

CHESHAM TOWN COUNCIL

PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

BEST VALUE SERVICE REVIEW

JULY 2001

CHESHAM TOWN COUNCIL

BEST VALUE SERVICE REVIEWS – YEAR ONE

PARKS, OPEN SPACES AND PLAYGROUNDS

1. Review Group

- 1.1 A Review Group was appointed by the Best Value Panel on 8 May 2000. The members of the group are :

Councillor Mrs. P.R. Wilkinson
Councillor P.W. Yerrell
R. Ayres – Parks & Premises Manager
M.W. Kennedy – Town Clerk

2. Review Timetable

- 2.1 The Council's rationale for reviewing this service coincided with the retirement of a member of the Parks and Premises Team in December 1999. This presented the Council with an early opportunity to review its Direct Labour Organisation.
- 2.2 The Review Group met on 24 May and 21 June with further update reports to the Best Value Panel. The Notes of these meetings are reproduced as *Appendix 6*.

3. Assessment of Current Service Provision

- 3.1 Town and Parish Councils have powers to acquire, by agreement, by purchase or lease any open space whether situated inside or outside its area. They may also undertake the entire or partial care, management and control of an open space, Open Spaces Act 1906; Local Government Act 1972, as amended by Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980.
- 3.2 The provision of this service by a local authority is a non-statutory function.

Impact the Service has on the Community

- 3.3 The Council's Parks and Open Spaces provide amenities and opportunities for recreational pursuits within a safe environment. The promotion of these areas for the maximum benefit of the people of Chesham and visitors alike satisfies the Council's strategic objective for this service.

Current Standards

- 3.4 We consult the public about the provision of amenity and recreational areas. The scope of work includes:
- (i) Grass cutting;
 - (ii) Litter picking;
 - (iii) Flower beds and grass verges;
 - (iv) Hanging baskets.

3.5 A full schedule of tasks is shown at *Appendix 1*. The Council seeks to

- maintain these areas to a high standard;
- keep these areas in an aesthetically pleasing condition
- constantly ensure these areas are in a safe condition for public use
- monitor the level of usage of these areas
- monitor the level of user satisfaction
- monitor the problems arising from individual areas
- monitor the costs of these areas against usage levels
- continuously consider changes or improvements to these areas through user consultation
- continuously consider service delivery methods

Current Service Provision

3.6 The Council provides Parks and Open Spaces at the following locations:

- Lowndes Park including pond, island, junior play area and Archena Gardens
- The Moor including Cannons Wood, Moor "Marsh", the hardstanding (car park) and play area
- Meades Water Gardens including Red Lion Street Gardens
- Codmore Recreation Ground
- Nashleigh Hill Recreation Ground
- Marston Recreation Ground
- Co-op Field
- Lye Green
- Manor Way Island

The Council also maintains a number of smaller areas e.g.: 12 children's play areas, raised planters, St. Mary's Church Yard and Annex grounds etc. These are included at *Appendix 2*.

4. Current Level of Service

- 4.1 Administration, letting of facilities and monitoring of usage etc. is undertaken by staff at the Town Hall. The management, supervision and day to day running of the Parks and Open Spaces is undertaken by the Parks and Premises Manager and a fulltime staff of five operatives.
- 4.2 The Council owns and maintains approximately 36 hectares (88 acres) of Parks and Open Spaces at 17 locations within Chesham. The Council also owns and maintains 5 bus shelters, the Clock Tower in Market Square, two sports pavilions - one each at Marston and Codmore Recreation Grounds, 12 children's play areas containing 61 items of play equipment in total, and the War Memorial. The Council also owns 1.12 acres of land at Big Round Green which is leased to the Woodland Trust and provides and maintains 51 hanging baskets throughout the Town.
- 4.3 The Council maintains other areas that are not owned by this Authority, eg the Council fulfils its statutory obligation to maintain St. Mary's closed church yard and maintains a road traffic island in St. Mary's Way (though sponsorship by a local company).
- 4.4 There are 22 dog-waste bins on Town Council land; Chiltern District Council empties these under contract.

4.5 The Council also undertakes ground maintenance work under contract for the following organisations :

- Chiltern District Council - Windsor Road Recreation Ground grass cutting
- Bucks County Council - 5 schools, library and 6.76 acres of roadside verges
- Girl Guide Association - Guide hut grass cutting

