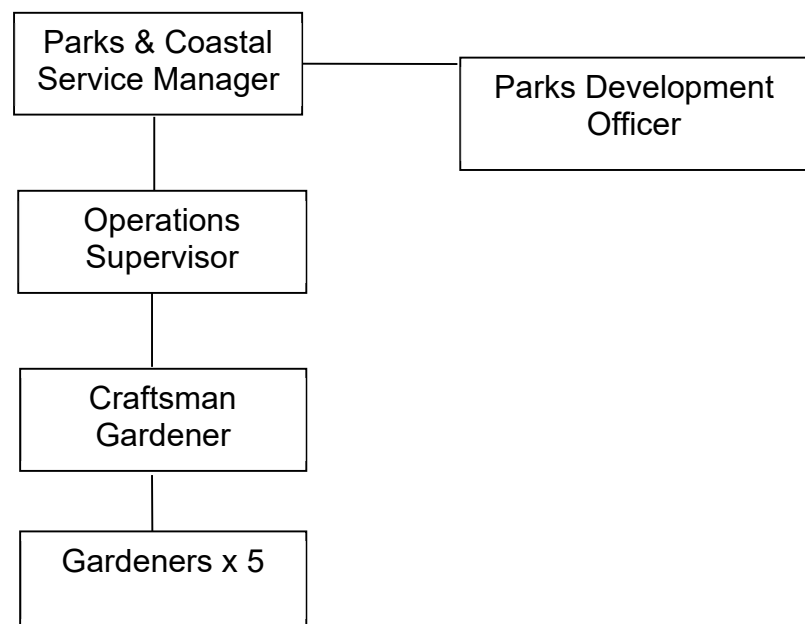
Fylde Council has a suite of plans, strategies and policies covering a diverse range of topics across the services that it delivers. The table below list the most relevant and live documents that relate to the management of parks and open spaces and must be referenced as part of any action proposed in the Action Plan.

Plan, Strategy, Policy	Link	Description and Relevance
Fylde Coastal Strategy	Fylde Coastal Strategy	Identifies and develops top tier level actions to address major issues affecting Fylde's coastline.
Corporate Plan	Corporate Plan	Blueprint document outlining Fylde Council's corporate priorities.
Local Plan	Local Plan	Guides decisions on future development proposals and addresses needs and opportunities within Fylde.
Built Heritage Strategy	Built Heritage Strategy for Fylde	Identifies and sets long term management actions for Fylde's key heritage assets.
Risk Management Strategy	Risk Management Strategy	Details how Fylde Council will deal with risk both pre-emptively and as incidents occur.
Business Continuity Plan	Business Continuity Plan	Aims to minimise the effects of incidents which may affect the provision of council services and to restore the highest possible levels of service in the shortest possible time.
Park Management Plans	Park Management Plans	Describes the management priorities and actions for the appropriate protection and management of Fylde's parks.
Events Policy	Events Policy	Provides a framework for the programming and operation of commercial and community events.
St Annes on the Sea Neighbourhood Development Plan	St Annes Town Centre and the Island Masterplan	Identifies specific areas of investment to boost economic, social and infrastructure value.

1.11 SERVICE STRUCTURE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Council's Parks and Coastal Service is responsible for holistically managing the borough's parks and open spaces. The service manager encourages people to work in partnership with one another to provide an effective and responsive service. Parks services are centralised to include parks development and landscape design, grounds maintenance, playground inspections and maintenance, arboriculture management, ranger service, ecological management, coastal patrol and the delivery of income generating grounds contracts.

Ashton Gardens Staff Structure:



Ashton Gardens maintenance, including cleansing, is undertaken by a site-based gardening team under the direction of the Parks & Coastal Services Manager and Parks Operations Supervisor. The scope of work is largely determined by frequency task sheets which are reviewed annually and adjusted according to resources and seasonal fluctuations. Quality monitoring is undertaken through monthly site meetings performed by the service manager, parks development officer and supervisor.

The gardening staff and their supervisor are expected to have appropriate levels of horticultural experience and recognised qualifications. Staff are broken down into individual teams focused on floral areas, sport turf, grass cutting and cleansing. Continuity of skilled staff assigned to specific areas of the park is particularly important in high profile areas. Public toilet facilities are managed and maintained by Danfo under a corporate contract.

Tree maintenance and safety works are undertaken by the Council's in-house Arboriculture Team according to the service manager and supervisor's instruction. There is an excellent range of age groups within the tree stock of the park. It is important that the trees are maintained in a safe condition and any safety works required are highlighted by inspection and dealt with sensitively, respecting the trees ecological and heritage value. Decaying wood is of particular importance and

where feasible is retained in-situ as standing deadwood or stacked as decaying wood habitats on site. The Arboriculture Manager and Supervisor carry out an annual tree assessment on the park, identifying key areas of risk in accordance with zoning principles. The Senior Arborist identifies the trees which require inspection each year and ensures that the cycle of inspections is up to date. The service uses the inspection software, Arbortrack to aid inspections and work prioritisation.

The Parks Development Officer is the day-to-day lead on park development matters in partnership with key council professionals and park stakeholders. This includes renovation or restoration projects, bedding design and procurement, landscape design, coordination of new installs including signage and furniture as well as leading on community liaison and consultations. The Parks Development Officer works closely with the service manager and supervisor in undertaking parks quality monitoring to aid Green Flag Award and In bloom Initiatives. They are also responsible for the coordination of award applications.

Playground and minor infrastructure inspection and maintenance is undertaken by the service-based Playgrounds and Projects team. This consists of two trained engineers who undertake weekly playground inspections and repairs as well as undertake minor repairs to furniture, fencing, walls, steps and paths. They also provide support to Technical Services on wider civic maintenance duties.

Buildings and large-scale infrastructure management and maintenance is the responsibility of Technical Services. This includes building assets, lighting, drainage and major construction works.

