

Lowther Gardens



Management & Maintenance Plan 2024 - 2029

LOWTHER GARDENS MANAGEMENT PLAN 2024 - 2029

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Foreword

The Borough of Fylde is situated on the Lancashire coast and is a major tourism destination attracting some 3 million visitors per year. Parks and open spaces are a fundamental part of the fabric of the Fylde. Our parks provide attractions for visitors from local, urban and rural areas, and are also important at local level for tourism.

Lowther Gardens is one of the borough's major parks and is situated adjacent to Lytham Green in the centre of Lytham. It is owned and managed by the Lowther Trust and maintained by Fylde Council under a Service Level Agreement (SLA).

The site comprises of mature gardens and contains an excellent range of recreational facilities for all age ranges. The gardens are an example of horticultural excellence and are maintained to an incredibly high standard.

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

In 2003, the site gained its first Green Flag Award, a first for the borough and has retained this status since. The Trust, together with its partners, are committed to continuously improving the services and facilities offered. Essential to this aim is engaging the community to understand their needs and desires and increase community involvement.

In order to focus resources and agree priorities the management plan has been developed to set out a comprehensive 5-year. It acknowledges previous studies and pulls together these and current issues and the priorities arising from community consultation.

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 5-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.

Cllr Karen Buckley
Leader of the Council

Tim Lince
Lowther Trust Chairman

Criteria	Strengths	Recommendations	Responses
Presentation	The plan is well presented and written in an easy to follow style with aims, aspirations and targets well defined. The management mechanisms within the plan are appropriate for the site and are well thought out and presented in a logical fashion.	Remember that the document is a 'live' one and should continuously be updated as the site develops and modernises eg. to accommodate the new mini golf course.	The plan is kept up to date with developments and actions.
Health, Safety & Security	The details within this section are sound and fulfil the requirements of the plan and site.	None	
Maintenance of equipment, buildings & landscape	The maintenance strategies outlined in the plan are appropriate for the site and provide the reader with a useful 'how to' guide for managing the gardens. There are a good number of volunteers and rangers working in the park who will benefit from this section of the plan.	The park is going through a series of updates in terms of the layout and content, so the plan should be updated to reflect them.	The plan is kept up to date with developments and actions.
Litter, cleanliness & vandalism	Describes the processes and reasoning for the management of litter on site. The gardens do not suffer from significant levels of vandalism, so there is no requirement for excessive weighting to this in the plan.	None	
Environmental Management	The policies in the plan apply to many sites across Fylde and serve to provide a coordinated approach.	Feedback in previous forms suggest rainwater harvesting which would be good to see implemented to provide water for planting.	Suitable locations for rainwater harvesting will be looked into.

Biodiversity, Landscape & Heritage	Whilst the site does not lend itself to a biodiversity orientated approach due to it's location and formal setting, the parks individual aspects are described well and their management is well matched. This is a historical park and the community is well involved, which is reflected in the plan.	Ensure the plan is updated to reflect the changing aspects of the park as well as the thinking and strategies behind them.	The plan is kept up to date with developments and actions.
Community Involvement	There is heavy involvement from the local community due to the parks heritage and longstanding presence. The community take ownership of various aspects eg. the herbaceous borders or apothecary garden.	None	
Marketing & Communication	The gardens are well advertised via the pavilion and the events that take place there. The gardens are well known in the region and it is likely that local people actively access the marketing material.	Ongoing social media presence to ensure the widest possible audience is attained.	Social media is used to promote activities and events across Council and Lowther Trust channels.
Overall Management	The plan is a very useful document offering practical management for the site. It is set out well and looks to forward plan for the gardens. Some sections are generic to Fylde Borough Council management plans, but they serve the sites well and in most cases, provide coordinated thinking and actions.	Ensure the plan is constantly updated to keep up with the changing facilities and features on site.	The plan is kept up to date with developments and actions

Field Assessment

Criteria	Strengths	Recommendations	Responses
A Welcoming Place	The gardens are located in a pleasant setting and is easy to find, despite the lack of signage in the approach. The car park has a slightly uncoordinated feel to it but this is due to be resolved during the redevelopment of the pavilion / theatre.	Improve the signage in the approach to the gardens with finger signage.	Signage will be included in the final masterplan.
Healthy, Safe & Secure	The gardens offer a feeling of good levels of safety. The vistas across the gardens are largely uninterrupted, which provide access to entrances / exits. There doesn't appear to be any CCTV on site, although there is a very regular presence on site by park staff.	None	
Well Maintained & Clean	The park is very well maintained and is under continuous upgrade / improvement works, including footpaths. There are several fairly aspirations projects underway (mini golf course) and planned (upgrade of the rose garden) and each have been well thought out and planned.	Ensure that adequate resources are in place to accommodate the future aspirations of the gardens to make sure there is no drop in standards.	Resources and planned works are managed and monitored in line with the Councils budget forecasts.
Environmental Management	Standard practices across Fylde are in place. There is an area of the gardens designated for green waste storage.	None	
Biodiversity, Landscape & Management	The gardens are largely formal and the intention is to continue to reflect this whilst allowing a blend of traditional planting and more modern features. The heritage of the gardens is very important to the staff and community and should continue to be celebrated.	The landscape in the gardens is very busy and there is a lot to take in and subsequently manage. make sure the task doesn't become too big and the reliance on volunteers isn't too great.	Resources and planned works are managed and monitored to ensure the high standards can be maintained at all times.
Community Involvement	There is a high level of community involvement in the gardens due to the heritage of the site and the fact that there is room to enable the community to take ownership of different areas and take them forward.	None	

Marketing & Communication	Marketing and communication is handled mainly within the café and theatre buildings. There are attempts being made to reach a wider audience via social media and this is ongoing.	None	
Management	The gardens are very well managed by a committed and well trained group of staff members, supplemented by a well rounded group of volunteers. The gardens are clearly high on the agenda for the council and forward planning is an ongoing process.		

