



Englefield Green Committee

Tuesday, 16 January 2024 at 7.30 pm

Council Chamber - Civic Centre

Members of the Committee

Councillors: T Gates (Chair), A King (Deputy Chair), A Berardi, E Kettle, N Prescott, N Bromilow and R McGregor-Johnson

In accordance with Standing Order 29.1, any Member of the Council may attend the meeting of this Committee, but may speak only with the permission of the Chairman of the Committee, if they are not a member of this Committee.

AGENDA

Notes:

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- 2) The relevant 'background papers' are listed after each report in Part 1. Enquiries about any of the Agenda reports and background papers should be directed in the first instance to **Democratic Services, Democratic Services Section, Law and Governance Business Centre, Runnymede Civic Centre, Station Road, Addlestone (Tel: Direct Line: 01932 425622). (Email: democratic.services@runnymede.gov.uk).**
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Part I		
Matters in respect of which reports have been made available for public inspection		
1.	Minutes	4 - 7
	To confirm and sign, as a correct record, the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 17 th October 2023 (Appendix 'A').	
2.	Apologies for absence	
3.	Declarations of interest	
	Members are invited to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests or other registrable and non-registrable interests in items on the agenda.	
4.	Englefield Green Management Plan Update	8 - 12
5.	Robotic Lawnmower	13 - 15
6.	Replacement Bollards	16 - 18
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Part II		
Matters involving Exempt or Confidential information in respect of which reports have not been made available for public inspection		
8.	Exempt information	
9.	Cricket Net	19 - 25
	This report contains information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.	

Public Document Pack Agenda Item 1

RBC EGC 17.10.23

Runnymede Borough Council

Englefield Green Committee

Tuesday, 17 October 2023 at 7.30 pm

Members of the Committee present: Councillors T Gates (Chair), A King (Deputy Chair), A Berardi, E Kettle, N Prescott and N Bromilow.

Members of the Committee absent: Councillors R McGregor-Johnson.

19 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 27th June 2023 were agreed

20 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mr McGregor-Johnson.

21 Declarations of interest

No declarations of interest received.

22 Proposed Maintenance Plan and Maintenance Updates

The Committee was updated on issues relating to ditches, nettles, maintenance schedules for the grassed area and the Section 27.4 (d) request for a costed management plan for the Green.

Officers advised the Committee that in September the meadow and wildflowers on the ditch were trimmed as part of the scheduled annual meadow cut. The nettles were also cut as part of this operation. The in-house team had no capacity to rake and collect the arisings. The Committee was, therefore, asked to approve the use of volunteers to rake meadow hay arisings.

Officers reported that the Cricket Club maintained the Cricket Square to their own schedule. In the last week of September, the Cricket Club had soiled and reseeded the Cricket Square. The Cricket Club had been reminded that the use of ropes and road pins was not permitted to protect the emerging growth. Open Space Officers would consider instructing legal Officers to write a letter if these had not been removed. The Runnymede Grounds Maintenance team cut the outfield weekly and the wider amenity grass approximately every 3 weeks. Some members of the Committee expressed their dissatisfaction with a 3 weekly rota particularly when there was more rapid growth. Officers advised the Committee that all Green Spaces in the Borough had the same cutting schedule and a bespoke service for the Green wasn't possible from normal grounds maintenance funds. If the Committee wished to consider more frequent cuts in the next cutting season, these would need to be funded from the Englefield Green earmarked reserves.

The Committee notified Officers that the grassed area adjacent to the play area and the grassed triangle had not been cut during the Summer. Officers would seek clarification on whether those areas were the responsibility of Surrey County Council or Runnymede Borough Council.

The Committee was asked to approve the use of contractors to complete the overseeding

in Autumn 2023/Spring 2024 at a cost of no greater than £2000 from the Englefield Green's earmarked reserves. Adding weed killer or fertiliser was not recommended and would not fall in line with the Council's sustainable planting policy.

Officers reported that in accordance with the approved Woodland Management Plan, works to remove holly, laurel and Rhododendron ponticum from the west woodland would continue. The cost of these works would not exceed £4000 and would be taken from the Englefield Green earmarked reserves.