5. Consultation

- 5.1 The Chesham Survey 2000, inviting local residents to comment on the services provided by the Council, was sent to every household in Chesham. By May, 1,462 replies had been received and analysed by Summit Services Limited, a 17.3% response rate. Section 1 of the questionnaire deals specifically with Parks and Open Spaces, and this section of the survey is reproduced as *Appendix 3*.
- 5.2 It is encouraging to note from the survey, that of the responses received, 67% rated all of the facilities in Lowndes Park as "Fair to Excellent", while only 5.7% said the facilities were "Poor or Bad".
- 5.3 A number of user surveys took place during Summer 2000 at various locations around Chesham. The results of these surveys are reproduced as *Appendices 4, 4a* and *4b*. A further inspection of users undertaken by Councillor Bacon on 12th April, 5th and 7th May is shown as *Appendix 4c*.
- 5.4 *Appendix 4a* consists of two charts showing a round-up of figures from the survey – **Chart A** shows the main reasons for using the Park and other Open Spaces. The chart shows at a glance that the children's play areas are the main attraction.
- 5.5 **Chart B** shows what it is that people most enjoy about these areas. It can be seen from this chart that the nearness to home is the main benefit, followed closely by open space and playthings.
- 5.6 *Appendix 4b* gives **Chart C** - what do you least enjoy about the Park and other Open Spaces? At a glance, it can be seen that the Public Toilets are the main concern in Lowndes Park. These are owned and maintained by the District Council. The main concern about the open spaces in general is readily seen to be litter and lack of facilities.
- 5.7 The survey also shows "other comments", e.g. suggestions for additional facilities and problems such as lack of litter bins and horse riding on the open space.

6. SWOT Analysis

The following strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are identified :

Strengths

- π responsive Town Council
- π service desired and required by residents and visitors alike, a "demand"
- π encourages social interaction - all ages
- π geographically accessible locations throughout Chesham
- π wide variety of facilities - play equipment, sports, waterways with wildfowl etc
- π local Council enable direct and immediate control of the service
- π local staff equals local interest

Weakness

- π work ratio to manpower "financial constraints"
- π quality of work is dictated by severe weather conditions
- π areas vulnerable to littering
- π increasing Health and Safety responsibilities = time = manpower

Opportunities

- π to investigate the outsourcing of selected tasks to improve standards
- π to reduce equipment costs by outsourcing some specialist tasks
- π to increase and expand the range of facilities, access for the disabled
- π to increase efficiency by simplifying working regimes
- π to encourage local involvement through volunteer groups e.g. Friends of Lowndes Park
- π to reduce costs by uniting with local authorities e.g. joint working - bulk buying, sharing of equipment etc
- π to respond to demands for a wider spectrum of facilities e.g. wild flower areas, disabled facilities and picnic facilities

Threats

- π increasing costs e.g. labour, machinery and equipment, training needs
- π increasing Health and Safety legislation may result in the closure of playthings
- π vandalism

7. Assessment of Competitiveness

7.1 The Review Group considered that it was necessary and valuable to explore the option of retaining all of the services in-house, or contracting out all, or part of them.

Four main tasks were considered :

- grass cutting - fine areas
- flowerbed maintenance
- herbicide application to hard areas (paths, drives, etc)
- hanging basket displays and maintenance

7.2 Specifications for each task were drawn up showing the current in-house methods, frequencies, standards and costs were evaluated. Reputable contractors were invited to tender for each task using the specifications.

7.3 The following figures show the cost differences for each task :

Task	In-house	Chenies Landscapes	Simon Collins
Hanging basket maintenance	£1861.00	£4700.00 (inc. supply plants)	£1632.00
Flowerbed maintenance	£3762.00	£3180.00	
Grass cutting - fine areas	£5332.00	£5100.00	
Herbicide application	£2141.00	£2040.00	

- 7.4 Financially, the figures show there are savings in placing these tasks out to contract. The standard of work produced, and the safety procedures used by these contractors have been observed regularly, and approved by the Officers of this Authority.
- 7.5 The in-house work force produces a fair standard in all tasks, but some weaknesses have been identified. These are mainly brought about by the volume of work, and the diversity of the tasks required to provide a wholly comprehensive service to the people of Chesham. It is clearly necessary to put some tasks out to specialist contractors, this would reduce the pressure on the workforce, enabling a greater concentration on those areas previously neglected, and also save on the cost of purchasing or leasing certain specialist items of equipment.
- 7.6 Contracts have been awarded to the two named contractors shown above. These contracts are for one year only, and the standard of work will be monitored and compared with previous and existing regimes. If the contractors complete the contract work successfully and to the specification, other tasks will be evaluated and costed, specifications produced, and a larger number of contractors invited to tender.

8. Monitoring Arrangements

- 8.1 The service is monitored by the Sports & Leisure Committee of the Town Council who receive regular reports from the Parks and Premises Manager. The day to day management is undertaken by the Town Council's Parks & Premises Department.
- 8.2 The Sports & Leisure Committees meets on approximately six occasions per year to discuss all aspects of the service. The condition of all play items is inspected and monitored by trained members of the Parks and Premises Department. The Parks & Premises Manager undertakes the overall management, inspections, monitoring and prioritising of work programmes.

Service Delivery

- 8.3 The overall service is provided in-house by the Town Council which is responsible for the following main tasks :
- Grass cutting - both fine and utility areas
 - Hedge cutting and tree pruning
 - Flowerbed planting and maintenance
 - Hanging baskets
 - Litter picking
 - Herbicide application
 - Inspection and maintenance of children's play equipment
 - Minor maintenance of buildings
- 8.4 A comprehensive list of all tasks carried out within this service is shown as *Appendix 1*. Some tasks are out-sourced, for example, major Arboreal work, electrical and plumbing maintenance.