1.11.1 Staff Training and Appraisals

Annual staff appraisals are undertaken as part of the Council's Performance Management Framework and the Fylde Competency Framework. Appraisals are valuable in identifying the skills, knowledge and experience of every employee and provides 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 list 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.

A Welcoming Place



2.1 WELCOMING

The vista into the gardens from the main entrance on St George's Road or Clifton Drive North is formal and welcoming with seasonal floral displays at one and an avenue of trees at the other. The layout at both entrances gives the impression of openness with good sight lines all around. The gardens are well laid out and maintained to a high standard. The northern side of the site is more naturalised and has a relaxing feel with woodlands, 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.

2.2 GOOD AND SAFE ACCESS

The site has seven entrances 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. These can be found at the public car park on St Georges Road and car parks in the town centre on St Annes Road West. All have provision for disabled parking. All entrances to the gardens are flat and well maintained to allow good access for people with pushchairs and wheelchairs.



All the facilities within the gardens are easily accessible to all including disabled users, with flat wide pathways ensuring that the main footpaths and routes are DDA compliant.

Public toilets, including disabled, are at the side of the Pavilion Café; along with a flat entrance to the Pavilion for wheelchair users and pushchairs.

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 still retain a peaceful atmosphere.

The main byelaws affecting Ashton Gardens are available upon request.

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

2.4 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.

N.B. The commemorative bench is Currently closed whilst a review of Existing benches is carried out.



Healthy, Safe and Secure

3.1 GENERAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Fylde Council's Health and 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. Sample 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 within the 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. 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 Welfare

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 strimmer's, 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, have 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. Ground's 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 ensure replacement of small handheld machinery every 3 years.
- 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 to the Parks and Coastal Services Manager and H&S Department for review.

All staff welfare facilities and depot area are regularly inspected by the 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

Park Quality Monitoring Meetings are held monthly by the service manager, supervisor and parks development officer. This ensures a strategic oversight of park management, maintenance, safety and project delivery. Items of particular attention for the management team include any areas which may require additional capital investment such as wholesale replacement of play equipment, footpath resurfacing and general infrastructure requirements.

In addition, the park is inspected daily by grounds staff whilst performing operational maintenance tasks and they pick up on any urgent safety issues by either making safe or removing general hazards when appropriate.

The children's play facilities meet both British and European Safety Standards. Playground and sport facility inspections are undertaken weekly. The results of the inspections are entered into a play software management system via a PDA, so that the safety of the equipment can be formally recorded, assessed and prioritised. The Council has invested £50,000 since 2019 in the Ashton Gardens playgrounds. This has been used to install new adventure play features, replace worn wetpour surfacing in the infant playground and to install more seating.

There are a number of signs around the park which aid safety management including playground usage and relevant Public Space Protection Orders relating to dogs.

3.3 PUBLIC SAFETY AND ENFORCEMENT

Ground's maintenance staff are the first daily point of contact for site users and can easily be identified by their uniforms. They are trained to assist people with their enquiries in a helpful and friendly manner. Site notice boards clearly advertise Council contact details should the public wish to report an issue.

The Ranger Service and the Council's Environmental Enforcement Officers undertake weekly uniformed patrols – including weekends during the season – to provide a sense of personal safety and reassurance, enforcing PSPO's relating to littering, BBQ's and dog controls.

The service periodically liaises with the local police regarding more serious or ongoing antisocial behaviour issues and joint patrols with the Rangers have been organised historically when matters escalate particularly during the season and school holidays.

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 2022 to 2025 Community Safety Strategic Partnership Plan 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. These priorities require a multi-agency response and encompass a wide range of threats facing local communities.

The plan is available to view on request.

3.4 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.

The Parks and Coastal Services management team understand and feel responsible for ensuring that any proposals regarding future provision are what the users want, that they comply with planning regulations and are appropriate to the original design concept of the site. The garden plays a vital role in the provision of the appropriate civic green space in St Annes.

3.5 CCTV

The Council have had approval from Full Council to upgrade the Town Centre CCTV infrastructure and have entered into a contract with BT

Telecommunications in December 2023. Work is ongoing and the new system is due to be live in March/April 2024, both Ashton Gardens and Promenade Gardens will benefit from this capital investment.

Well Maintained and Clean



4.1 LITTER AND WASTE MANAGEMENT

The frequency of cleansing activities such as litter picking, sweeping paths and emptying of bins is stipulated within the task sheet and undertaken by site-based gardeners.

The site is litter picked and bins emptied daily during peak times and 3 times weekly during quieter periods. There is also a seasonal weekend rota for litter picking and bin emptying and this is undertaken by a mobile weekend team.

The site has excellent bin provision throughout and there are also recycling bins at the Clifton Drive entrance to the park.

Non-recyclable waste is disposed of in site-based skips located within the depot yard. The Council has a 3-year contract with a local skip company to collect and empty the skips as and when required.

The management of the green waste and arisings is fully described in the Environmental Management section. The majority of green waste is composted at the site-based depot and reused as soil conditioner in the gardens. Green waste is also reduced through the reuse or transfer of plants when possible and through community donations if plants and bulbs are lifted and no longer required.

4.2 DEALING WITH GRAFFITI AND VANDALISM

The level of graffiti and vandalism is relatively low, however antisocial behaviour does occasionally occur in the evenings during the summer months. When it does occur 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. Serious crime incidents are reported to the police and log number recorded.

Rangers and Environmental Enforcement Officers deter and educate park users through proactive patrols and organise diversionary activities as part of the annual events programme. CCTV cameras are present but not always a reliable source of data for crime issues – camera provision is being currently reviewed and renewed.

4.3 HORTICULTURAL DESIGN & MAINTENANCE

Task sheets are followed to preserve the unique character of the park and are implemented by 3 full-time gardeners. The programme of maintenance ensures that hard and soft landscape areas, together with the park's buildings, are kept in good condition.

The gardeners undertake all horticultural jobs including bed work, weed control, grass cutting, strimming, sport turf and shrub management. The Craftsman Gardener and Supervisor ensure the quality of operations are undertaken to a high standard as well as to the correct frequency.