Introduction

1.1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The partners Lowther Trust and Fylde Council acknowledge the essential contributions to this management plan from:

- Lytham in Bloom
- Lytham Heritage Group
- Tourism & Leisure Services
- Community Safety Partnership Officers
- Risk Management and Insurance Officer
- Technical Services

Thank you for your valuable contributions to the management plan.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

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

This management plan seeks to:

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

1.3 RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PLAN

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 Site Description

Lowther Gardens is a municipal park, located within Lytham St. Annes on the South Western part of the Fylde peninsula, Lancashire.

The gardens are situated adjacent to the Western part of Lytham Green, which borders the Ribble Estuary Ramsar/ SSSI. The gardens are surrounded on the East and West side by residential homes and to the North by the Lytham Cricket Club. Lytham St. Annes is one of the North West's most picturesque holiday resorts. Its public open spaces play a major part in the town's popularity with residents and visitors.

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

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

1.4.2 Location

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

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

Grid Reference (at centre of site)

OS National Grid Reference: SD 496 305 GB Grid
Nation Grid Reference: 350313, 431916

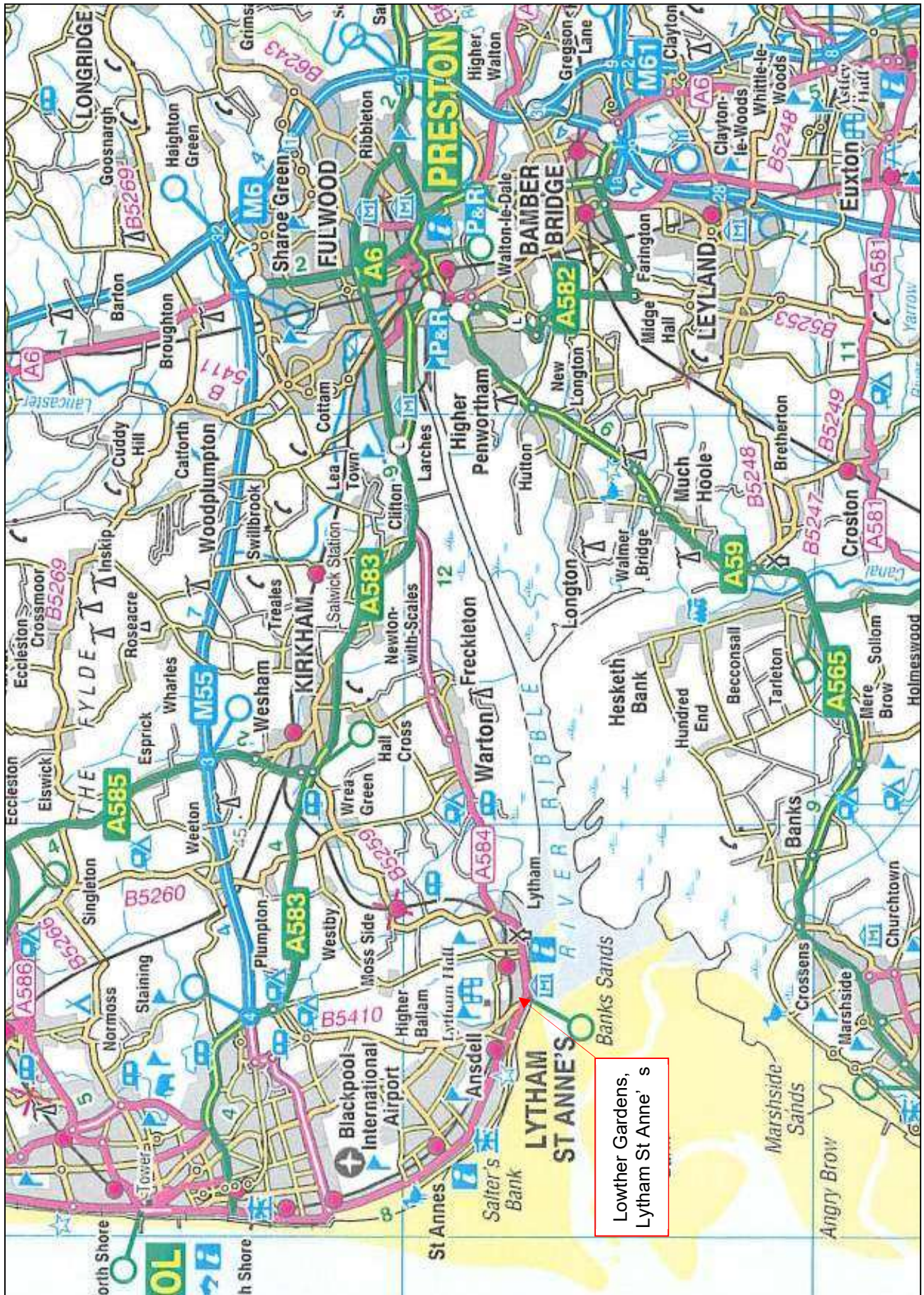
Area

Acres: 12.5

Hectares: 5.1



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



Lowther Gardens,
Lytham St Anne's

1.4.3 Lowther in its Borough Context

Lowther Gardens is one of the four main strategic parks within Fylde. Along with Fairhaven Lake, it is one of the two main strategic parks in Lytham.