9. Performance Indicators

- 9.1 The performance indicators for this service are :

Performance Indicator	1999/2000	Target 2000/01	Current Performance	Target 2001/02
Cost to the Council per elector	£ 4.01	£ 4.68	£ 4.92	£ 6.22

Cost to the Council per hectare	£1,777	£2,074	£2,180	£2,756 **
Number of items of play equipment	61	61	61	63 *
Percentage satisfaction taken from questionnaire	n/a	70%	92%	92%
Percentage of play equipment inspected and made safe within 24 hours of reported defect	n/a	n/a	95%	100%
Percentage of sites visited and inspected each fortnight	n/a	n/a	95%	100%
Number of events held in the Park	0	0	4	10

* New items of play equipment due Summer 2001.

** The increase in target for 2001/02 is mainly due to increased staff wages, see 12.4.

Our performance against last year's targets set :

Target	Progress
To undertake a Best Value Performance Review of the service	To be completed May 2001

10. Performance Targets

10.1 The provision of Parks, Open Spaces and Playgrounds is a high profile activity in the Council's portfolio of services. Covering approximately 89 acres, these areas offer a wide range of activities providing pleasure and interest for visitors.

10.2 Key targets for the year commencing April 2001 -

- to complete a Best Value Performance Review of the service (achieved)
- to install a new skate park and junior play area within Lowndes Park
- to develop a policy on managing school's grounds maintenance work for local schools
- to develop a policy on urban highway grass verge maintenance work for the County Council
- to provide a programme of events in the park throughout the Summer

10.3 Observations by Council staff and comments received from the public and users, have enabled other areas of improvement to be identified. Our operational improvement targets commencing April 2001 include -

- to increase the areas of fine turf mowing
- to increase the frequency of herbicide application to hard areas - from two to three per year
- to increase the standards of maintenance to the town's hanging baskets
- to increase the standards of maintenance regimes to flower bedding schemes

11. Comparisons

11.1 The Review Group has experienced some difficulty obtaining meaningful comparative data from other Best Value Councils. The principal reason for this is the broad definition of "Parks and Open Spaces".

- 11.2 A number of Councils include allotments (e.g. Oswestry and Woodley Town Councils) within their classification of Parks and Open Spaces while others include sport pitches and pavilions (e.g. Sevenoaks and Malvern Town Councils). Some Councils have excluded, what they consider to be, their principal park e.g. John Coles Park in Chippenham and CaeGlas Park in Oswestry and have established their own cost centre for these "showpiece" parks.
- 11.3 Five Town Councils have been selected for benchmarking purposes, Chippenham, Dunstable, Dorchester and St. Neots and Swanage. This is not to say that these Councils provide identical services for example Chippenham have six play areas to Chesham's twelve. The provision of Marston and Codmore sports facilities has been excluded from the following data but the full cost of the works depot has been included as the majority of this forms part of the cost of the provision of Parks and Open Spaces.

Authority	Cost of Service 2000/2001	Cost per Elector
Chesham	£132,375	£8.33
Chippenham *	£146,900	£6.92
Dorchester	£351,389	£26.01
Dunstable	£112,515	£4.37
St. Neots	£ 48,810	£2.42
Swanage	£166,795	£25.50

12. **Financial Appraisal**

- 12.1 The current year's estimates for 2001/2002 have been adjusted for Capital Charges and are detailed below to show the cost to the Town Council of managing the Parks and Open Spaces, including the provision of play equipment, seats, poop scoop byelaws, events in the Park etc.

<u>Expenditure</u>	<u>Works Depot</u>	<u>Parks & Open Spaces</u>	<u>Amenities</u>	<u>Total</u>
	£	£	£	£
Parks and Premises Manager	24,940	-	-	24,940
Direct labour wages	5,000	57,580	4,620	67,200
Staff costs (clothing, training etc)	2,850	-	-	2,850
Central admin	7,140	300	3,890	11,330
Operational costs	6,010	750	5,040	11,800
Vehicle / Machinery costs	14,000	-	-	14,000
Poop Scoop Byelaws	-	-	2,400	2,400
Play Equipment Maintenance	-	-	3,410	3,410
Events in the Park	-	1,500	-	1,500
Capital Charges	14,540	-	10,240	24,780
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Total Expenditure	74,480	60,130	29,600	164,210

Income				
Lye Green access	-	3,500	-	3,500
Ice Cream concession	-	1,800	-	1,800
Sundry income (including fairs, circuses)	100	360	1,450	1,910
Total Income	100	5,660	1,450	7,210
<u>Net Cost to the Council</u>	74,380	54,470	28,150	157,000

12.2 A comparison for the last four years including an adjustment for notional capital interest charges is shown below.

	1998/1999 Actual £	1999/2000 Actual £	2000/2001 Revised Estimate £	2001/2002 Estimated £
Works Depot	61,250	64,170	69,010	74,380
Parks	37,280	38,850	48,020	54,470
Amenities	25,940	17,850	29,820	28,150
	124,470	120,870	146,850	157,000

