



Our Vision for Southwark Park





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Rt. Hon. Sir Simon Hughes**

A Vision for Southwark Park

We start from the self-evident fact that the park is, and will be, vital to Bermondsey, Rotherhithe and beyond. The Covid-19 pandemic has illustrated just how important the park is for the community. Its strength as a place of well-being, comfort and recreation for people is beyond doubt. Located within an intense and developing cityscape presents both challenges and opportunities. As it always has done the park will evolve and adapt to the changing world around it. Looking forward the park must be cared for as part of a local green recovery.

Southwark Park will be a place where:

- The boundaries are unswervingly protected or enhanced, with no land sold-off or built upon for non-park purposes.
- The green and blue environment is protected and significantly enhanced, through investment and innovative measures which help wildlife flourish, improve public health and quality of life of the community, aid biodiversity and mitigate climate change.
- The cultural, sports, play and recreational facilities are protected and significantly enhanced.
- The infrastructure is improved and maintained to meet its status as an English Heritage Grade 2 Listed and Queen Elizabeth Field in Trust facility.
- Participation and community involvement in making decisions about the park is far more inclusive by Southwark Council listening, and responding to a wide range of people and organisations with their varied interests and enthusiasms.
- The staffing levels have improved so that the public can be confident of their health and safety at all times when using the park, and that their information needs are met.

- Education and communications about the park are improved so everyone can discover the rich variety of its natural and historic environment, and have the chance to value it as a source of local pride and identity.
- Sustainable development is seen in action.

Priorities

Protecting and enhancing the boundaries of the park by:

- Retention of the whole of the Old Nursery site and upgrading it for managed community use.
- Boundary hedging and/or planting to improve the visual amenity for users and environmental value for wildlife, most notably:
 - along St. Joseph's Primary School boundary
 - by The Lodge.Space near the former Swedish Church
 - all of the south-west boundary from Hawkstone car park beyond Maydew House to Frankland Close
 - the boundary walls from the Moreton entrance to Millstream House
 - the boundary along Albin's Memorial Garden
- Retention of soft ground along the Jamaica Road, Lower Road and Hawkstone Road boundaries to help absorb the noise and air pollution from heavy traffic.
- The introduction of quiet zones, with appropriate signage, close to neighbouring properties in order to respect people's privacy and their quality of life.

Protecting and significantly enhancing the green and blue environment of the park by:

- Retention of the whole of the Nature Area and upgrading and managing it for increased environmental education and community use.
- Creation of some fast-growing pocket forests to help combat air and noise pollution caused by the surrounding heavy traffic.
- Dredging parts of the lake around the perimeter.
- Introducing a substantial wildlife summer meadow of flowers for pollinators.
- Creating a 'dry' garden.
- Installing a bat tower.
- Greening the Idiverde depot containers to remove an unacceptable eyesore on a main path.
- Greening the Sports Centre fencing to soften the harsh visual impact.
- Installing a sand pit dog toilet.

Protecting and significantly enhancing the cultural, sports, play and recreational facilities of the park by:

- Retention and continuous improvement of the two art galleries, the bowls green and pavilion, the tennis courts, the sports centre and the children's playground.
- Lake Gallery renovations and upgrading of defunct or inefficient utilities including replacement lighting, heating installation, improved Wi-Fi, improved drainage, new loos and the reconfiguration of the office and store. Also solar panels on the roof to improve environmental efficiency and reduce overheads.
- Dilston Gallery restoration, in particular to repair the concrete cracking and other works to remove the building from the 'Buildings at Risk' register.
- The Oval - provision of high quality grass cricket square; a new all-weather cricket pitch and two grass football pitches.
- Adding an additional outdoor fitness gym in the north of the park.
- Providing distance markers by the main paths for park runners.
- Installing an activity/skateboarding facility located within or by the sports centre, but away from the air-polluted Hawkstone Road.
- Providing chess/games tables near the café.
- Installing a Petanque pitch in the north of the park.
- Providing covered eating areas with permanent tables so that the public can still enjoy the park if the weather changes. Sited near to the pathways for disability access.
- Adding more seating for those who wish to rest or take in the views.

Improving and maintaining the infrastructure by:

- Upgrading the central drive - fence renewal/repainting; pavement repairs; and investigation of drainage problems by the former Park Lodge.

Improving Community Involvement in the park by:

- Southwark Council confirming that public engagement over the park is a good and effective way to build a sense of community and improve the quality of life of the people.
- Southwark Council committing to engage with many more local organisations and individuals on an equal and regular basis than is currently the case; and to do so in as many differing ways as possible.
- Specifically engaging with more people over major future design, planning and management issues.
- Encouraging greater use of the bandstand as a venue for community activities.

Improving Staffing by:

- Ensuring a permanent senior management presence in the park.
- Employing staff with a strong community engagement remit.

Improving Education and Communications about the park by:

- Protecting and enhancing school access to the park's facilities, especially the Nature Area, Sports Centre and Old Nursery site.
- Provision of interpretation information in various forms including static boards, publications, events and a more dynamic social media presence.

Sustainability

- Utilising existing buildings such as the former café and the boat house for community benefit.
- Reintroduction of a tree and plant nursery to supply the park and other green spaces in the area.
- Exploring wind power for lighting, etc.

We believe progress towards achieving the vision can be made through Southwark Council and key partners working positively together on the achievement of these outcomes over the coming years.

The Management Committee
Southwark Park Association 1869
November 2020