

GSYH Forum Open Meeting

Notes from the day

kindly taken by Lucy Fowler

Roundhay Park Education Centre, Leeds

Tuesday 7th December 2010

Mission Statement...

...To enhance the quality and sustainability of Yorkshire and Humber's green spaces, consequently improving the quality of life for our residents and enhancing visitor experience.

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GSYH Open Meeting Notes

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Delegates

+ attendance AM only

*attendance PM only

David Gill	Parks Services Manager, Barnsley MBC
John Preston+	West Yorkshire Manager, BTCV
Paul Appleton	Area Manager, BTCV
Deborah Wright	Safer, Cleaner, Greener Manager, Calderdale MBC
Mark Dempsey*	Senior Technical Support Officer, Calderdale MBC
Samantha Ward*	Senior Technical Officer, Calderdale MBC
Dave Meigh	Heads of Parks and Open Spaces, City of York Council
Caroline Schofield	Yorkshire and Humber Forum Manager, GreenSpace
Lucy Fowler	Administrator: Regions and Communities, GreenSpace
Martin Page	GSYH Steering Group Chair & Trustee, GreenSpace
Simon Chapman	Regions Development Manager, GreenSpace
Stephen Hyde	Steering Group Vice Chair, GreenSpace Yorkshire and Humber
Waldemar Kripp	Landscape Team Manager, Groundwork Wakefield
Nick Illingworth	Interim Regional Director, Groundwork Yorkshire & The Humber
Trish McLaughlin	Parks Development Manager, Harrogate Borough Council
Paul Todd	Green Flag Awards Manager, Keep Britain Tidy
Emma Crowley	Countryside Ranger, Oakwell Hall Country Park, Kirklees Council
Maryke Woods	Park Development Officer, Kirklees Council
Naomi Goddard	Parks Development Officer, Kirklees Council
Shaun Gregory*	Estate Manager, Roundhay Park Estate Offices, Leeds City Council
Stephen J Taylor*	Senior Chargehand Gardener, Leeds City Council
Alan Simson	Reader in Landscape Architecture + Urban Forestry, LMU
James Walsh	Lead Advisor, Local Government Team, Natural England
Susan Booth	Advisor, Natural England
Sarah Wills	Senior Programme Development Officer, Play England
Andy Lee	Green Spaces Operations Manager, Rotherham MBC
David Lawson	Senior Research Officer, Sports Turf Research Institute
Ian Rowland	Policy & Performance Manager, Wakefield MDC
Christine Beaver	Wakefield MDC

Unable to attend on the day:

Mick Marston	Northern Development Co-ordinator, FCFCG
John Le Corney	Chief Executive, Heeley City Farm
Bob Pipkin	Policy Manager, Wakefield MDC
Tim Johnson	Estates Manager, Wakefield MDC
Peter Snodgrass	Green Flag Judge

Morning Session: Repositioning Parks and Green spaces

1. Chair's Introduction and welcome

Martin Page welcomed all delegates to the meeting and introductions and apologies were given.

2. Forum Update

Presentation given by Martin Page and Caroline Schofield

Topics from the presentation included:

- GSYH Steering Group update
- Introduction to the new Forum Manager
- The work of the Forum

A full copy of the presentation is available by clicking [here](#) or can be viewed via the GreenSpace Yorkshire and Humber website and going to the Resources page.

3. Adapting to Change

With the new political landscape beginning to take shape, parks services must re-assess the methods in which they work and deliver.

An audio version from a recent presentation that Martyn Allison, National Advisor Culture & Sport, Local Government Improvement & Development delivered discussing how to approach the new landscape with the most effective tools, methods and advice available. Drawing on learning from the 'Positioning and Delivering Culture and Sport: The Main Driver's,' model and the government initiative 'Total Place', which looks at how a 'whole area' approach to public services can lead to a more cost effective outcome.

A full copy of the presentation is available by clicking [here](#) or can be viewed via the GreenSpace Yorkshire and Humber website and going to the Resources page.

The audio version and a transcribed version of the presentation is also available to GSYH members please contact [Caroline Schofield](#).