12.3 The increase of £25,980 between the actual 1999/2000 and revised estimate of 2000/2001 is mainly due to :

<u>Works Depot</u>	
Salaries / staff costs	2,000
Maintenance etc	2,600
<u>Parks</u>	
Wages (replacement of staff 1999/2000)	6,000
Legal fees	1,000
Reduced income - ice cream / filming fees	1,850
<u>Amenities</u>	
Play equipment maintenance / replacements	9,000
Seats	1,350
Tree works	1,000
	24,800

- 12.4 The estimated increase of £10,150 in years 2000/2001 and 2001/2002 is mainly due to increased staff wages due to the staff grading review £6,000 and provision for sickness cover £2,400.
- 12.5 A detailed analysis of the cost to the Council of maintaining its 12 play areas is shown below :

PLAY AREA COSTINGS

	April 2000	April 2001
	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Projected</u>
	£	£
Co-op Field	183.55	1,800.00
Marston Field	231.85	-
Windsor Road Recreation Ground	632.80	900.00
Batchelors Way	460.90	500.00
Nashleigh Hill Recreation Ground	1,028.87	632.20
Codmore Field	599.00	-
Gordon Road	690.45	3,500.00
Woodland View	945.60	124.40
Bois Hill	360.65	2,681.00
Hodds Wood	421.90	750.00
Moor Road	350.25	2,581.00
Lowndes Park	1,395.65	500.00
TOTAL	7,301.47	13,968.60

Costs = annual inspections, in-house inspections, litter picking, grass cutting (where applicable), replacement parts through wear and tear and vandalism, labour to fit the above

- 12.6 Projected Expenditure for the year 2001/02 on fencing, replacement programme of swings, replacement bins and benches is shown below :

PLAY AREAS

Analysis of Projected Expenditure 2001/02

		£
Co-op	- replace bench	300.00 *
	- fence area	1500.00 *
Marston	-	-
Windsor Road	- replace bench	300.00 *
	- change fence to weldmesh	500.00 *
	- anti-vandal litter bins	100.00 *
Batchelors Way	- change fence to weldmesh	500.00 *

Nashleigh Hill	- 2 x benches	632.20
Codmore Recreation	-	-
Gordon Road	- rebuild retaining wall	3500.00
Woodland View	- rebuild wooden fence 'part'	124.40
Bois Hill	- supply bench, bin, swing (rolling prog.)	2681.00 *
Hodds Wood	- supply bench, bin, change fence (weldmesh)	750.00 *
Moor Road	- supply bench, replace swing (10')	2581.00 *
Lowndes Park	- replace vandalised litter bins	500.00 *

* = in-house labour to be added

13. **Assessment of the Options for Improving the Service**

Play Equipment

- 13.1 The advent of the European Playground Equipment and Safety Surfacing Standards, has emphasised the need for greater attention to all play items.
- 13.2 An annual inspection is carried out in May by Trained Inspection Engineers to BS EN 1176 and BS EN 1177. An inspection by Council staff took place in the past on an approximately three weekly basis. From April 2001, the frequencies have been increased to fortnightly and a target for increasing the inspection to weekly from April 2002 is set.

Arboreal Works

- 13.3 Chesham has a huge number of trees throughout the Town, the majority of which receive attention throughout the winter months. This ranges from dead-wooding, de-suckering, raising of low branches etc. Some trees require specialist treatment. The budget has been increased from £500 to £1,000 over the last two years, and will be increased in future years. There are a large number of Willow Trees beside the River Chess, that require pollarding every few years to enhance their growth and prevent them falling. This is specialist work and we are fortunate to receive regular assistance from the Countryside Services Department of Bucks County Council which, for the last few years, have pollarded many trees in Cannons Wood and Meades Water Gardens.

Improving Standards

- 13.4 Certain tasks have been out-sourced, enabling a greater concentration to be made on those areas which were previously maintained to a lower standard. From April 2001 it is intended that :
- a) All hedgerows which border paths and roads will receive a minimum of two cuts per annum

- b) Increase frequencies of play equipment inspections
- c) Increase frequencies of litter picking (esp: Park and High Street areas)
- d) Monthly clean of the River Chess Sluice Stream (for cress and other growth)
- e) Extra attention to shrubs and climbing plants
- g) More attention to structures e.g.: bus shelters and notice boards - especially quicker response to vandalism and graffiti.

Volunteer Groups

13.5 Local groups such as Rotary and Rotaract, have made several improvements around the Town for a number of years. During spring 2001 the Rotary Club of Chesham cleared and replanted the raised planters in St. Mary's Way. Opportunities to receive assistance on a number of projects eg: litter blitz, riverside cleaning etc will also be explored.

14. Continuous Review

14.1 The Best Value Panel will review its objectives, achievements and failures each year. New and ongoing objectives will be published in the annual Best Value Performance Plan.