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. coastline, which has a number of important ecological designations including the Ribble Estuary Ramsar/ SSSI and Fylde Sand Dunes LNR/ SSSI

1.4.4 Summary of Attractions and Facilities

The park offers the following attractions and facilities:

- Formal gardens
- Woodland walks
- Floral clock
- Play area
- Café
- Pavilion theatre
- Putting
- Bowling
- Padel tennis
- Picnic areas
- Sharmen shelter
- Public toilets
- Public parking

1.5 HISTORY OF THE SITE

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



The gardens were conveyed to the Council in 1905 and transferred to Lowther Trust in 2012, and the Ordnance Survey Map of 1908 illustrates the layout. Most of the original design has been retained with the addition of the first pavilion in 1922, new entrances and car parking in 1936 and construction of the aviary dates back to 1934. The pavilion was replaced in 1981. The bowling greens, sports pavilion, tennis courts, play area and toilets have all been added, date unknown. More recently, the bowling greens have been upgraded and an irrigation system installed. The rose bed between the rose garden and the pitch and putt, was replaced with an herbaceous border in 1999, and the rose garden was re-planted in 2002 with 1100 roses, in beds

sponsored and named with a pictorial plaque. The rose garden has undergone further improvements with a number of rose beds being replanted and restocked.

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

1.6 LEGAL AND ESTATE MATTERS

The ownership of Lowther Gardens was transferred from Fylde Council to the Lowther Trust in 2012. The Trust have managerial responsibility for the gardens and Pavilion Theatre. The Trust has a well-established board of Trustees made up of Fylde Council and Lowther Trust staff as well as members of the local community. The Council and Lowther Trust meet on a quarterly basis to discuss theatre and park management matters, agree any actions required and share information.

The Café is leased from Lowther Trustees to a private tenant for a term of 15 years. The current lease is due to expire 23rd April 2030.

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
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	<u>Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000</u>	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	<u>Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005</u>	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	<u>Land Drainage Act 1991</u>	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	<u>Public Health Act 1961</u>	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	<u>ASB, Crime and Policing Act 2014</u>	Provides powers to the police and Councils to undertake appropriate action against nuisance behaviours.
Local Government Act 1972	<u>Local Government Act 1972</u>	Defines the procedures, structures, duties and geographies of English and Welsh councils.
Building Act 1984	<u>Building Act 1984</u>	Statutory framework for the construction process, and the design and specifications for

		buildings and their component parts.
Building Regulations 2010	<u>The Building Regulations 2010</u>	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	<u>Health and Safety at Work Act 1974</u>	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	<u>Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999</u>	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 EDUCATIONAL VALUE

The Lowther Trust and Fylde Council work collaboratively to promote the park's cultural and educational value. 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 promote and encourages wider use of the park.

The Lowther Trust have their own events and theatre programme which promotes and utilises both indoor and outdoor space. The theatre has a proud history of serving the Fylde Coast and surrounding areas as a cultural hub of community entertainment.

The 450 seated/ 900 standing capacity venue provides a wide and diverse range of events from tea dances, to international live music, drama, comedy and children's shows as well as world class dance, ballet and musical theatre.

Events such as Easter Fairs, Halloween Fairs, Christmas Fairs and outdoor shows draw a high level of visitors and bring a great deal of fun and enjoyment.

1.8 SPORT & LEISURE VALUE

The purpose of the park is very much about informal recreation, recreating how the park would have been used when it was originally conceived, strolling, taking in the views and vistas and decorative planting. It also tries to balance the needs of modern-day users and includes bowls, tennis, a children's playground and picnic areas.

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



The Parks & Coastal team updated the old putting green and 9-hole crazy golf course and installed a new 18-hole crazy golf attraction in the gardens. The course uses the footprint of the old crazy golf and extends over unused space in the gardens. The new holes have been mounded and raised to create a 3D look and makes the course more exciting and fun. The facility opened last year and is proving popular with visitors.

The Lowther Trust commissioned works to improve the tennis courts, which were heavily under used. Works included resurfacing, new flood lights and a booking kiosk. In partnership with Padel Project UK, the Trust helped to deliver the first padel tennis court facility in the North West. The courts comprise of two floodlit padel tennis courts, a floodlit tennis court and a mini tennis/contact tennis court. The Trust work with a local developer who delivers racket sport activities at Lowther Gardens. The courts are a pay and play facility that are available to anyone.

The Trust and Padel Project UK have submitted plans to expand the centre by building a further two courts on site,

The children's play area is well used and has a mix of toddler and junior equipment. The Council has invested £14,000 in the playground surfacing and further investment to the value of £80,000 is planned for 2023/2024 to improve the equipment provision on site.

1.9 DEMOGRAPHICS

An essential reference for compiling this management plan is the demographic information for the local area around Lytham and the wider community of Fylde. This information has assisted the authors in determining current and potential future community needs in conjunction with the consultation. Below is a link to the research, which details the information for Fylde borough.

[Demographic dashboard - Lancashire County Council](#)

1.10 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.

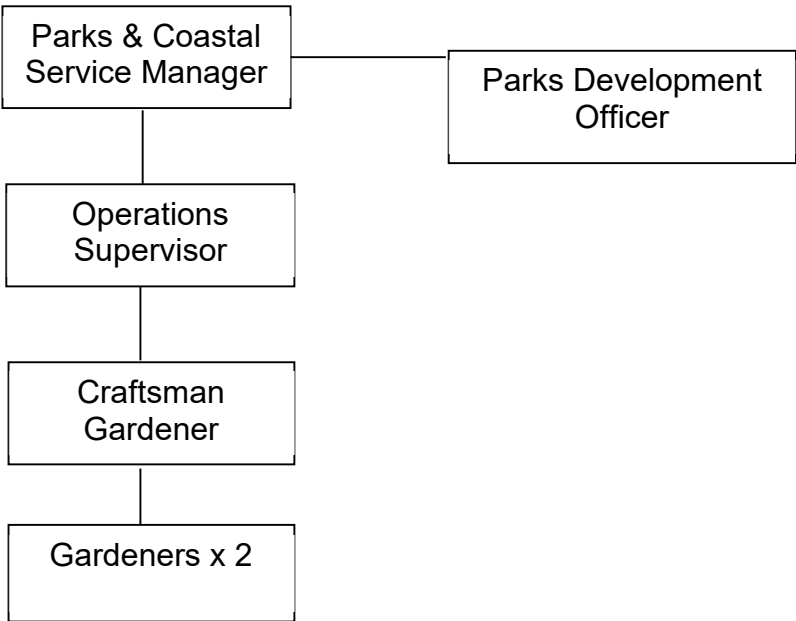
1.11 SERVICE STRUCTURE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Lowther Gardens is owned and managed by the Lowther Trust and maintained by Fylde Council under a Service Level Agreement. The Lowther Trust is a registered charity and has a board of Trustees who meet on a monthly basis. They are responsible for setting the strategy and policies of the trust and support the Chief Executive and staff. The Management team have overall responsibility for Lowther Gardens and are the main points of contact between the Trust and the Council.

