

Fields in Trust

A Briefing Note



Fields in Trust champions and supports our parks and green spaces by protecting them for people to enjoy in perpetuity. Because once green spaces are lost, they are lost forever.



"I was very fortunate that growing up in Jersey I had a huge amount of access to outdoor spaces and it was something I really appreciated as a youngster, not just because I wanted to be a football player but also because I was able to spend time outdoors with my friends. I understand how important these spaces are and the opportunities they provide for our communities."

Graeme Le Saux
Fields in Trust Ambassador and former England international

Our **Revaluing Parks and Green Spaces** research quantifies the health and wellbeing benefits that parks and green spaces provide to the individual. Using HM Treasury best practice, we have identified they provide £34.2 billion worth of physical and mental health benefits every year.

It's a persuasive statistic, as is the fact that £111 million worth of NHS cost savings are made every year because frequent park users have better general health and are less likely to visit the GP.

The creation of a new park on derelict land in Newbold, Rugby resulted in local residents feeling healthier, happier and becoming more active.

Fields in Trust conducted research into Centenary Park in Rugby which opened in April 2016 and features a green outdoor gym, play area, multi-use games area, wildlife meadow, butterfly bank and sensory garden. The space was also protected by Rugby Borough Council as part of Fields in Trust's Centenary Fields programme.

The research found that since Centenary Park opened three times as many people visit local parks daily than before with over 60% of park visitors reporting feeling happier and better about themselves. Half said they had significantly more access to nature and two-thirds said the most important reason for visiting was physical activity.

Policy Context

Parks and green spaces are increasingly prominent on the Westminster Parliamentary agenda. Fields in Trust is a member of the **Parks Action Group** convened by the **Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government**.

The **Department of Health and Social Care** vision document, "Prevention is Better than Cure", supports our research findings stating: "Our mental and physical health is also shaped by the neighbourhoods we live in, including access to green space". **Public Health England** have recently issued a briefing paper about the role of accessible green space in tackling child obesity. Parks and green spaces are vital for the successful delivery of the **Department for Culture, Media and Sport** "Sporting Future" strategy and the aspiration to build a more active nation.

DEFRA's ambitious 25-year plan identifies the need to protect and enhance the natural environment; the plan (Ch3) also identifies the role that urban environments have in improving health and wellbeing.

Published by **DCMS**, the Government's strategy to tackle loneliness, "A Connected Society", recognises "the value of public parks and green spaces, helping them bring together communities now and in the future".

The overarching "Civil Society Strategy" lists several areas of social policy where access to parks can make a positive contribution by supporting positive physical and mental health outcomes and allow space for social mixing. It goes on to include "educational and training opportunities and encourage business investment".

Contributing to this diverse policy agenda is an extensive workload, but parks and green spaces are arguably the most universal of our public services - we believe they are good, do good, and should be protected for good.



spotlight on...

Rugby's Centenary Park

Fields in Trust's work

- **Protect:** Green spaces are good, do good and need to be protected for good. They are not pleasant nice-to-haves to be taken for granted - they are the green hearts of our communities.
- **Support:** Parks and green spaces should be open to everyone, connecting people and catalysing community spirit. Places we can all move, breathe, run and play.
- **Champion:** Parks and green spaces have a positive impact on a range of key issues from physical and mental health and wellbeing to community cohesion. They need to be revalued for their contributions to society.



Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play

First published as The Six Acre Standard in the 1930s our guidance on the provision of space for sport and play is firmly embedded in the planning lexicon.

The 2015 edition Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play is a one-stop shop for all practitioners in the planning and design of both informal and formal space to meet the recreational needs of the community.



Fields in Trust's history

Since our founding in 1925 we have been protecting and improving outdoor space under key protection programmes:

- King George V Playing Fields: protected in tribute to our first Patron, King George V.
- Queen Elizabeth II Fields: protected in celebration of the 2012 Diamond Jubilee and the London Olympic and Paralympic Games.
- Centenary Fields: our recently concluded programme, delivered with The Royal British Legion to permanently protect recreational spaces connected to World War I.
- Active Spaces: our programme protecting spaces and supporting community activation; the first UK-wide funding by the London Marathon Charitable Trust.



Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play is available in versions for England, Scotland and Wales, plus a Welsh language version



Barn Elms Playing Fields, London

Protected parks and green spaces

Fields in Trust uses charity and contract law to protect valuable public and recreational land for the long term.

We protect land through a Deed of Dedication. It's a robust yet flexible way to do it. The Deeds are a legally binding document which means each space is protected for future generations to enjoy. We work in partnership with landowners including sports clubs, private individuals and local authorities to achieve this protection.

A total of 2,809 parks and green spaces across the UK are protected with us in perpetuity. To find out if your local park or green space is safe, visit: www.fieldsintrust.org