14.2 The Council will look to establish a Friends of Lowndes Park Group, which, it is hoped, will help to identify the needs of the users, and assist with the upkeep of the park through 'local involvement'.

14.3 Increased involvement by volunteers local to other areas will be explored, with a view to providing the same assistance as Lowndes Park i.e.: identify the changing needs of each individual locality, and assist with the upkeep - local involvement should bring the additional benefit of a reduction in vandalism.

14.4 The annual review by the Best Value Panel, along with the input from volunteer groups will ensure that the Council is in touch with the changing needs of the people of Chesham, and ensure continuous service improvement.

15. Service Improvement Plan

15.1 The Review Group has identified a five year phased plan for service delivery - see **Appendix 5**.

A P P E N D I C E S

Appendix	1	Schedule of Tasks Performed by the Parks & Premises Team
Appendix	2	Locations of Parks, Open Spaces and Playgrounds
Appendix	3	Chesham Survey 2000
Appendix	4	User Survey
	4a	Chart A - Main reason for using Park
		Chart B - What do you most enjoy about the Park
	4b	Chart C - What do you least enjoy about the Park
	4c	Councillor A.K. Bacon's Survey of Users
Appendix	5	Action Plan
Appendix	6	Notes of Panel Meetings

KEY TASKS

Lowndes Park including Pond and Island and Play Area

Grass cutting	-	15 occasions
Grass cutting rides (top park) monthly	-	7 occasions
Grass cutting (top park)	-	2 occasions
Litterpick	-	summer 180 occasions, winter 50 occasions
Beds (clear / plant)	-	2 occasions
Beds (edge and maintain weed free)	-	15 occasions
Beds (water)	-	As necessary
Apply herbicide	-	3 occasions
Leaf clear	-	3 occasions
Hedge cutting	-	2 occasions
Shrub pruning	-	50% per occasion - 2 occasions
Maintain trees	-	As necessary

St. Mary's Church and Annex and Archena Gardens

Grass cutting - fine area	-	15 occasions
Grass cutting - main area	-	15 occasions
Apply herbicide	-	3 occasions
Leaf clear	-	3 occasions
Hedge cutting	-	2 occasions
Shrub pruning	-	2 occasions
Maintain trees	-	As necessary

The Moor including Cannons Wood

Grass cutting	-	15 occasions
Litterpick	-	52 occasions
Maintain trees	-	As necessary
Trim trees back from paths (Cannons Wood)-	-	2 occasions

Moor 'Marsh', Hardstanding, Play Area and Sports Centre

Grass cutting	-	15 occasions
Litterpick	-	52 occasions
Apply herbicide	-	3 occasions
Leaf clear	-	3 occasions
Hedge cutting	-	1 occasion
Maintain trees	-	As necessary
Clear sluice stream	-	1 occasion

Friedrichsdorf Corner, Meades Water Garden, Red Lion Street Gardens and Duck Alley

Grass cutting - fine areas	-	20 occasions
Grass cutting - amenity areas	-	15 occasions

Litterpick	-	52 occasions
Apply herbicide	-	3 occasions
Leaf clear	-	3 occasions
Beds (clear / plant)	-	2 occasions
Beds (edge and maintain weed free)	-	15 occasions
Beds (water)	-	As necessary
Hedge cutting	-	1 occasion
Shrub pruning	-	1 occasion
Maintain trees	-	As necessary
Clear waterlay	s	1 occasion
Clear weirs	-	As necessary

St. Mary's Way Shrub "Verge", Raised Planters and Roundabout

Apply herbicide	-	3 occasions
Trim shrubs back from road	-	1 occasion
Grass cutting - fine area	-	30 occasions
Beds (clear / plant)	-	2 occasions
Beds (edge and maintain weed free)	-	15 occasions (including planters)
Beds (water)	-	As necessary

Elgiva

Litterpick (2 wkly)	-	104 occasions
Apply herbicide	-	3 occasions
Prune shrubs	-	2 occasions

War Memorial, Raised Planters and High Street Trees / Grills and Town Hall

Grass cutting - fine area	-	30 occasions
Litterpick (2/3wkly)	-	104-156 occasions
Apply herbicide	-	3 occasions
Beds (clear / plant)	-	2 occasions
Beds (edge and maintain weed free)	-	15 occasions
Beds (water)	-	As necessary
Hedge cutting (War Memorial)	-	2 occasions and as necessary
Maintain trees and stakes	-	As necessary
Paint War Memorial kerbs	-	1 occasion
Wash "soldier"	-	1 occasion and as necessary

White Hill, Codmore Cross and Manor Way Island

Grass cutting - fine area	-	30 occasions
Grass cutting - amenity areas	-	15 occasions
Apply herbicide	-	3 occasions
Beds (clear / plant)	-	2 occasions
Beds (edge and maintain weed free)	-	15 occasions
Beds (water)	-	As necessary
Prune shrubs (Harding Stone)	-	1 occasion
Maintain trees (Manor Way)	-	As necessary
Paint / replace white posts (Manor Way)	-	As necessary