Meetings are held quarterly by the Lowther Trust Chairman, Parks & Coastal Services Manager and Tourism & Leisure Manager to monitor and drive the delivery of the SLA. The Council also holds the operational budget for landscape maintenance, building, infrastructure and path maintenance. The Trust and Council work together to fund any large-scale capital improvements. For all intent purposes the Parks & Coastal Service take full responsibility for the day-to-day management of the site.

Parks and Coastal Services 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.

Lowther Gardens Staff:



Lowther 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 – and through quarterly meetings with the Lowther Trust.

The gardening staff and their supervisor are expected to have appropriate levels of horticultural experience and recognised qualifications. 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 Senior Arborist 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 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.

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. The theatre building is maintained and managed by Lowther Trust.

1.11.1 Staff Training and Appraisals

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

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

Parks & Coastal Service have developed staff training plans which lists both mandatory and task-based training for each individual member of the team, to ensure that the team skill base is kept relevant and up to date as well as to allow personal growth within the organisation. Training includes but is not exclusive to corporate procedures and policies (iPool), IT, manual handling, health and safety, driving, operating machines and project management.

1.12 LOWTHER TRUST

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

The aims of the Trust are to:

- Increase the awareness of the park and gardens.
- Increase the use of the pavilion and gardens.
- Implement a culturally diverse mix of programming that celebrates our local societies, schools and community groups whilst providing first class professional work for locals and tourists alike.
- The Trust's plans are to place the Lowther Pavilion and Gardens firmly at the centre of the community and thus give a greatly increased cultural offer to all and to use and develop the space more effectively.

The services the Trust want to continue to provide are:

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

- The promotion of the performing arts in Fylde, supporting and developing local amateur groups, volunteers and the wider community.

1.13 AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH OF GARDENS



1.14 PICTORIAL PLAN OF THE SITE



The following attractions in the gardens are:

- A. Children's playground
- B. Pavilion Theatre
- C. Putting
- D. Padel tennis courts
- E. Crown green bowling
- F. Café
- G. Formal pond and water feature
- H. Rose garden
- I. Mosaic clock
- J. Herbaceous border
- K. Sharmen shelter
- L. Car parking
- M. Public toilets

Welcoming Park



2.1 WELCOMING

The physical appearance of Lowther Gardens is very welcoming. A wide border of mature trees lace the park's boundary, drawing the eye into the site and providing an attractive vista for pedestrians and commuters travelling along the adjacent road and promenade network.

The park is secured by an attractive and low-rise pebble clad wall, in keeping with the surrounding Conservation Area and adjacent Lytham Hall Estate. The park has several entrances, which are marked by attractive, ornamental archways depicting the park's name, affixed to metal piers. The most impressive being those situated at the main entrances, giving the park a sense of grandeur and arrival. The landscape around all entrances is attractive and inviting, marked by a variety of herbaceous borders, shrubs and trees.

2.2 GOOD AND SAFE ACCESS

The site is situated in a highly accessible location, situated close to Lytham Town Centre, Lytham Hall and the infamous Lytham Green. It has its own public car park and is easily accessible for both visitors and local residents. All facilities are easily accessible to all including disabled users. The entrance to Lowther Pavilion is ramped for wheelchair and pushchair access.

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

Public footpaths are in a good state of repair following an annual capital refurbishment programme. Over £60,000 has been invested in resurfacing works. Further capital works are due for completion during 2023- 2024.

2.3 SIGNAGE

The park has an appropriate suite of signs which are clear, informative and educational, as well as suitable for the period style of the site. All signs are checked by the gardeners and cleaned/ descaled as and when needed. Lowther Pavilion also manage entrance notice boards which advertise annual events, shows and concerts.

2.4 EQUAL ACCESS FOR ALL

All entrances to the gardens are wide, flat and well maintained to allow good access for people with pushchairs and wheelchairs. Car parking is available on site from the West Beach entrance with provision for disabled parking. A Lowther Trust decision was made to make the car park a 'pay and display' to generate a small income for the management of the site. Bus stops serve the gardens with stops on West Beach and Church Road. Information about the site is well publicised online – the site is advertised on the Council's website and Lowther Pavilion social media pages.

2.5 COMMEMORATIVE BENCH SCHEME

Lowther Trust administer the commemorative bench scheme within the gardens, along with some alternative commemorative schemes. Details can be found at the Lowther Pavilion website:

[Support Us at The Lowther Pavilion - Lowther Pavilion](#)



Healthy, Safe & Secure



3.1 General Health and Safety

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

Copies of the manual are available to staff at all major offices and depots. The folders contain Risk Assessments, COSHH, Safe Systems of Work and booklets, HSE leaflets etc. Example risk assessments are given in the appendices.

3.1.1 Risk Assessments

There are a number of steps taken to ensure that the Council has an effective and consistent approach to health and safety and risk assessment across all of the parks and green spaces and Lowther Gardens in partnership with Lowther Trust.

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

Event organisers are required to complete the generic risk assessment form, before and during the event in question. The initial form is submitted to the Parks Operational Supervisor.

3.1.2 Staff (general)

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

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

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

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

Parks & Coastal Services has a policy to protect the hearing of workers exposed to high noise levels. Grounds maintenance machinery can reach high noise

levels which cannot be screened out. There are control measures that we employ to protect workers as far as possible.