The park has a large number of high-profile floral displays, which are designed and monitored by the park's development officer. The floral displays are a constant work in progress and include permanent rose, shrub and perennial schemes as well as annual floral bedding and bulb displays. There is a move towards more sustainable planting designs and techniques within the park, with a 25% reduction of annuals that have been replaced with perennials.

Ashton Gardens is 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 four consecutive years.

Current horticulture projects in the gardens include:

- Introduction of more sustainable perennial and shrub planting.
- Planting of the main drive beds with herbaceous perennials.
- Design and replanting of the sunken garden boarder.
- Selective tree planting where losses have occurred through age or storm damage.

Ashton Gardens Nursery is a valued site-based asset which is used to grow, nurture and harden off plants. The nursery includes 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.

4.4 ARBORICULTURAL MAINTENANCE

Tree maintenance and safety works are undertaken by the Council's in-house Arboriculture Team according to the service managers and supervisor's instruction.

Park trees are routinely inspected and monitored by the council's senior arborist and Planning based tree officer. From these inspections, safety works are planned and undertaken accordingly. The team are also responsive to out of hours emergencies, as a result of storm damage.

There is an excellent range of age groups within the tree stock of the park. It is important that the trees are maintained in a safe condition and any safety works required are highlighted by inspection and dealt with sensitively, respecting the trees ecological and heritage value.

Decaying wood is of particular importance and where feasible is retained in-situ as standing deadwood or stacked as decaying wood habitats on site.

The Council has secured £34,000 to implement new tree planting across the whole borough in 2023/24. The Parks & Coastal services team are leading on this project and currently compiling a list of sites and suitable trees, with Ashton Gardens being included.

4.5 BUILDING AND EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE

Park buildings, large structures, lighting and toilets are under the management and maintenance direction of the Council's Technical Services and Operational Services teams. All other equipment, including sport, play and infrastructure equipment is maintained by the Parks and Coastal Services team.

Park Quality Monitoring Meetings are held monthly by the service manager, supervisor and parks development officer. This ensures a strategic oversight of park management, maintenance, safety and project delivery. Items of particular attention for the management team include any areas which may require additional capital investment such as wholesale replacement of play equipment, footpath resurfacing and general infrastructure requirements.

In addition, the park is inspected daily by grounds staff daily whilst performing operational maintenance tasks and they pick up on any urgent safety issues by either making safe or removing general hazards when appropriate.

The children's play facilities meet both British and European Safety Standards. Playground and sport facility inspections are undertaken weekly. The results of the inspections are entered into a play software management system via a PDA, so that the safety of the equipment can be formally recorded, assessed and prioritised.

Environmental Management



5.1 MANAGING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The Parks and Coastal Services team are managing Ashton Gardens so that it is a sustainable and eco-friendly space as well as an attractive gathering place for people. We are aware that expectations of what is defined as a beautiful park often conflicts with those features which make it environmentally friendly: such as reducing or altering grass cutting regimes; reduction of chemicals; reducing waste; leaving wild areas; and changing long standing traditional floral bedding schemes. The service has an Environmental Policy which is available to view upon request. The policy document outlines key ways in which the service can minimise its environmental impact in the delivery of its operations.

5.1.1 Sustainable Design

When it comes to green spaces, good design is the process of shaping them in a way that makes the most of local opportunities. Good design can transform parks and open spaces, that have become negative spaces for local communities into great new places for people that need them. It makes places that accommodate varied activities and future use change, express distinctive character, make people feel safe and welcome, as well as ensure resources are used wisely. A well-

designed green space also allows plants and wildlife to flourish. We will be developing a design code that provides detailed guidance on a variety of development subject areas including access, furniture, sport facilities and landscaping, providing a framework for the appropriate and sustainable development of the park.

5.1.2 Sustainable Environment

Biodiversity is an essential part of green space management and should be at the heart of green space design and development. Moreover, design can have a major influence on enhancing ecological value. Habitats and wildlife make a site unique and should be protected, interpreted and enhanced. Sustainable environmental practices are integrated into both the management of the park's formal horticultural areas as well as naturalized areas. Ranger staff have been undertaking practical conservation work on the park. We have reduced grass cutting by 20% and introduced wildflower areas, without compromising formal garden areas. We have reduced annual bedding by 25% from all areas except high profile gardens, replacing with perennial plants.

5.1.3 Chemical Use

Herbicides will only be used where it will result in tangible benefits on hard standing areas only, with strimming being used as an alternative to spraying around trees and obstacles. Pesticides will also only be used where there is no viable, cost effective, less harmful alternative.

5.1.4 Peat Use

We have aligned our aims with the UK Biodiversity Action Plan, whose objectives are to be 90% or more peat-free. Working in partnership with our horticultural suppliers, we aim to source suitable, well managed renewable alternatives to peat which also have a low carbon impact. We aim to reduce the use of peat in plant products whenever possible by using acceptable alternatives and minimising the volume wherever peat is used.

5.1.5 Waste Minimisation

We make prudent use of natural resources. A green waste storage and disposal area has been created on site, where wood chip, timber, brash and cuttings are stored for composting and reused within the park or other green spaces across the town. Cut timber and brash is stored and chipped for horticultural use.

On-site composting at Ashton Depot has reduced the amount of material entering the waste stream and has allowed for considerable savings in buying-in mulch and soil improvers.

The compost bays currently produce around 20 tonnes of good quality compost per annum. Each tonne of compost has a value of approx. £50. Green waste in landfill generates the "greenhouse gas" Methane (CH₄). The recycled green waste from Ashton Depot is used on the park to improve soil structure, nutrient and moisture retention.

All the turf scalping's from path edges and turfing work in Ashton Gardens are processed at the Depot. This material cannot be added to a "hot composting" operation, (as the inert material content of the turf acts as a heat damper in the compost heap). However, handled separately this material eventually produces a friable sandy loam. We add spent compost from hanging baskets and bedding troughs to improve moisture and nutrient retention in the final product. Current production is around 20 tonnes per annum.