Discussion regarding Martyn Allison's presentation

Key discussion points that arose following the presentation were:

- a) Group were in agreement regarding Martyn Allison's comment regarding parks and green spaces are not quite "at the table" and that there is a great need to ensure representatives are present even if we as individuals cannot be.
- b) Councils are better focused on productivity however now is the time to stop doing everything; now we need to pick and choose (David Gill, Parks Services Manager, Barnsley MBC)
- c) There is a need to look at doing things differently and delivering through others (Martin Page, GSYH Steering Group Chair & Trustee, GreenSpace)
- d) The need to provide support to trusts; there is a concern regarding responsibility and trusts are the way forward now for Harrogate Borough Council. (Trish McLaughlin, Parks Development Manager, Harrogate Borough Council)
- e) Engagement with partnerships is key and there is a need to understand the types of partnerships which are currently available by completing research through surveys
- f) How can GSYH support and be a conduit of information.
- g) LA officers and volunteers: research should be carried out to fill in the gaps to provide LA's with the help that they need to complete the "nitty gritty" (Naomi Goddard, Parks Development Officer, Kirklees Council)
- h) The need to feed in information from other regions to Yorkshire and Humber.
- i) The possibility of a "Myth buster" role within GSYH to help distinguish the facts from the fiction (Stephen Hyde, Steering Group Vice Chair, GreenSpace Yorkshire & Humber)
- j) Exploring the options of contacting health boards and Health Assets – the advantages and challenges.
- k) Funding and HLF – how can the region and GreenSpace nationally be more involved.
- l) Looking forward there is a need to work more strategically.
- m) Council elections in May 2011 in York (Dave Meigh, Heads of Parks and Open Spaces, City of York Council)
- n) The idea that we need to better share research and information with each other and look at tackling issues in a different way – we need to discover what a 21st century park looks like (Alan Simson, Reader in Landscape Architecture & Urban Forestry, Leeds Metropolitan University)
- o) The idea of taking ownership of our own regions. (Caroline Schofield, Yorkshire and Humber Forum Manager, GreenSpace)
- p) Sector Identity - We need to remind ourselves of what we do. (Trish McLaughlin, Parks Development Manager, Harrogate Borough Council)
- q) Look at new ways of disseminating information effectively
- r) How we need to match the learner with the person who has the knowledge (Simon Chapman, Regions Development Manager, GreenSpace)
- s) Look at developing a Y&H Forum.

- t) The option of using the website or email system for circulating queries – Other options suggested were using a Facebook page, LinkedIn and Survey Monkey
- u) The idea that attendees could provide feedback regarding at least 3 of the 6 opportunities which are listed on the slide entitled ‘The challenges and opportunities for the sector.’ (Nick Illingworth, Interim Regional Director, Groundwork Yorkshire & The Humber)
- v) The option of disseminating positive stories to the region once, twice a month to promote what is happening within our region.
- w) Local authorities need to look at partnership working, new ways of delivering services and working with 3rd sector organisations for example BTCV and Groundwork. LA’s must look at reducing staff numbers but maintain productivity (Paul Appleton, Area Manager, BTCV)
- x) Steering group priorities (Martin Page, GSYH Steering Group Chair & Trustee, GreenSpace)
 - a) Sharing good ideas.
 - b) The sharing of concerns through different types and styles of communication.
 - c) How we can help you raise awareness with others. (Blue Sky Green Space document)
 - d) How we can help you influence other bodies e.g. health boards.
 - e) 3rd sector involvement – how can we help stimulate this?
- y) Ideas to take forward for the Steering Group (Stephen Hyde, Steering Group Vice Chair, GreenSpace Yorkshire and Humber)
 - a) Community budget examples
 - b) Council delivery model
 - c) Developing own indicators for Y&H region
- z) We need to look at discovering our own identity, how we get our message across and who we work with. It’s about the need to modernise and not to be so traditional (Deborah Wright, Safer, Cleaner, Greener Manager, Calderdale MBC)
- aa) We need to be more like architects, need to stop being so nice and get our hands dirty (Alan Simson, Reader in Landscape Architecture & Urban Forestry, Leeds Metropolitan University)

Afternoon Session: Green Flag Award Scheme

4. An update from the Green Flag Plus Partnership – Paul Todd, Green Flag Award Scheme Manager

Paul Todd gave an update regarding the Green Flag Awards scheme for this year and future plans for the scheme. Paul Appleton, BTCV representative also gave a short talk about the kinds of community groups which can apply for awards.

Key points from the presentation

- 1st time over 1,000 sites have been named as winners
- Green Pennant Award has now been renamed as Green Flag Community Award
- The Innovation Award and the People's Choice Award will both be available next year.
- Next year money through applications will be used for marketing
- GFA scheme is about a minimum standard – A "MOT for parks"
- Group Award, Mystery Shopper and Piloting of Community Assessment
- 14th January 2011 – deadline for applying to become a judge for Green Flag
- GF Representative for Y&H – Mary Bagley

A full copy of the presentation is available by clicking [here](#) or can be viewed via the GreenSpace Yorkshire and Humber website and going to the Resources page.