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

3.1.3 Depots

A first aid box is supplied and kept in the mess room. The craftsman gardener is fully trained to use the kit and is the responsible person for the use and maintenance of it. This can also be used by other site users if necessary.

Accident/ incident forms are available in the mess room. The person affected by the accident/incident completes the form, where possible. Failing this, the craftsman gardener will complete the form and forward to the operational supervisor for further investigation. Once the investigation is complete, the findings are recorded on the accident/ incident form which is then sent through to our H&S section for any further action.

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

3.2 SAFE EQUIPMENT

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. The Council invested £14,000 in the playground surfacing during 2021. Further investment to the value of £80,000 is planned for 2023/2024 to improve equipment provision.

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 and littering.

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.

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 and dog controls.

The service periodically liaises with the local police regarding more serious or ongoing antisocial behaviour issues and joint site-specific 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.

3.4 APPROPRIATE PROVISION OF FACILITIES

We ensure Lowther 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 Lowther Trust and 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 Lytham.

Well Maintained & 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.

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.

4.2 HORTICULTURAL DESIGN & MAINTENANCE

Fylde Council's Parks and Coastal Services team undertake the operational maintenance of Lowther Gardens.

Task sheets are followed to preserve the unique character of the park and are implemented by 2 full-time gardeners and a seasonal. 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.

Lowther Gardens supports a significant range of horticultural displays including informal shrubberies to year-round formal bedding and floral containers. The seasonal bedding displays include spring and summer displays of plants and bulbs. The parks development officer is responsible for the design of planting schemes within the garden. They work closely with the Parks Manager, Operational Supervisor and Gardeners to ensure the designs meet the style and conditions of the gardens and can be maintained to a high standard.



Current horticulture projects in the gardens include:

- Changing the front circle beds from annual bedding schemes to more sustainable herbaceous and shrub planting.
- Redesigning the rose garden – phase 2 to include new layout for the remaining rose beds, restocking and companion planting.
- Planting the perimeter entrance borders with shade tolerant shrubs, bulbs and grasses.
- Setting up a growing area to produce shrubs and perennials to use on site.

There are already significant horticultural features in addition to the seasonal flower borders within the park including the herbaceous border with floral clock, shrub borders and the 'Wicker man' bed which is a re-creation of the Silver-Gilt winning entry at the Tatton Flower Show display.

The herbaceous border and 'Wicker man' bed are maintained throughout the year by a group of volunteers, who continually weed, dead head and refurbish the beds to keep them at a high standard.

2023 saw the creation of a small nursery and growing facility on site. The aim is to grow and produce shrub plants for regenerating the woodland schemes around the park. Within the first year nearly 2,000 plants were produced and planted out on the park over winter / springtime.

In 2024 we are looking at growing more stock from seed for meadow creation on the far side of the park mainly using ox-eye daisy.

The Lowther Trust Friends group are looking at producing some plants from seed to grow and sell when events are held on the park to aid in their fundraising efforts.

Future aims of the facility are to link in with the new education facility once complete and have demonstrations for cuttings and seed growing.



Lowther Gardens is annually entered into the North West in Bloom Local Authority Park Category, where it has been awarded a Gold Medal Award and a National Certificate of Distinction for Parks by the RHS for five consecutive

years. Lowther Gardens is one of the main horticultural features and sites in Lytham's North West in Bloom submission, who regularly receive Gold award's and Category Winners in the annual North West in Bloom competition and last year took Gold and joint category winner at the National Britain in Bloom Small Coastal Category.

4.3 SPORTS TURF MAINTENANCE

Park based sports turf facilities includes two well used bowling greens, and a putting green. The greens are connected to an automatic irrigation system and have benefitted from newly installed timber edging boards. The greens maintenance and associated frequencies is documented within the site task sheet. This stipulates maintenance requirements from April – October as well as includes the Spring and Autumn renovation works.

Demand and expectation on the green's quality is extremely high and therefore green condition has to be managed carefully. Climate changes have also resulted in alterations to the green regime to avoid turf stress during periods of prolonged drought or high rainfall.

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.

Work is largely reactionary; the service uses tree inspection software Arbortrack to record, prioritise and programme work delivery.

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 in partnership with Lowther Trust are compiling a list of suitable trees for Lowther Gardens.

4.5 BUILDING & EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE

Park buildings, with the exception of the Lowther Pavilion, large structures and lighting 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.

4.6 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 incidents 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.

Environmental Management



5.1 MANAGING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The Parks and Coastal Services team, with support from Lowther Trust, are managing Lowther 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 Council 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. Cut timber and brash is stored and chipped for horticultural use.

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 Keep Britain Tidy, 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.

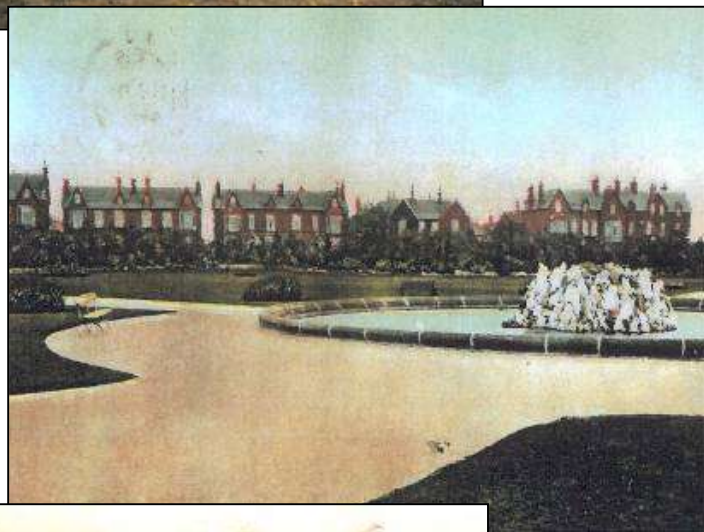
5.1.7 Electric Vehicles and Machinery

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 trimmers 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 pond, shrubs, tree belts, herbaceous beds and grassland areas have softened and matured, providing home for a variety of flora and fauna.