Leaf Mould

The annual leaf fall in Ashton Gardens is around 30 tonnes. Much of the bulk in our leaf pile and around one third of weight is lost as the leaves break down. We add some of the "fresher" leaves to the compost heap when other "brown" material is scarce. Producing leaf mould takes about 18-24 months, so we have a "production line" where we add newly gathered leaves at one end and collect the finished leaf mould at the other end 2 years later. This is a recent venture, and we expect to have our first results in the early months of 2024.

The original groundwater supply to Ashton Gardens and Depot was restored 10 years ago and expanded to include the nursery facility. The water features in the park are supplied throughout the year from a well under the Depot. In the warmer months we use this water on the beds and borders in the Gardens and the town centre. 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 Ashton Gardens, Depot and St. Annes centre now have a greener footprint.

Plastic

We make an effort to apply "the rule of 3 R's".

To reduce our use of plastic in the nursery we are using bio-degradable pots. These are made from paper waste and work well with younger plants that have a quick turnaround.

To re-use plastic, we do not throw away any pots or trays until they are no longer fit to use.

To recycle we opt to buy plastic that is coloured grey and can be picked mechanically from a waste picking line. We send plant trays back to our bedding supplier, (who is also happy to take any other pots and trays we have in excess).

5.1.6 Climate Change Adoption Strategies

Carbon reduction and climate change strategies are included on the Council's Corporate Plan. Some of the ambitions and actions from the plan are:

Ambition

- Reduce the use of plastics & increase recycling
- Implement energy efficient initiatives

Actions

- Implement carbon reduction policies including; plastics reduction, tree planting, energy efficiency and recycling

- Design education and awareness programmes to support carbon reduction policies and actions
- Work with partners to deliver the carbon reduction policy actions i.e. reduce, re-use, recycle, tree planting
- Explore opportunities to introduce electric car charging points.

Fylde Council is committed to achieving its net zero target of greenhouse gas emissions. As part of this commitment, we have:

- Installed motion-sensor LED lighting within the Council's Town Hall buildings along with new double-glazing and insulation for energy efficiency.
- Stopped ordering Single Use Plastic items and introduced office recycling bins across all of our council buildings.
- Introduced a Cycle to Work scheme and installed new bike facilities at the Town Hall.
- Working on an action plan to bring down all greenhouse gas emissions from within our council operations.
- Expanded on the types of plastics that can be recycled from homes and provided a new wheeled bin to increase household recycling capacity.
- Introduced a ban on the release of sky lanterns and helium balloons on council land to reduce plastic waste locally.
- Installing electric vehicle rapid charging points for taxi drivers and residents to use
- Delivered ongoing home energy efficiency measures and advice to residents in Fylde.
- Worked with partners to continue to implement flood prevention schemes across Fylde, including the new sea defences at Lytham, Fairhaven and St Annes
- Engaged with Love My Beach, schools, local volunteers and other community groups through the Fylde Litter Action Group (FLAG) initiative on projects to improve their local environment in a sustainable way.
- Working on a strategy on how we can reduce emissions from external sources across the Fylde area.

5.1.7 Electric Vehicles and Machinery

The Council has a fleet replacement programme. As the smaller vans become due for replacement the Council will look to replace these with electric models. There is currently only a small budget held for these replacements so further funding needs to be sought to continue this.

The Parks team trialled a variety of electric hand machines and mowers throughout the 2023 season. It was concluded from these trials that the hedge cutters and strimmers were the best performing and most cost effective. The team are looking to introduce more of these hand machines on a phased approach based on budget resources.

The teams ensure that all new fleet and machinery, including petrol ones meet new 'greener' EU legislation.

Biodiversity, Landscape & Heritage



6.1 MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL FEATURES, WILD FLORA AND FAUNA

A formal, urban park of this scale may appear a poor ecological replacement for natural countryside. Nevertheless, over the passage of time the park's landscape including lake, shrubs, woodland and meadow areas have softened and matured, providing home for a variety of flora and fauna. These habitats have been enhanced by changes in park design and maintenance including differential mowing, introduction of wildlife friendly perennial plants and tree planting of native species.

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.

The rock and water gardens are a major feature and provide habitat for a variety of waterfowl and shelter for small creatures such as frogs, toads, newts, hunting spiders and bees.

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.

6.2 CONSERVATION OF LANDSCAPE FEATURES, BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

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

The site is located within a Conservation Area, which covers St Annes Town Centre and some of the surrounding area, as shown on the link below.

[Porrit-Houses.pdf \(fylde.gov.uk\)](#)

Conservation Area status gives the council additional powers to ensure any proposed development is in keeping with existing styles and the character of the area. Any new structures or significant changes within the garden must first be discussed with the council's planning team and may require planning permission.

Park buildings, large structures, lighting and infrastructure are under the management and maintenance direction of the Council's Technical Services. The team carry out a full conditional survey on all buildings and structures every five years, with lighter triennial inspections carried out. The condition survey reports on internal and external fittings and fixtures, roofs, floors, stairs and ceilings, sanitary services and external areas. The findings are recorded and a report drafted. Any actions are graded and works are carried out on a priority basis. Mechanical and electrical services are visually inspected, if any faults or concerns are found these are reported to the relevant contractor for further investigation.

Features of particular conservation importance include:

6.2.1 Ashton Institute (now known as the Pavilion Café)

Between 1914 and 1916 The Ashton Institute was described as "A games pavilion, equipped with billiard table and veranda 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.

6.2.2 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 1 and later conflicts. The memorial was restored as part of the HLF refurbishment programme.

The War Memorial is Grade II listed, which gives it protection for future generations. A condition survey is carried out on the War Memorial by the Council's Technical Services team. The survey provides a systematic and uniform basis of identifying necessary works. The survey covers a period of five years and is updated annually with a lighter inspection.

