

LINKING UP ACROSS THE COUNTRY

The National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces is the federation of area forums and networks of local Friends and User groups for Britain's green spaces.

We are calling for the setting up of Friends groups for every green space, and Forums of such groups for every area and town.

Our aims:

- Protection of green spaces, and creation of new ones
- Ensuring sufficient resources (capital and revenue)
- Seeking good levels and quality of staffing and management
- Full involvement of Friends/Users groups in management of their parks and open spaces

How we support each other

- Sharing ideas and experiences, and spreading best practice
- Promoting and aiding the development of Friends/Users Forums and networks in all towns and areas of the UK
- Raising the profile of green spaces generally, and lobbying for the improvements needed

Membership: Any Forum or network of local Friends/Users groups, run mainly by and for such groups, has an automatic right to be part of the NFPGS.

The NFPGS was founded in March 2008 at a meeting of 9 local/town-wide Forums with a combined membership of 398 local Friends groups. Since then more networks have joined, with NFPGS now involving around 1,500 groups. NFPGS was constituted in Feb 2010.

NFPGS regional reps:

Midlands: info@bosf.org.uk **London:** dmorris@onetel.com

South West: info@bristolparksforum.org.uk

North West: Christine.hession@btinternet.com **North East:** tomcranston34@yahoo.co.uk

We're seeking reps in Wales, Scotland & N. Ireland. Environmental charity GreenSpace provides admin support: community@green-space.org.uk

www.green-space.org.uk/community/nfpgs

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF PARKS AND GREEN SPACES

STANDING UP FOR OUR VITAL LOCAL GREEN SPACES!

Green spaces are vitally important and make a unique and priceless contribution to the health and well-being of all sections and interests in our local communities, and to our urban environment. They are places to relax, meet, play, exercise, learn and work.... and much more!

From ornamental gardens to nature reserves, woodlands to sports pitches, allotments to cemeteries, green open spaces provide a huge range of opportunities both for wildlife and for local residents, some of whom have no other access to nature or any sizeable free outdoor space.

GETTING ORGANISED

In recent years communities have got much more actively involved in the future of our local green spaces, seeking improvements. There are now around 4,000 local Friends and Users groups!

Local groups meet regularly to:

- discuss our views and concerns
- lobby for better maintenance, and for improvements
- work in partnership with managers
- produce leaflets, Newsletters and webpages
- organise a wide range of events, from planting and clear-up days, to picnics, nature walks and festivals
- develop long-term visions for how our parks *could* and *should* be
- research and publish history
- apply for grants for some of the things above

Forums and networks of local groups are springing up all over the country to share their ideas and experiences, pool their efforts, identify and insist on 'best practice', conduct collective and effective lobbying, and ensure a high profile for the needs of green spaces.



ADEQUATE RESOURCES — FOR ALL GREEN SPACES

**All green spaces deserve to be properly looked after!
There should be a statutory duty on all authorities to ensure that the green spaces they are responsible for are properly maintained and managed.**

THE PROBLEMS, IN OUR EXPERIENCE

The 'hands on' experience of Friends groups throughout the UK is that:

- There is **currently a large shortfall in funding** (capital and revenue) for almost all green spaces, with many paths, buildings and other facilities in a state of disrepair, and a lack of staffing.
- Local communities and park users are **unfairly expected to wait years or even decades for basic repairs and much needed improvements**, and - even worse - to compete with others for scarce resources.
- Local Councils and other authorities are **constantly reducing green space budgets, instead of increasing them**. This is largely due to inadequate funding for this from Central Government.
- The situation **will get much worse** if Central Government continues to cut resources for all our public services.

We know that an under-resourced park can soon deteriorate and become a negative space full of fear and anti-social activity. It makes no sense to make cuts in parks budgets given the huge contribution they make — in fact they offer fantastic value for money!

WHAT CAN WE ALL DO?

Speak out now! We must raise the profile of green spaces. Friends groups and all those concerned need to speak out about what's happening, identify what resources our green spaces need, and lobby for such resources. **Doing nothing is not an option!**

The current limited 'options' are neither desirable nor sustainable. Whilst individual groups may have little or no choices, collectively we must challenge strategies which mean we are being asked to...

- **compete** for ever-decreasing funding sources
- **wait** for decades for much needed improvements
- **choose** between parks or other essential public and community services. All need adequate funding.
- **put up with** further **"outsourcing"** and **privatisation** of management and maintenance **without proper safeguards**
- **take over** the running of green spaces ourselves **without full funding and back-up** from local authorities or other owners.

Cuts can be countered and reversed if there is massive public pressure to call for the funding and staffing needed. If not we will face a return to the disastrous cuts and neglect of the 1980s-90s.

It will be essential to promote and strengthen independent Friends groups and networks across the whole country. We will need co-ordinated local, regional and national lobbying and campaigning.

The National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces calls on all concerned people and organisations - friends groups and residents associations, voluntary and community groups, local Councils, green space workers and trade unions, charities and political organisations - to lobby for adequate resources and funding for the effective maintenance, management and improvement of all green spaces.