Our understanding of wildlife within the park is insufficient. The Council's Ranger Service will be starting biannual wildlife surveys on each of the borough's heritage parks from 2024. This data will inform the plans and guide the management and maintenance of the site.

The park's more naturalised environment has been enhanced by changes in park design and maintenance including the introduction of differential mowing, increasing perennial plants and the introduction of wildlife hotels within woodland areas. We are also introducing more companion perennial planting in formally planted areas such as the rose garden.

The Council has been awarded £34,000 grant funding to undertake a borough wide tree planting initiative from 2023 - 2024. It is our intention to broaden native tree species diversity and age structure within the park using this funding. This will clearly aid sustaining the tree community and ecological value of the park.

6.2 CONSERVATION OF LANDSCAPE, BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

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

The gardens are not included on English Heritages' Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. The boundary walls are however Grade II listed, as they're constructed from original Lytham cobble, which can be seen throughout Lytham on various historic buildings and features.



The gardens are located within a Conservation Area, which covers Lytham Town Centre and most of the surrounding area, as shown on the link below.

[Lytham.pdf \(fylde.gov.uk\)](https://www.fylde.gov.uk/lytham.pdf)

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 (except the theatre building), 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.

Site-based features of particular historical interest include:

- Perimeter cobble walls
- Ornate and decorative entrances
- Lowther Pavilion building
- Ornamental pond and shrimper statue
- Historic shelters

The Lowther Pavilion building is maintained and managed by the Lowther Trust.

All the trees within the garden are protected under the Conservation Area Order and any intended works are undertaken in conjunction with the Planning based tree officer.

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

6.3 REDEVELOPMENT

Lowther Trust and the Council recognized the need to refurbish the existing theatre building to make it more efficient and welcoming. The Trust has spent time consulting with locals and professionals to develop plans that will create a greener and environmentally friendly space that will encourage and attract a wider audience.

The plans have been broken down into 3 phases. Works on phase1 – Construction of an education center and studio theatre. The space will increase the creative program on offer as well as boost the number of local employment opportunities.

Plans to develop and fund phases 2 and 3 are ongoing.

The overall Masterplan for the theatre redevelopment also includes a landscaping plan. The Parks & Coastal team are supporting the final designs.

Community Involvement



7.1 LYTHAM IN BLOOM

Lytham in Bloom are an active group and have a growing number of volunteers who are willing to tackle planting, weeding, watering and dead heading tasks within the gardens. 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 gardens are a main focal point of the Lytham in Bloom judging route and so in addition to the above the group decided to take responsibility of maintaining the herbaceous border, the 'Wicker Man' bed along with the Apothecary Garden and the entrance border from Lowther Terrace, which was designed and planted up by the group.

The parks development officer is the main point of contact between the Council and the Lytham 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.

7.2 FRIENDS OF LOWTHER PAVILION

The Friends of Lowther Pavilion are a group of volunteers who formed to support and secure the future of the theatre and gardens. The group's main tasks are:

- To provide support at events held in the park, including site set up and marshalling.
- Promoting the park and theatre at every opportunity.
- Fundraising to support the future plans for the theatre and gardens.
- To carry out historic and informative walks around the gardens.

The group would also like to start using the new growing area to produce plants from seed to sell on the craft stalls at events held in the park throughout the year.

7.3 EVENTS

The Lowther Trust have their own events programme which promotes and utilises the outdoor space. Outdoor theatre and 'Drive In' cinemas have become regular dates in the event diary.

Annual events such as Easter Fairs, Halloween Fairs, Christmas Fairs and outdoor shows draw a high level of visitors and bring a great deal of fun and enjoyment.

The Ranger service also 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.

7.4 WIDER STAKEHOLDERS

It is well recognised that for any park to be successfully managed it must respond to the needs of the local community, and this means that a park service must actively engage and involve the local community in the development of the park or green space. The key partner organisations involved with Lowther Gardens are representing user groups as follows:

- Lytham in Bloom Trust
- Lytham Heritage Group

The key stakeholders involved with the gardens are:

Group	Lead Member	Contact No. (where appropriate)
Lowther Pavilion	Tim Lince	(01253) 658665
Lytham Hall Park Primary School		(01253) 738864
Lytham CofE Primary School		(01253) 736900
Ward Councillors	Local Councillors for each ward.	
Leisure & Tourism Committee Chair		
Police		
Lowther Pavilion Café		(01253) 735523
FBC Parks and Coastal Services Team	All staff	(01253) 658658
FBC Tourism Team	Tim Dixon	(01253) 658436
FBC Technical Services Team	Darren Bell	(01253) 658675

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

7.5 APPROPRIATE PROVISION FOR THE COMMUNITY

Lowther Gardens is a hugely popular and well used community park. Its well-balanced park facilities combined with a varied event offer, makes it appealing to both local residents and tourists.

The Lowther Trust and Fylde Council organise a large number of indoor and outdoor events and activities that draw crowds from across the region. The Trust hold world class shows with the Lowther Pavilion Theatre and have increased outdoor shows and events.

The Council's Ranger Service also undertakes activities on the park through undertaking environmental education, holding walks and events and through implementing a variety of volunteer schemes.

The Ranger service undertakes the following key functions:

- **Patrols:** Regular patrols to check for litter, glass, vandalism and graffiti. To put up any necessary signs and to advise on Public Space Protection Orders.
- **Education:** The rangers have developed a formalised, curriculum linked Outdoor Education Programme and can also provide bespoke activities on site on subjects including history, geography, art and the local environment.
- **Volunteering:** The rangers periodically work with In-Bloom groups to assist with garden work and to help to provide tools or remove green waste.
- **Activities:** The Ranger Service undertake a structured and well-advertised parks event and guided walks programme which utilises Lowther Gardens.