Lye Green

Grass cutting - amenity area - 15 occasions

Codmore Recreation Ground and Play Area

Grass cutting - amenity areas - 15 occasions
Litterpick - 52 occasions
Apply herbicide - 3 occasions
Hedge cutting - 1 occasion
Hedge cutting beside public footpath - 2 occasions
Maintain trees - As necessary

Nashleigh Hill Recreation Ground and Dell

Grass cutting - amenity areas - 15 occasions
Litterpick - 52 occasions
Apply herbicide - 3 occasions
Hedge cutting - 1 occasion
Maintain trees - As necessary

Marston Recreation Ground and Play Area

Grass cutting - amenity areas - 15 occasions
Litterpick - 52 occasions
Apply herbicide - 3 occasions
Hedge cutting - 1 occasion
Maintain trees - As necessary
Leaf clear - As necessary

Co-op Field

Grass cutting - amenity area - 15 occasions
Litterpick - 52 occasions
Hedge cutting (no formal) - As necessary
Maintain trees - As necessary

TASKS PERFORMED AS AND WHEN REQUIRED

Snow clear / apply Rocksalt	-	As necessary
Fit new or repairs to structures	-	Benches, litter bins
	-	Signs, stiles, fences
	-	Gates, walls
Repair paths and roads	-	As necessary
Repairs / alterations to buildings	-	Sports Centre, pavilions, bus shelters, Elgiva
	-	Town Hall, Maintenance Depot, shelters
Urgent repairs - electrical and plumbing	-	As necessary
Remove / replace hardstanding barriers	-	5 occasions
Arrange water supply for circus	-	1 occasion
Apply bark chips to muddy areas	-	As necessary
Fix posters to noticeboards	-	As required
Deliver letters to Councillors	-	As required
Deliver bye-election notices to shops, schools etc	-	As necessary
Transport furniture between sites - Town Hall, Elgiva, Pavilion	-	As necessary
Transport crockery / cutlery between sites	-	As necessary
As above	-	As necessary
Raise / lower sluice gate	-	As necessary

Fenced Play Areas (separate to Recreation Grounds)

Windsor Road Recreation Ground

'Hard surface'	-	Sweep as necessary
Apply herbicide	-	3 occasions

Batchelors Way Recreation Ground

Apply herbicide	-	3 occasions
Grass cutting	-	15 occasions

Gordon Road

'Hard surface'	-	Sweep as necessary
Apply herbicide	-	3 occasions

Woodland View

Apply herbicide	-	3 occasions
Grass cutting	-	15 occasions

Bois Moor Road

Apply herbicide	-	3 occasions
Grass cutting	-	15 occasions

Hodds Wood Road

Apply herbicide	-	3 occasions
Grass cutting	-	15 occasions

SPORT AND PLAY FACILITIES

Play Areas

Visual inspection of 62 play items

(Avg.: 3 wkly)

- Target weekly

Repair / update play items

- As necessary

Football pitches - 4

Erect / dismantle 8 sets goal posts

- 2 occasions

Measure / mark 4 pitches

- 1 occasion

Re-mark 4 pitches

- Possibly 30 occasions

Field husbandry

- To be investigated

Cricket Wicket

Roll and re-mark

- 1 occasion

MISCELLANEOUS TASKS - VARIOUS LOCATIONS

Street Furniture

Ventilate Clock Tower

- Weekly (52 occasions)

Adjust Town Clocks

- 2 occasions (and as necessary)

Adjust Timers on War Memorial Spotlights

- 2 occasions

Maintenance Depot

Grass cutting

- 7 - 10 occasions

Hedge cutting

- 1 occasion

Apply herbicide

- Where necessary, 3 occasions

Clean and tidy

- As necessary

Events

Fire maroons - Remembrance Day

- 1 occasion

Handling of Maroons training

- 1 occasion

Summer Sounds in Lowndes Park

- 10 occasions

Major Events

e.g. Allotment Fencing

- unmeasurable

River bank revetment

- unmeasurable

Clear culvert

- unmeasurable

SITES AND PREMISES

Lowndes Park inc.: pond, island and play area (14.24 hectares)
St. Mary's Church Yard and Annex Garden
Archena Gardens
The Moor (7.35 hectares)
Cannons Wood
The Moor hardstanding, play area and Sports Centre
Friedrichsdorf Corner
Meades Water Gardens (0.51 hectares)
Red Lion Street Gardens
Duck Alley
St. Mary's Way 'shrub verge' and 5 raised planters
Elgiva Theatre
St. Mary's Way roundabout 'sponsored' BCC land
The War Memorial
High Street raised planters
Town Centre specimen trees and grills
The Town Hall
Lawns at entrance to Star Yard Car Park
White Hill lawns and flower beds
Thomas Harding Memorial - White Hill
Codmore Cross
Manor Way Island (0.17 hectares)
Codmore Recreation Ground and play area (2.95 hectares)
Lye Green (0.57 hectares)
Nashleigh Hill recreation ground and play area (3.84 hectares)
Nashleigh Hill Dell (0.19 hectares)
Marston Recreation Ground and play equipment (3.10 hectares)
Windsor Road play area (390 m²)
Batchelors Way play area (385 m²)
Co-op Field and play equipment (1.64 hectares)
Gordon Road play area (200 m²)
Hodds Wood Road play area (800 m²)
Bois Moor Road play area (440 m²)
Woodland View play area (930 m²)
Police Station planters
Town Council maintenance depot
Bus Shelters - Chartridge Lane
 - Upper Belmont Road
 - Berkhamstead Road
 - Codmore Cross
 - Cresswell Road
Town Centre Notice Boards at 6 locations