The condition survey inspection reports on the following:

- Floors and stairs
- Re-decorations
- Fixed furniture and fittings
- External areas such as paths and walkways

The War Memorial is cleaned and polished annually prior to Remembrance Sunday.

6.2.3 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 Friends of Ashton Gardens secured a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to fully restore the Monument.

6.2.4 Bowling Pavilions

The Gents Bowling 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 Bowling Pavilion to have the same veranda 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 Bowling Pavilion was set centrally to the green. This required the removal of the Ladies Bowling Pavilion and the two were combined into an extended Gents Bowling Pavilion. The veranda was restored and despite the written evidence, the 1934 photograph indicated a plain clay roof tile.

The Gents Bowling 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 enhanced the setting of the Bowls Pavilion.

6.2.5 Gate Lodges

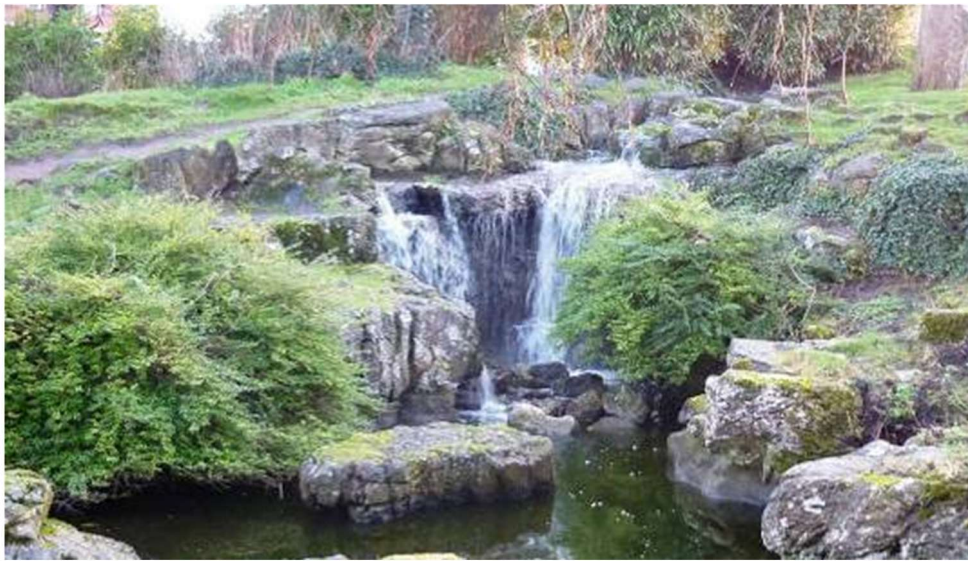
It seems that these two buildings were the original lodges for the St George's Gardens, and they are probably the same buildings that are shown on the 1893 map, and each version in sequence. They are typical late 19th Century villas, and they have obviously been subject to a series of ad-hoc alterations.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

6.2.6 Entrance Gates, Piers and Railings

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

The gates and railings are surveyed and repainted annually.

6.2.7 Rock & Water Garden



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.

6.2.8 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:

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

Community Involvement

7.1 FRIENDS OF ASHTON GARDENS

7.1.1 General

Friends of Ashton Gardens 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 'Friends of Ashton Gardens' and turned to fund raising for improvements in the gardens. The group 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.

The group 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.



7.1.2 Aims

The aims of Friends of Ashton Gardens 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 the group and its activities.

Access to the 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 contributes 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. They have also won the category for 'Best Large Coastal Resort' for four consecutive years. 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

The Parks Development Officer is the main point of contact between the Council and the St Annes on Sea In-Bloom group. They have regular meetings to provide updates on projects, issues arising and North West in Bloom. This helps to maximise effective use of the group's commitment to and the resources for the site and gives residents the opportunity to raise any concerns around the site.

The group are highly organised and successful in fundraising, using the site to hold their plant sales. This not only promotes the site and raises the profile of St Annes on Sea in Bloom but allows the group to act as one voice for the site users to communicate with the Council.

7.3 VOLUNTEERS

In addition to the Friends of Ashton Gardens and St Annes on Sea in Bloom, Ashton Gardens has several regular volunteers who either come independently to work in the park 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 site-based nursery sowing seeds, taking cuttings and potting on plants.

All the volunteers benefit from learning horticultural skills from Council staff and enjoy helping to improve local parks and green spaces. The park benefits 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 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 several structured volunteer opportunities, one of which will be a Volunteer Ranger Scheme.

7.4 COMMUNITY PAYBACK SERVICES

The Parks & Coastal team are working with the Justice Service to undertake a Community Payback scheme within Ashton Gardens. The team are completing general grounds maintenance tasks such as edging off, pruning, weeding and grass cutting as well as litter picking and painting parks furniture. The scheme will not only assist in the upkeep of the gardens but will benefit the individuals by learning and developing new skills.

7.5 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 tenant is very proactive and holds several events, live music concerts and food fairs in the courtyard area throughout the year. In addition, they provide a community gallery space for schools, charities and local artists with a new artist each month.

7.6 EVENTS AND EDUCATION

Local clubs and societies in St Annes join 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 can enjoy entertainment and a range of stalls offering games, local produce and food. Further details of the Carnival can be found at: [St Annes Carnival is a fun day for all the family - Visit St Annes](#)

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. 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 host a variety of seasonally themed, environmental, family events during school holidays. At Fylde's major urban parks, they offer springtime potting events, summer minibeast hunts, autumnal bat walks, Halloween pumpkin

carving and festival Christmas Wreath workshops, amongst much more. The aim of all of these is to engage families with nature in the local parks.

7.7 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.

Key stakeholders involved with the gardens are:

St. Annes in Bloom
St Annes Town Council
Ashton Gardens Friends Group
Ward Councillors
Pavilion Café Tenants
Justice Service
Lancashire Constabulary
Lancashire Fire and Rescue
Natural England
RSPB
Historic England
The Wildlife Trust
STEP
Ashton Bowling Club

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.