7.6 RESIDENTS SURVEY

The Council undertakes a resident 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 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 & Communication

8.1 MARKETING & PROMOTION

Lytham is a major tourist attraction for visitors to the Fylde Coast and the North West. Lowther Trust and the Council actively promotes Lowther Gardens as a tourist attraction to provide a quality of life and boost the local economy, as set out in the Council's Corporate Plan.

It is the aim of the Trust and the Council to provide and encourage the best use of Lowther Gardens to meet the leisure needs of residents and visitors.

Objectives of Publicity:

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



The gardens will be included in marketing strategies and the websites will be continually developed and updated. This will include 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 www.greenflagaward.org.uk The Lowther Pavilion Lytham St Annes Lancashire	Local and event information. News and notifications. Promotion.	Daily/Weekly.
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 shown 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 Council's 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.

Lowther Trust also promote and market the theatre and gardens. The Trust has its own team of Marketing Officers who are responsible for advertising campaigns, event and activity promotion and branding and logos.

The Council and Lowther Trust work together to promote the theatre and gardens. They hold regular meetings to discuss advertising, event and activity information along with topics such as grounds maintenance and tourism issues.

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
- Lytham in Bloom

Management

9.1 Clearly Addressing Green Flag Criteria in Management Prescriptions

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

9.2 Management Plan Must be Actively Implemented and Reviewed

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

9.3 Sound Financial Management

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

SECTION 10. ACTION PLAN

Proposals/Actions	Responsible	Target Date	Progress
A Welcoming Place			
Install finger posts	Parks & Coastal	2024 - 2026	To be completed
Install community notice board	Parks & Coastal	Mar 2025	To be completed
Enforcement of dog control orders	Environmental Enforcement Officers	Ongoing	Ongoing
Healthy, Safe & Secure			
Install French drains at path footpath edges	Parks & Coastal	March 2023	Completed
Remove old storage building from depot area	Parks & Coastal	Feb – Mar 2023	Completed
Install security fencing around polytunnel	Parks & Coastal	Apr 2023	Completed
Resurface tractor storage depot area	Parks & Coastal	March 2023	Completed
Install ornamental bollards	Parks & Coastal	Apr 2023	Completed
Well Maintained & Clean			
Ensure cleanliness standards are maintained	Parks & Coastal	Ongoing	Ongoing
Improvements to entrance borders – turf & plant with woodland plants	Parks & Coastal	Oct 2023 – Mar 2024	In progress
Refurbish parks furniture	Parks & Coastal	Sep 2023	Completed

Carry out footpath & tarmac repairs and re surfacing	Parks & Coastal	Mar 2024	To be completed
Plant & gap up woodland trails	Parks & Coastal	Sep 2023 – Sep 2024	In progress
Plant newly designed rose garden	Parks & Coastal	May 2023	Completed
Install new parks furniture	Parks & Coastal	Sep 2023	Completed
Environmental Management			
Continue to reduce reliance on chemical use	Parks & Coastal	Ongoing	Ongoing
Plan & design new sustainable planting schemes	Parks & Coastal	Mar 2024 – Mar 25	To be completed
Develop Climate Change strategy	Corporate Services	Ongoing	Ongoing
Carry out large scale tree planting project	Parks & Coastal	Mar 2024	To be completed
Install polytunnel & set up nursery growing area	Parks & Coastal	Apr 2023 – Sep 2023	Completed
Trial electric hand machinery & mowers	Parks & Coastal	Mar – Sep 2023	Completed
Investigate infrastructure requirements to support large scale electric vehicle fleet	Fleet Management Services	2024 – 2026	In progress
Phased introduction of electric hand machines	Parks & Coastal	Ongoing	Ongoing

Build & install habitat houses for bugs and hedgehogs	Parks & Coastal	Sep 2023 – Mar 2024	In progress
Continue to plant up 'Avenue of Trees' down the main drive on a phased basis	Parks & Coastal	Feb 2024 – Oct 2025	To be completed
Community Involvement			
Deliver Outdoor Education Packs to help develop links with local schools	Parks & Coastal	Ongoing	Ongoing
Carry out public consultation on Lowther Gardens masterplan	Parks & Coastal/ Lowther Trust	December 2023	Completed
Install bike racks at bowling pavilion & children's play area	Parks & Coastal	Mar 2023	Completed
Form Partnership with external groups to deliver ongoing engagement and support sessions	Tourism & Leisure Services	Ongoing	Ongoing
Implement new commemoration schemes	Lowther Trust	Ongoing	Ongoing
Support Memorial bulb planting day	Lowther Trust/Parks & Coastal	Ongoing	Ongoing
Work with Partners to hold events in the park	Parks & Coastal/Tourism & Leisure Services	Ongoing	Ongoing
Prepare & launch volunteer ranger service	Parks & Coastal	Mar 24 – Mar 25	To be completed
Evaluate & update Ranger's events schedule	Parks & Coastal	Feb – Mar 2024	To be completed

Marketing & Communication			
Continue to update Councils & Trusts websites & social media	Tourism & Leisure Services/Communications Team & Lowther Trust	Ongoing	Ongoing
Advertise in Fylde's mini guide & local tourist publications	Tourism & Leisure Services	Ongoing	Ongoing
Management			
Liaise with Lowther Trust to develop a landscape masterplan	Parks & Coastal/ Lowther trust	Mar 2024	In progress
Update Corporate Plan Actions	Corporate Services	Jan – Mar 2024	In progress
Prepare & submit capital bid for £80,000 play improvements project 2023/24	Parks & Coastal	January 2023	Completed
Carry out tender exercise for design & build play improvements project 2023/24	Parks & Coastal	Oct – Dec 2023	Completed
Project manage £34,000 tree planting project	Parks & Coastal	Oct 23 – Mar 24	In progress
Submit plans to build 2 more padel tennis courts	Lowther Trust	Jan - Mar 2024	In progress
Develop a site-specific signage strategy	Lowther Trust/Parks & Coastal	Mar 2024 – Mar 2026	To be completed