The Committee was advised that Officers planned to produce Borough-wide Green Spaces Management Plans and one would be written specifically for Englefield Green. The Plans would be written over the next 2/3 years with the Englefield Green Management Plan due to be drafted during 2023/24. A draft of the plan, when available would come to a future Committee.

The Committee was advised that Officers would need to obtain costings for any leaf blowing, top soiling and reseeding from the Englefield Green earmarked reserves. An informed decision could only be made when costings had been received. As this was urgent Officers would obtain costings and prepare a Standing Order 42 to enable the works to be carried out as soon as possible.

Resolved that:

Volunteers to rake meadow hay arisings to encourage wildflowers and discourage nettle and grass growth.

Contractors complete overseeding in Autumn 2023/Spring 2024 at a cost no greater than £2000 from Englefield Green's earmarked reserves.

23 **Site furniture on Englefield Green**

The Committee received audit information regarding existing site furniture including benches, posts and bollards, bridges and signage. Members also received an update on the proposed bench replacement. Most posts and bollards were in relatively good condition. Officers would prepare a cost proposal to replace those in poor condition for the next Committee meeting.

Officers advised the Committee that there were 14 wooden benches situated around the Green, with a further two metal benches in the children's play area. All the benches currently had a Green RAG (risk) rating. However, the benches would be monitored as part of the on-going management plan.

Following on from communication to local residents regarding the opportunity to donate a memory bench, Officers received 4 responses. The first person on the list was contacted but despite several follow up emails no reply was received.

Officers contacted the second person on the list and the donation of a memory bench had been progressed. The bench would be installed by the end of November on the Barley Mow plinth. Additionally, two other families were looking to arrange memory benches on the Green.

The matrix paving had not yet been installed. This would be included at the foot of the previously identified benches during the scheduled renovations where no other concrete base exists.

All the bridges were structurally sound, these would also be added to the long-term

management programme and continually monitored.

The Committee was advised that Runnymede Borough Council's Communications team was currently leading on a project to improve branding and refresh signage in green spaces across the whole borough. Officers reassured the Committee that different signage would be used to areas with different characteristics and on Englefield Green this would incorporate existing messaging and messaging previously approved by the Committee. Officers would bring an update on the new signage proposals to the next Committee meeting in January.

Resolved that:

Site furniture should be added to the Englefield Green's long-term management programme.

The installation of two memory benches as detailed in the report be approved.

24 **Events on Englefield Green**

Guyatts Funfair

The cancellation of the funfair due to take place on 21st September was noted.

My Time, My Fitness

The Committee was advised that Officers had received an application from My Time, My Fitness. The application requested use of the Green weekly on Saturdays from 9am – 10am for a bootcamp. The personal trainer hoped to recruit 10 participants initially, rising over time to 20 or 30 participants. The event holder had demonstrated adequate Public Liability and Professional Indemnity Insurance. The Committee was supportive of the application.

Beach's Funfair

The Committee was asked to consider allowing Beach's Funfair to operate on the Green. Mr Beach had advised Officers the funfair was run professionally and would like to demonstrate their new high standards.

Members recalled the problems in the past relating to Beach's Funfair using the Green but appreciated the community benefit of having a Funfair on the Green. The Committee, therefore, sought further reassurance from Mr Beach that previous issues would not be repeated. Officers were, therefore, asked to obtain references pertaining to Beach's Funfair prior to Mr Beach completing the Runnymede Borough Council application process. The option of an informal meeting with Members and Mr Beach to obtain more information etc. was also discussed.

Resolved that:

Information relating to Guyatts Funfair be noted.

The application from My Time, My Fitness be approved.

Officers to obtain more information in relation to James Beach's Funfair

25 **Adopted Bin Policy and Fox-proof bins**

The Committee was advised that the new Borough-wide Litter and Dog Waste Bin Policy had been adopted at the September Environment and Sustainability Committee.

Signs had been added to bins to indicate that they could be used for both litter and dog waste. The signs also included a QR code for reporting purposes. These signs were temporary whilst a more permanent solution as to how they are attached was sought.

Officers would look to retain rural style bins on Englefield Green should any need to be replaced in the future.

With reference to fox proofing bins, Officers had received no details of fox proof bins from the Committee.