Key Questions asked during the presentation:

- Q - Martin Page enquired about how many applications were submitted for 2009/10 and what the current success rate is.
A - Paul Todd to circulate this information
- Q - Stephen Hyde wanted to know whether the Innovation Award is open to all GF and Green Pennant applicants.
A - Paul responded yes.
- Q - Stephen Hyde asked whether there will be any support for community groups with regards to helping develop management plans and applications.
A - Paul informed the group that the idea is to develop workshops with community groups from April 2011.
- Q - Martin Page enquired about the Group Award and management plan arrangements – will a management plan have to be submitted for each site?
A - Paul responded that yes a short management plan will have to be submitted for each site.

- Q - Stephen Hyde enquired about the Mystery Shopper process if you apply for the Group Award; what happens if a mystery shopper identifies a park which doesn't meet the required GF standard.
A - Paul confirmed that the park in question would move back into the standard process.
- Q - Caroline Schofield followed on by asking what would happen if an applicant put in an application to the Group Award for 5 parks and one park was moved down to the standard process, would they still be able to remain in the Group Award process?
A - Paul verified that yes the applicant would remain in the Group Award process.
- Q – Stephen Hyde commented on the slide entitled Selling the Benefits and asked what was the primary source for the statistics.
A – Paul confirmed that the statistics had been taken from GreenLINK's document Blue Sky Green Space.

5. Discussion regarding Paul Todd's presentation

The delegates were separated into two teams and were given two topics to discuss:

- a) The GF Judging cycle – What would work for you?
- b) What kind of GF branding would be useful for you?

Key issues raised for each topic were:

- a) The GF Judging cycle – What would work for you?
 - A longer time scale for judging – maybe a possibility to squeeze in a few extra weeks
 - More notice to plan visits required
 - Judging should avoid holidays /summer and conflict with Britain in Bloom
 - Judging should be done all year round and there should be a rolling programme of applications (Martin Page, GSYH Steering Group Chair & Trustee, GreenSpace)
 - Leave the judging cycle as it currently is (Dave Meigh, Heads of Parks and Open Spaces, City of York Council)
 - Overall the topic was seen as a “swings and roundabouts” dilemma.
 - The groups also agreed that there was a lot of overlap between the GFA scheme and Britain in Bloom.

Paul Todd enquired whether the groups felt that applications could be completed and submitted any quicker. The group agreed that they could be completed quicker it just depends on the agreed deadline.

- b) Branding
 - Car stickers, postcards, bookmarks
 - The involvement of supermarkets in campaign e.g. Tesco
 - The promotion of the success stories should be done more

- Size of materials – smaller banners could be offered rather than just large ones.
- Local award ceremonies for winners on the park site work really well and encourage local people to celebrate their success. (Paul Todd went on to make the point that national award ceremonies are unlikely to make a comeback therefore local award ceremonies are the way forward.)
- Banners for lampposts could be offered – Paul Todd confirmed that these are currently available and so are banners for fences
- Tourist Information Bureaus could be contacted about the GFA scheme e.g. Visit England.
- Tom-toms – area of interest for promoting GFA scheme
- It would be nice to see the GFA winner's flag displayed near the entrance of some parks so it is more visible to visitors.
- Idea of using apps for scheme - would be more aimed at young people. Also the idea of having separate Facebook and Twitter accounts.
- Pieces of a jigsaw within each GF site which could be put together
- A GF award winner logo could be created so that it could be included on stationery – ideally with year to avoid repeat misuse

Additional questions:

Dave Meigh, Heads of Parks and Open Spaces, City of York Council enquired about if a park scores highly one year, is there a possibility that they could keep their GFA for more than one year. Paul Todd to look into this option.

Paul Todd also confirmed that the Group Award will be evaluated in January and it is likely that the pilot will be continued for another 12 months. A pricing structure for the Group Award is not yet available.

6. Summing Up – Martin Page

Morning Session

- Sector identity
- Share good ideas and issues
- Review Communication in region
- How can we help you raise awareness?
- If we can help you influence others
- Tell us what you want
- 3rd sector involvement

Afternoon Session

- Provide application numbers to establish success rate
- People's Choice Award – Could Y&H go for this and win it?
- Continuing engagement with regional forums and GFA scheme