CHESHAM SURVEY 2000 RESULTS

Section 1 Parks and Open Spaces

Question 1. How often do you or members of your household visit these places?

	Every week or more	%	2-4 times a month	%	Less than once/month	%	Never	%	Not answered	%
Lowndes Park	296	20.4	327	22.5	587	40.4	174	12.0	68	4.7
Nashleigh Hill	42	2.9	54	3.7	202	13.9	835	57.5	319	22.0
Codmore Field	45	3.1	70	4.8	186	12.8	830	57.2	321	22.1
Marston Field	36	2.5	31	2.1	102	7.0	927	63.8	356	24.5
Chesham Moor	130	9.0	124	8.5	459	31.6	498	34.3	241	16.6
Co-op Field	24	1.7	21	1.4	60	4.1	974	67.1	373	25.7
Woodland View	6	0.4	8	6.0	45	3.1	998	68.7	309	27.2
Bois Moor Road	77	5.3	56	3.9	207	14.3	782	53.9	330	22.7
Hodds Wood Road	18	1.2	21	1.4	96	6.6	951	65.5	366	25.2
Gordon Road	8	0.6	6	0.4	38	2.6	1019	70.2	381	26.2

Question 2. How would you rate the facilities at Lowndes Park?

	Excellent	%	Good	%	Fair	%	Poor	%	Bad	%	Not answered	%
Toddlers play area	141	9.7	579	39.9	233	16.0	30	2.1	3	0.2	466	32.1
Play equipment	83	5.7	564	38.8	284	19.6	3	2.3	2	0.1	486	33.5
Skateboard ramps	61	4.2	400	27.5	291	20.0	43	3.0	13	0.9	644	44.4
Multi-play court	111	7.6	405	27.9	236	16.3	26	1.8	5	0.3	669	46.1
Skottowe's Pond	159	11.0	550	37.9	312	21.5	110	7.6	19	1.3	302	20.8
Flower beds	158	10.9	579	39.9	344	23.7	106	7.3	22	1.5	243	16.7
Seats/litter bins	51	3.5	433	29.8	519	35.7	154	10.6	28	1.9	267	18.4
Access	158	10.9	719	49.5	237	16.3	53	3.7	18	1.2	267	18.4

The following pages are the unedited replies given by respondents to questions contained in the Chesham Survey 2000.

Chart A**Question 3. Main reason for using Park?**

	Play Area	Meet others	Walking	Football	Dog Walking
Lowndes Park	10	5	3	1	1
Nashleigh Hill Recreation	5	-	-	2	5
Co-op Field	3	1	-	1	3
Codmore Field	3	-	-	1	2
The Moor	2	-	-	-	-
Bois Moor Road	2	3	-	-	-
Gordon Road	1	1	-	-	-
Hodds Wood Road	1	-	-	-	-
Woodland View	1	1	-	1	-
Total	28	11	3	6	11

Chart B**Question 8. What do you enjoy most about the Park?**

	Lowndes Park	Nash. Hill Rec.	Co-op Field	Codmore Field	The Moor	Bois Moor Road	Gordon Road	Hodds Wood	Woodland View	Total
Ideal for kids	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	11
Open space	10	3	4	4	-	1	-	-	-	22
Flower beds	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
The pond	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
Trees	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
Multi-court	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Near home	2	9	4	4	1	3	1	1	1	26
Tranquillity	2	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Skate ramps	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Playthings	5	3	1	3	2	2	1	1	1	19
Safe environ.	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Tidy	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Pre-pool use	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1

Chart C**Question 9. What do you enjoy least about the Park?**

	Lowndes Park	Nash. Hill Rec.	Co-op Field	Codmore Field	The Moor	Bois Moor Road	Gordon Road	Hodds Wood	Woodland View	Total
Toilets	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9
No kiosk	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
Vandalism	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	5
Poor lighting	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Dog mess	2	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	5
Dogs	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Pond safety	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
No pool	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Litter	1	3	2	-	1	3	-	-	-	10
Lack of facilities	-	4	1	-	-	2	1	1	1	10
Motorbikes	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	2
Nothing	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2

Question 10. Other Comments

A number of suggestions for improvements were made :

BMX ramp

Lighting for the multi-court facility in Lowndes Park

An assault course for teenagers

An artificial cricket wicket

More toilets

Paddle boats

More activities for kids

A museum

Remove alcoholics

Prohibit bikes and horses

Tackle vandalism

Basketball nets

Football goalposts

Provide more litter bins

Appendix 4c

Survey by Alan Bacon of use of play equipment at three different times. Figures shown for each site represent a snapshot. All sites were visited in the space of about one hour.