26 **Exclusion of Press and Public**

There were no Part II items

27 **Exempt information**

There were no exempt items

(The meeting ended at 9.08 pm.)

Chairman

Report title	Englefield Green Management Plan Update
Report author	Helen Wilson, Deputy Green Spaces Manager
Department	Green Spaces, Environmental Services
Exempt?	No
Exemption type	N/A
Reasons for exemption	N/A

Purpose of report:
For information

Synopsis of report:
To provide an update to Committee on the draft Englefield Green Management Plan (EGMP) and to seek involvement from the Committee as key stakeholders.

Recommendation(s):
None

1. Context and background of report

1.1 A report was put forward by the Deputy Green Spaces Manager at the October 17th 2023 Committee to recommend the drafting of a management plan specific to Englefield Green. This report seeks to give information on the progress of this Management Plan.

2. The Englefield Green Management Plan – Update

2.1 The task to produce a template for Green Space Management Plans has fallen to the Green Space National Management Trainee, Kruti Pabari with support from Helen Wilson, Deputy Green Spaces Manager and other relevant officers and related RBC teams.

2.2 From this Borough-wide template, Helen Wilson and the Green Spaces team will be tailoring the plan to suit Englefield Green specifically.

2.3 The Management Plan is based on the CABI Space Management Plan Guidance document.

- 2.4 *It is important to note*, whilst we will be modelling our EGMP on Green Flag Award guidance, we are simply using the criteria of an award-winning green space to set the standard for management to which we aspire, we are *not* proposing that we enter the awards.
- 2.5 This document will focus on management & maintenance, supporting more tangible and practical processes. Whilst some reference to strategy & development (with signposting where appropriate) will be made, many of these elements will be covered by the Community Development team in their own park strategy documents.
- 2.6 Aims for the EGMP:
- Aiding the development of monthly and quarterly action plans with achievable targets, aligning day-to-day operations onsite with overarching goals.
 - Supporting annual budget-setting processes and identifying requirements for additional financial resources from both internal RBC budgets and the Englefield Green earmarked reserves in consultation with the Englefield Green Committee.
 - Keeping the Englefield Green Committee, elected members, the mayor and other stakeholders aware of management processes and priorities, thereby managing expectations in line with what may be deemed achievable.
 - Communicating with relevant stakeholders what their responsibilities entail surrounding their activities and the delivery of other services that may impact the site. For example; officers may request key information/input at committee meetings or by other means.
 - Monitoring development progress and success against management targets.
- 2.7 The following information is a guide to the topics covered by the Green Spaces Management Plan (GSMP) template and relates to the *draft* format of the EGMP so far:

About the Site

- Include a map to show the location and extent of the site. *This will set the scope of the plan and will encompass the Crown Estate land under the remit of the Englefield Green Committee.*
- Include a written description of the space summarising it's basic features and any relevant history.
- Refer to previous documents and any information that other relevant departments may have.

Strategy & Policy

- Refer here to any previous plans/guidance that may lend use to Green Space Management Plans (such as ecological appraisals for wildlife areas)
- It is useful to consider how the site may have fared in the Open Spaces Study, as conducted by the planning department in 2022.

- Summarise and explain the relevance of any national or RBC strategy and policy, indicating what is established or in development.

A “Welcoming Place”

- Visual appearance - *Assess current overall appearance with the intended appearance/vision for the site in consultation with the committee and stake holders.*
- Signage
- Outline what exists and what can be put into place. *To include recent audit.*
- Refer to the RBC Signage Replacement Project (which is in development - update progress as necessary).
- Appropriate range of quality facilities and activities
- Outline what exists and what the aspirations may be *in consultation with the committee and stake holders.*
- Accessibility
- Analyse the space, in person and on the map, with consideration to accessibility.
- Conduct an Equalities Impact Assessment (with either the relevant officer in the RBC legal team or someone who will actually be impacted by this)

Health, Safety and Security

- Standards of maintenance
- Outline what exists (i.e. inspection schedules) and any review of this.
- Safe equipment and facilities
- Current contract for play inspections and repairs.
- Updated Risk Assessment
- Personal Security
- JAG & community safety – consult
- Control of Dogs/Dog Fouling
- Outline specific site policy regarding leads/fouling, with relevant signage in place

Maintenance and cleanliness

- Look at current inspection rotas, update grounds maintenance (GM) maps
- Litter and waste management

- Horticultural Maintenance – GM map and Programme of Works

Relating to RBC in-house routine maintenance plus any additional works proposed by the Englefield Green Committee and the Cricket Club.