Appendix A. CES Worksheets

Fylde Borough Council Private & Confidential

Period Work Schedule : Period J5

Lowther Team

All Assets (non-contract specific)

	CC	Pnts	Frequency	Quantity	Tick Completed
L Lytham Area					
Lowther Gardens					
BD28	Bedding-Apply Fertiliser	MT	[1]	x1 393.00	m2
BD30	Bedding-Hand Weed / Hoe	MT	[1]	x4 393.00	m2
CK001	Daily Inspect Mechanism/Time	MT	[1]	x28 1.00	no
CK002	Clean Aviary & Feed Birds	MT	[1]	x8 1.00	no
CL13	Empty Litter Bin - Ornamental Areas	MT	[1]	x28 14.00	no
CL16	Turn Compost Bays (Weekly)	MT	[1]	x4 1.00	no
CL17	Litter Pick High Ornamental Areas	MT	[1]	x24 62,871.00	m2
GC11	Grass - Mow Fine Sports Turf	MT	[1]	x12 2,873.00	m2
GC12	Grass - Mow Ornamental	MT	[1]	x4 15,020.10	m2
GC14	Grass - Mow Amenity Cut & Mulch	MT	[1]	x2 1,508.90	m2
GE03	Edge Off Amenity	MT		x2 76.20	lm
GE11	Grass Edge - Ornamental, LHS	MT	[1]	x4 303.20	lm
GE13	Grass Edge - Amenity Strim	MT	[1]	x2 6,717.53	lm
HB11	Herbaceous-Hoe (Weed), Stake & Tie	MT	[1]	x2 323.00	m2
PO001	Pond-Inspect & CleanseDaily	MT	[1]	x20 1.00	no
RB11	Roses-Dead Head & Remove Suckers	MT	[1]	x4 846.62	m2
RB15	Roses-Apply Fertiliser	MT	[1]	x1 846.62	m2
RB16	Roses-Treatment Of Pests & Diseases	MT	[1]	x1 846.62	m2
RB17	Roses-Cultivate & Hand Weed	MT	[1]	x4 846.62	m2
SB30	Shrub-Hand Weed & Cultivate Ornamental	MT	[1]	x2 1,675.98	m2
SB31	Shrub-Hand Weed/Hoe, Amenity	MT	[1]	x1 6,938.74	m2
TC001	Tarmac - Brush/Airbroom Weekly	MT	[1]	x4 1,975.60	m2
TC002	Tarmac - Spot Treat With Herbicide	MT	[1]	x1 1,975.60	m2
TM103	Spike / Silt Fine Sports Turf	MT	[1]	x1 2,873.00	m2
TM107	Weed Control Fine Sports Turf	MT	[1]	x1 2,873.00	m2
TM111	Apply Fertiliser To Fine Sports Turf	MT	[1]	x1 2,873.00	m2
TM113	Brush / Switch Fine Sports Turf	MT	[1]	x20 2,873.00	m2
TM115	Verticut Fine Sports Turf	MT	[1]	x1 2,873.00	m2
TM122	Clean Bowling Green Gutters	MT	[1]	x1 303.20	lm

All Assets (non-contract specific)

Tick Completed

L Lytham Area

Lytham Area (your ref L1004546 our ref : 004546)

Item	Description	Unit	Qty	Unit Price	Total Price	Unit
BD24	Plant Spring Bedding Bulbs	MT	[1]	x1	393.00	m2
BD30	Bedding-Hand Weed / Hoe	MT	[1]	x2	393.00	m2
CK001	Daily Inspect Mechanism/Time	MT	[1]	x20	1.00	no
CK002	Clean Aviary & Feed Birds	MT	[1]	x8	1.00	no
CL13	Empty Litter Bin - Ornamental Areas	MT	[1]	x8	14.00	no
CL16	Turn Compost Bays (Weekly)	MT	[1]	x4	1.00	no
CL17	Litter Pick High Ornamental Areas	MT	[1]	x8	62,671.00	m2
GE15	Grass Edge - Half Moon Edge	MT	[1]	x1	303.20	lm
HB11	Herbaceous-Hoe (Weed), Stake & Tie	MT	[1]	x2	323.00	m2
HB12	Herbaceous-Cut Down Plants	MT	[1]	x1	323.00	m2
HB14	Herbaceous - Split/Divide 1/3 Plants	MT	[1]	x1	323.00	m2
HB15	Herbaceous-Fork Bed & Add Organic Matter	MT	[1]	x1	323.00	m2
HB16	Herbaceous-Replant Divided Plants	MT	[1]	x1	323.00	m2
PO001	Pond-Inspect & Cleanse/Daily	MT	[1]	x20	1.00	no
RB13	Top Roses	MT	[1]	x1	846.62	m2
SB35	Shrub-Formative Prune/Apply Mulch (Nov)	MT	[1]	x1	8,614.72	m2
TC001	Tarmac - Brush/Air/room Weekly	MT	[1]	x4	1,975.60	m2
TC006	Clear Leaves Off Paths Daily	MT	[1]	x16	1,975.60	m2
TM113	Brush / Switch Fine Sports Turf	MT	[1]	x10	2,873.00	m2

[illegible]

Appendix B. Example Risk Assessment

Fylde Borough Council Risk Assessment Form 1							
This Form can be used for the assessment of all organisational risks including Health and Safety; Risk Management & Business Continuity. This Form must be used in conjunction with Form 2 – Agreed Actions For Details of Risk Ratings see Form 3							
Business Unit: Community Services				Date of Assessment 1 st April 2023			
Section: Parks				Assessment Team Gail Isbister, 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 <i>Manual Handling</i> Section Manager Responsible for this Action Plan.....M Wilde Signature..... <i>Lia C. Ode</i> Action Plan Review Date.....1st April 2024.....					