7.8 RESIDENTS SURVEY

The Council undertakes a resident's survey each year. The survey focuses on the main front-end services as well as the residents' experience, perception and knowledge of the Local Authority. The objective is to get an overview of satisfaction

with services and the Council that can be used to identify areas for improvement and allow comparison over time.

The 2023/24 results are shown below:

QUESTIONS <i>(Percentages figures are the percentage satisfied, good and excellent)</i>	2023/24 (807 responses)
How would you rate the refuse collection service at Fylde	97%
How would you rate the household recycling service at Fylde	93%
How would you rate the parks and open spaces in Fylde	94%
How would you rate the cleanliness of the streets in Fylde	75%
Overall, I would rate the Fylde as a place to visit	97%
Overall, I would rate Fylde as a place to live	95%
How would you rate the value for money I receive from Fylde Council	74%
Overall and taking everything into account , would rate Fylde Council	82%

Marketing & Communications

8.1 MARKETING & PROMOTION

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 needs of residents and visitors to the borough.

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 develop and update the dedicated Ashton Gardens page and the Council website including information on:

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



Promotion and marketing of parks and gardens is carried out by means of a range of measures to ensure that local people and visitors to the borough are aware of the facilities.

Marketing Activity	Links	Comment	Frequency
Residents e-newsletters	Sign up to our newsletter – Fylde Council	Local information. Promote events.	Monthly
Websites	www.fylde.gov.uk www.discoverfylde.co.uk www.vistilancashire.com	Local and event information. News and notifications. Promotion.	Daily/Weekly.

	www.greenflagaward.org.uk		
Media/ news outlets		Local and event information. News and notifications. Promotion.	As and when.
Social media	Facebook – Fylde Council Facebook – Fylde Rangers https://twitter.com/fyldecouncil	Information on Fylde Council, events, links to partners websites/social media, news and notifications	Daily
Printed ads		Promoting events, projects.	As and when
Internal communication		Staff intranet, newsletter, briefing sessions.	Daily/ weekly/ monthly

8.2 COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

The Council has an active Communication Strategy, which is reviewed every four years and updated by the Corporate Services team, with involvement from Senior and Middle Management and the Communications Officer.

The main priorities identified within the strategy are:

- To ensure our communications meet the needs of our audience.
- To make information and services more accessible online through a range of communication methods.
- To ensure council services all have the same recognisable, understandable and consistent brand.
- To ensure that our workforce is kept well informed, motivated and engaged helping to understand what the organisation is trying to achieve and their role within it.
- To continue to engage, and develop relationships with key stakeholders including members, partners and third sector organisations.

The progress on delivering the actions in this strategy is monitored through regular meetings with the lead member for communications as well as continuous reviews of communications.

Evaluation is essential to monitoring success, return on investment and continuous learning; the Council will therefore agree measurements prior to the start of any specific campaign, and provide monthly visitor statistics for digital channels.

The Communication Strategy fits in to the Corporate Plan under the Efficiency theme – to offer Value for Money. Each year the Council reviews and produces key performance indicators for each service area which relates to the Corporate Plan priorities. Aims are set with a target figure which should be met within the next 12 months. The latest set of figures for social media presence and communication show that each aim has exceeded the target set. A few examples are show below:

Aim	Target Date	Target Figure	Actual Figure
Total no. of Facebook reach	Sep 2023	120,000	179,421
Total no. of Twitter followers	Sep 2023	11,000	12,216

No. of news releases, statements & letters issued	Sep 2023	42	43
No. of unique hits on the website	Sep 2023	150,000	159,451

The following outcomes have been achieved under the Corporate Plan priorities:

- Developed innovative ways of using signage, including advertising, use of digital screens to communicate with customers.
- Provided access to council services through all possible means with particular focus on the most vulnerable.

8.3 COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

The Communications Team comprises of Communications, Press, Social Media and Digital Officers. With support from the ICT and Corporate Team they lead on marketing and communication across all Council Services. They are responsible for:

- Media Relations
- Corporate Communication, including internal communications
- Corporate Events
- Campaign planning and management of products, services or issues

The Communications Team liaises closely with the emergency services, council officers and members to organise press conferences, official statements, interviews and supervised visits to other locations, ensuring that advice and information is disseminated to assist the public.

The Tourism team ensures that parks and events are promoted through a variety of media; the events are promoted using the website, community groups, local press and internally within the council. Information boards provide park users with general information regarding specific sites.

8.4 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 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. The Council is also proactive in allocating annual capital funding to be invested in medium to large scale projects which benefit the park. These are approved via the Council's Committee reporting procedure.

Five Year Management Action Plan

Proposals/Actions	Responsible Team	Target Date	Progress
A Welcoming Park			
Develop ideas for plant identification labels	Parks & Coastal	2024-25	To be completed
Develop ideas for information signs detailing garden areas, Lord Ashton, Pulham & Sons	Parks & Coastal	2024-25	To be completed
Enforcement of dog control orders	Environmental Enforcement	Ongoing	Ongoing
Healthy, Safe & Secure			
Remove log climbing structure from play area, install new timber play equipment and top up sand base	Parks & Coastal	Mar 2023	Complete
Implement new upgraded CCTV system	Procurement & Surveillance	Mar – Apr 2024	To be completed
Well Maintained & Clean			
Design & implement new perennial planting for main drive beds	Parks & Coastal	November 2023	Complete
Plan and replant Sunken Garden outer border	Parks & Coastal	Mar- Oct 2024	To be completed
Gap up outer borders of rose garden with shrub roses	Parks & Coastal	Feb 2023	Complete
Remove lavender from top borders in rose garden and replant with Nepeta Walkers Low	Parks & Coastal	Feb 2023	Complete
Dredge and de silt the lake and re fill	Parks & Coastal	Dec 23– Jan 24	In progress
Environmental Management			
Continue to reduce reliance on chemical use by using alternative maintenance methods	Parks & Coastal	Ongoing	Ongoing
Adhere to environmental policy at all times	Parks & Coastal	Ongoing	Ongoing