- Arboriculture Maintenance – Woodland management plan
- Building Maintenance
- Infrastructure (paths/fences/benches)
- Equipment Maintenance

2.8 The following is likely to be covered by the Community Development team as it relates to wider strategic issues but will be referenced in the EGMP with potential to add detail over time:

- Environmental Management
- Biodiversity with consideration of landscape and heritage
- Community Involvement

2.9 This section may be written in collaboration with the communications team as well as any relevant stakeholders:

- Marketing and Communication

2.9.1 Implementation of this plan:

- This section will be informed by both ideal/benchmark goals and realistic expectations in line with what is deemed achievable based on current and projected capacity (all of which will have been signposted to or explored through the document) and in line with the aims of the EGMP.
- Create a table to outline what needs doing, when across a year, with clear indication of timescales and costs *in consultation with the Englefield Green Committee and other stakeholders. This will be a key part of the plan for regular reference and review by Green Spaces management and the Englefield Green Committee.*
- Reflections on the current management of Englefield Green and its future
- Outline a 10-year plan, with metrics for measuring success/progress described and review dates suggested. – *this will need to be very well considered, with consultation with the Englefield Green Committee and other relevant stakeholders.*

3. Policy framework implications

3.1 Climate Change – We aim to reduce our impact on Climate Change by employing sustainable management practices.

Empowering our Communities - We will present the best possible arguments to external stakeholders to preserve, protect and enhance local quality of life.

Health and Wellbeing - Access to Sport, leisure and recreation improves health and wellbeing.

4 Resource implications/Value for Money

4.1 Not applicable

5. Legal implications

5.1 Notes on the legal status of the Englefield Green Crown Estate will be included within the management plan.

6. Equality implications

6.1 We will complete an EQIA to include within the management plan

7. Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications

7.1 We will reference Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity within the management plan.

8. Risk Implications

8.1 Any identified risks will be included in the management plan

9. Other implications (where applicable)

9.1 None.

10. Timetable for Implementation

10.1 We will update the Committee on the EGMP progress at each committee meeting with the hope to have a final draft in Summer 2024.

10.2 Once the final draft has been agreed, this will be a live document, continuously reviewed by Green Spaces Officers.

11. Conclusions

11.1 The EGMP will be a useful tool for both the Green Spaces team and the Englefield Green Committee in the management of the Crown Estate land.

12. Background papers

12.1 None

13. Appendices

13.1 None

Report title	Automated Lawn Mower
Report author	Helen Wilson, Deputy Green Spaces Manager
Department	Green Spaces, Environmental Services
Exempt?	No
Exemption type	N/A
Reasons for exemption	N/A

Purpose of report:

To resolve

Synopsis of report:

This report was requested under SO27.4 (d)

Information on the potential benefits and drawbacks of automated lawn mower use on Englefield Green and reference to trials conducted in other authorities.

Recommendation(s):

The suggested use of automate mowers on Englefield Green be rejected based on the vulnerability to interference by the public in this location.

1. Context and background of report

1.1 This suggestion was brought to Cllr. Gates by a committee member of Englefield Green Cricket Club introduced by Mr McGregor-Johnston, the report was then requested under SO27.4 (d).

2. Report and, where applicable, options considered and recommended

2.1 In recent years, the use of automated lawn mowers has gained popularity for maintaining lawns. These machines operate autonomously, following pre-programmed routes and schedules.

2.2 The selling points are that the mowers can work continuously, resulting in a well-maintained appearance throughout the year.

2.3 These machines are powered by electricity, reducing the reliance on fossil fuels and minimizing carbon emissions and utilize sensors to detect obstacles.