	12/4	5/5	7/5
	4-5pm	12-1pm	2-3pm
Marston	2 (1 adult)	0	0
Windsor	1	0	2
Batchelors	2 (4 teen)	0	0
Gordon	closed	closed	closed
Woodland	0	9	6
Bois Moor	3	0	0
The Moor	0	0	0
Codmore	0	0	9 (3 adults/2 teen)
Nashleigh	5	0	0
Co-op	0	0	0
Hodds	0	4	0
Lowndes	10 (7 adults)	13 (13 adults)	21 (13 adults/4 teen)

Only people on or around play equipment were counted. Skateboard ramp and multiplay area in Lowndes Park not counted. Where adults and teenagers were present, these are shown in addition to the number of children.

Best Value Service Review

Parks & Open Spaces - Action Plan

Year 1

Commencing 1 April 2001

- To complete the Best Value Performance Review of the service
**Action : Town Clerk /
Parks & Premises Manager /
Best Value Panel**

- To install a new skate park and junior play area for Lowndes Park
**Action : Town Clerk /
Parks & Premises Manager**

- To review the policy on managing school grounds maintenance work for local schools
**Action : Town Clerk /
Parks & Premises Manager**

- To review the policy on urban highway grass verge maintenance work for the County Council
**Action : Town Clerk /
Area Manager B.C.C. /
District Engineer**

- To provide a programme of events in the Park throughout the summer
**Action : Town Clerk /
Town Manager**

- To increase the frequency of play equipment inspections to fortnightly
**Action : Parks & Premises
Manager**

- To draw up a field husbandry programme (with costs) for sports pitches, to implement in year 2
**Action : Parks & Premises
Manager**

- To draw up specifications for all measurable tasks, calculate in-house costs, and invite contractors to provide quotations (for comparison)
**Action : Parks & Premises
Manager**

- To explore the potential for setting up volunteer groups
**Action : Town Clerk /
Lowndes Park Users Group**

- To continue the rolling programme for replacing 12' high swings with 10' high swings (Bois Moor Road)
**Action : Sport & Leisure
Committee / Parks &
Premises Manager**

Year 1 continued

- To continue the rolling programme of fencing in play areas

**Action : Sport & Leisure
Committee / Parks &
Premises Manager**

Year 2

Commencing April 2002

- To implement the policy(ies) for County Council contracts
- To increase the frequency of play equipment inspections to weekly
- To implement the field husbandry programme
- To investigate the outsourcing of measurable tasks (as appropriate)
- To continue the rolling programme for replacing 12' high swings with 10' high swings (Moor Road)
- To implement volunteer groups
- To continue the rolling programme of fencing in play areas
- To start a rolling programme to refurbish bus shelters
- To re-examine the Council's objectives in delivery of the service within the preparation of the next annual Best Value Performance Plan

**Action Town Clerk /
Parks & Premises Manager**

**Action : Parks & Premises
Manager**

**Action : Parks & Premises
Manager**

**Action : Parks & Premises
Manager**

**Action : Sport & Leisure
Committee / Parks &
Premises Manager**

**Action : Town Clerk /
Parks & Premises Manager**

**Action : Parks & Premises
Manager**

**Action : Parks & Premises
Manager**

Action : Best Value Panel

Year 3

Commencing April 2003

- To extend the field husbandry programme to include areas other than sports pitches

**Action : Parks & Premises
Manager**

Year 3 continued

- To develop the use of IT to enable on-line questionnaires, provide information on the Council's website and generally promote the parks & open spaces. To positively use IT for on-going benchmarking purposes
Action : Town Clerk
- To complete the rolling programme for replacing 12' high swings with 10' high swings (Lowndes Park)
Action : Parks & Premises Manager
- To continue the rolling programme of fencing in play areas
Action Parks & Premises Manager
- To continue the rolling programme of bus shelter refurbishment
Action : Parks & Premises Manager
- To draw up a procedure for the annual inspection of all trees on Town Council land
Action : Parks & Premises Manager
- To re-examine the Council's objectives in delivery of the service within the preparation of the next annual Best Value Performance Plan
Action : Best Value Panel

Year 4

Commencing April 2004

- To complete the rolling programme of fencing in play areas
Action : Parks & Premises Manager
- To complete the rolling programme of bus shelter refurbishment
Action : Parks & Premises Manager
- To implement the procedure for the annual inspection of all trees on Town Council land
Action : Parks & Premises Manager
- To re-examine the Council's objectives in delivery of the service within the preparation of the next annual Best Value Performance Plan
Action : Best Value Panel

Year 5

Commencing April 2005

- To re-examine the Council's objectives in delivery of the service within the preparation of the next annual Best Value Performance Panel
Action : Best Value Panel