Develop climate change action plan	Corporate Services	Mar 2023 – Apr 2025	In progress
Carry out large scale tree planting project	Parks & Coastal	Mar 2024	To be completed
Trial electric hand machinery and mowers	Parks & Coastal	Mar – Sep 2023	Complete
Investigate infrastructure requirements to support large scale electric fleet service	Fleet & Waste Management	2024 – 2026	In progress
Phased introduction of electric hand machines	Parks & Coastal	Ongoing	Ongoing
Make and install bird boxes	Parks & Coastal	Mar 2024	In progress
Create wildflower areas	Parks & Coastal	Oct 2024	To be completed
Develop idea for community orchard	Parks & Coastal	January 24 – Mar 25	To be completed
Biodiversity, Landscape & Heritage			
Refurbish Japanese garden	Parks & Coastal	Mar 2024 – March 2025	To be completed
Continue to reduce the amount of annual bedding plants and increase in perennial planting schemes	Parks & Coastal	Ongoing	Ongoing
Continue to propagate Lyme and Marram grasses for the Sand Dune project team	Parks & Coastal	Ongoing	Ongoing
Remove raised beds in nursery area	Parks & Coastal	Jan – Mar 2024	To be completed
Carry out Wildlife Survey to be completed by Ranger Service	Parks & Coastal	Sep 2024	To be completed
Carry out naturalised bulb planting (8,000)	Parks & Coastal	Oct 2023	Complete
Community Involvement			
Deliver Outdoor Education Packs to help develop links with local schools	Parks & Coastal	Ongoing	Ongoing
Support & facilitate corporate wide and stakeholder events	Parks & Coastal	Ongoing	Ongoing
Form partnership with external groups to deliver ongoing engagement and support sessions	Tourism & Leisure	Ongoing	Ongoing
Carry out tree planting with Rangers & community/school groups	Parks & Coastal	Mar 2023	Complete

Involve Justice Service in the use of Community Payback teams to assist in park maintenance	Parks & Coastal	Ongoing	Ongoing
Assist in the installation of armillary sculpture in sunken garden	Parks & Coastal	May 2023	Complete
Prepare and launch volunteer ranger service	Parks & Coastal	Mar 24 – Mar 25	To be completed
Evaluate and update Ranger Events schedule	Parks & Coastal	Feb – Mar 2024	To be completed
Marketing & Communication			
Update Council website & social media regularly	Communications Team	Ongoing	Ongoing
Advertise the gardens in Fylde mini guide & local tourist publications	Tourism & Leisure	Ongoing	Ongoing
Management			
Carry out commemorative bench scheme review & explore other commemorative options	Parks & Coastal	March 2025	In progress
Update Corporate Plan Actions	Corporate Services	2024 – 2025	In progress
Prepare & submit capital bid for Path Improvements to secure £60,000 for removal of crazy paving and re tarmacking round bowling greens & skate park	Parks & Coastal	Nov 2023	Complete
Project manage £34,000 tree planting project	Parks & Coastal	Oct 2023 - Mar 2024	In progress

Appendices

APPENDIX 1 EXAMPLE TASK SHEETS

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)					
BD30 Bedding-Hand Weed / Hoe	MT	[1]	x4	566.00 m2	W1 W2 W3 W4
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)					
BD30 Bedding-Hand Weed / Hoe	MT	[1]	x4	566.00 m2	W1 W2 W3 W4
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	

Tick Completed

[illegible][illegible]

Appendix 2 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: Development Services	Date of Assessment 1 st April 2023
Section: Parks	Assessment Team Gail Isbister and Mick Sumner
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.....L. Foden

Signature.....



Action Plan Review Date.....1st April 2024.....

APPENDIX 3 FRIENDS 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 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:

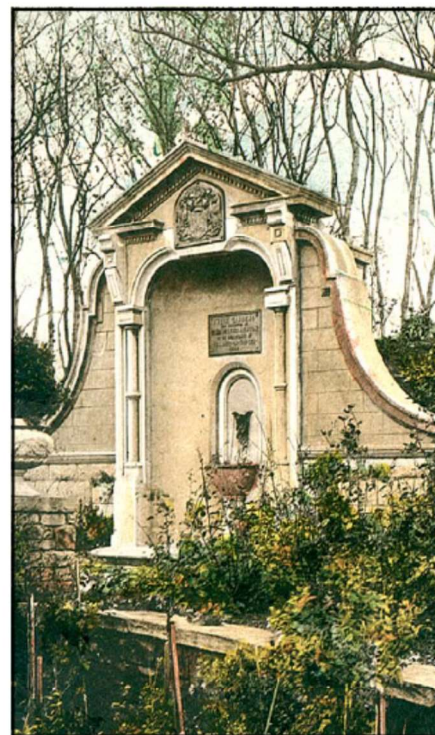
secretary@ashtongardens.org.uk

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)



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

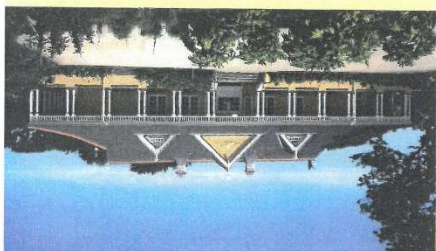
The layout of the entrances give a sense of a grandness and significance to the park and these have been greatly improved.

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 Rose Garden has recently been restored to its original design including the reinstatement of the trellis around both sides of the entrance gates. The centre piece in the restored gardens is the newly sited and fully restored Ashton Institute Building. Complimenting this is the reinstatement of the perimeter railings and refurbishment of the garden. The rose beds have been replanted using new and existing roses and lawn edges reinstated around each bed. 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 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.