2.4 The very small clippings are left to feed the grass and not removed from site.

- 2.5 Commercial automated mowers retail at around £3,000-£6,000 although further research would need to be conducted to establish the full set up costs.
- 2.6 Concerns around the use of automated mowers in public open spaces such as Englefield Green arise around the buried boundary wire, potential for theft, vandalism, and the ongoing maintenance requirements for the machines.
- 2.7 While the mowers can be tracked with GPS and are fitted with alarms, the likelihood for interference from the public is high, particularly as Englefield Green is so visible to passers-by and not enclosed in any way.
- 2.8 While automated mowers are often used in golf clubs, college campuses and private gardens, their use in public open space appears limited.
- 2.9 Edinburgh City Council employed auto-mowers following a trial in 2017 that included their very steep, fenced site at the Edinburgh Mound.
- 2.10 East Devon City Council has trialled auto-mowers in 2019 in Manor Gardens and Withycombe Pitches in Exmouth and at All Hallows in Honiton.
- 2.11 There do not seem to be published results from these trials, although this could be requested.

3. Policy framework implications

- 3.1 The adoption of automated mowers would comply with our Climate Change Policy.

4 Resource implications/Value for Money

- 4.1 Acquisition, use, maintenance and insurance of automated mowers at this location would be funded from Englefield Green earmarked reserves.

5. Legal implications

- 5.1 None.

6. Equality implications

- 6.1 None

7. Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications

- 7.1 Lower carbon emissions, electric mowers.

8. Risk Implications

- 8.1 The risk that the automated mower would be stolen is high. A full risk assessment would need to be undertaken prior to the auto-mowers use.

9. Other implications (where applicable)

- 9.1 None

10. Timetable for Implementation

10.1 N/A

11. Conclusions

11.1 There are no results from our research to support the use of automated mowers in the location.

12. Background papers

12.1 None

13. Appendices

13.1 None

Report title	Replacement bollards
Report author	Helen Wilson, Deputy Green Spaces Officer
Department	Green Spaces, Environmental Services
Exempt?	No
Exemption type	N/A
Reasons for exemption	N/A

Purpose of report:

To resolve

Synopsis of report:

To advise on the cost to replace 2 timber bollards

Recommendation(s):

- To seek consent from the Crown Estate to replace 2x timber bollards. If consent is given to replace 2x timber bollards.**

1. Context and background of report

1.1 During the last committee meeting on the 17th October 2023, the audit of bollards highlighted that 2 needed replacing as they were in a very bad condition.

2. Report and, where applicable, options considered and recommended

2.1 The wooden posts at the northern end of the Green are in a poor condition, 2 have already collapsed and others are leaning and could collapse in the near future.



2.2 The cost to replace these 2 posts is £350. These posts help to prevent vehicles parking on the grass.

3. Policy framework implications

3.1 Maintaining Englefield Green and offering a clean and welcoming open space is in accordance with the Borough's Corporate Business Plan.

4 Resource implications/Value for Money

4.1 To be funded from Englefield Green earmarked reserves. Estimated cost is £350 to replace both bollards.

5. Legal implications:

5.1 The 1955 lease granted by the Crown states that the Council must not 'break up the surface of the said land without the previous consent in writing from the Lessor'. Replacement will require the consent of the Crown Estate, as bollards are erections and even their replacement will require additional breaking of the surface of the land.

5.2 As a measure that prevents parked vehicles obstructing the access to the Englefield Green by legitimate users, replacement of damaged existing bollards promotes the access of legitimate users to the Englefield Green. However, there is a statutory duty to keep the Englefield Green 'open and unenclosed'. Replacement of the existing damaged bollards would be in reliance on the (rebuttable) argument that the bollards already installed at the Englefield Green do not sufficiently discourage or obstruct public access to qualify as a breach of the duty to keep the Englefield Green open and unenclosed.

6. Equality implications

6.1 None

7. Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications

7.1 Sustainable materials will be sourced from approved suppliers.

8. Risk Implications

8.1 None

9. Other implications (where applicable)

9.1 None

10. Timetable for Implementation

10.1 The works will be added to the list of repairs by our in-house repair operative and completed by Spring 2024.

11. Conclusions

11.1 The replacement of the bollards would enhance the attractiveness and security of the Green and reduce the risk of vehicles parking on the grass.

12. Background papers

12.1 EGC report on Site Furniture - 17/10/23 Committee

13. Appendices

13.1 None

By virtue of paragraph(s) 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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