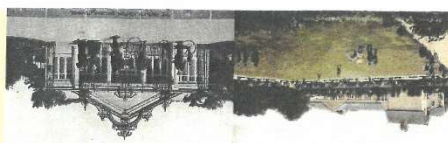
THE RESTORATION OF THE GARDENS



THE SUPPORTERS OF ASHTON GARDENS

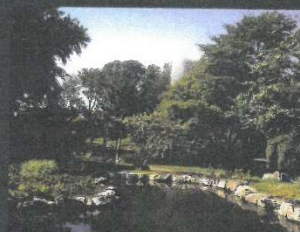
The Supporters of Ashton Gardens are a voluntary group who aim to work in conjunction with the local authority to maintain and improve the gardens. With Lottery funding we have restored the monument (above) to Lord Ashton, our benefactor. Our plans for the future include getting the ornamental overthrows 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.

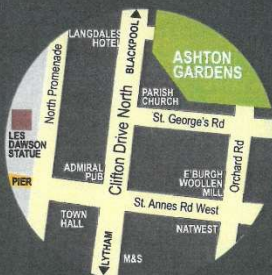


Ashton Gardens is a fine example of an early twentieth century display garden and demonstrates a range of garden styles promoted by the leading designers of the day. Originally established by the St Annes Land and Building Company in 1874, the gardens were formally known as St George's Gardens. The Gardens 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.

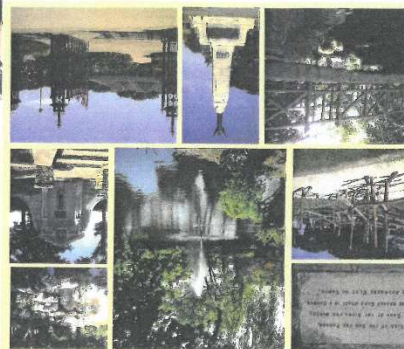
THE STORY OF THE GARDENS



ASHTON GARDENS



www.fylde.gov.uk



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. English Heritage's Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest and holds the prestigious Green Flag status, only achieved by the best parks and open spaces.



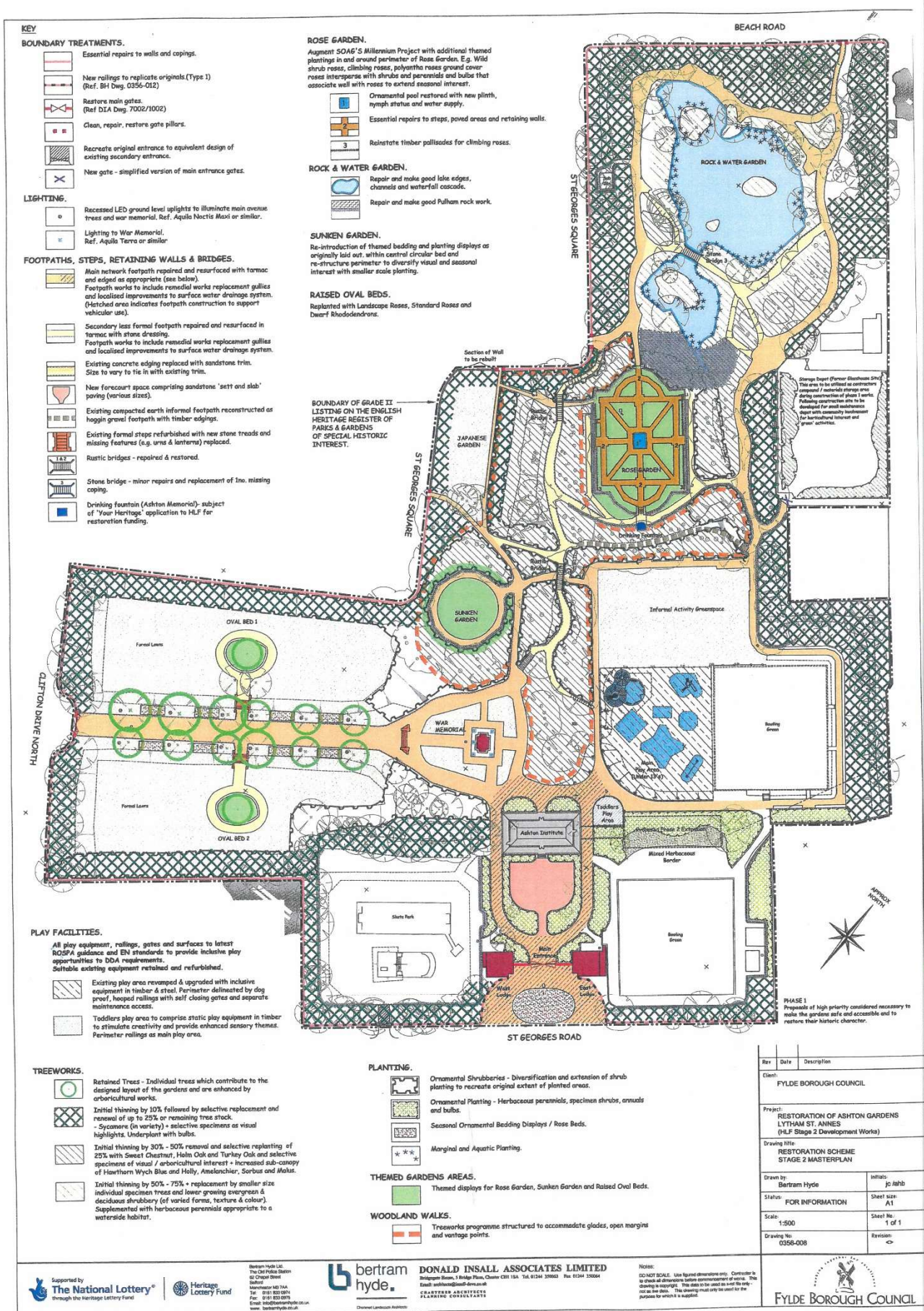
ASHTON GARDENS



ASHTON GARDENS



APPENDIX 5 – MASTER PLAN



APPENDIX 6. SITE LOCATION OF ASHTON GARDENS

