



Lowndes Park Strategic Masterplan

Masterplan Vision Document

August 2023

LDĀDESIGN

Contents

1.0 Introduction	5
1.1 The Park	
1.2 Site History	
1.3 The Project	
1.4 Stakeholder Engagement	
2.0 The Park Then And The Park Now	7
2.1 Context	
2.2 Areas Of Interest	
3.0 Site Analysis	9
3.1 Entrances / Connection To Town	
3.2 Path Network / Circulation	
3.3 Grassland Management	
3.4 Water Quality	
3.5 Play	
3.6 Demographics	
4.0 Stakeholder Engagement	13
4.1 Questionnaire	
4.2 Online Event	
4.3 In-Person Workshop	
5.0 The Vision For The Park	15
5.1 Challenging Change In Chesham	
5.2 Zoning Concept	
5.3 Seasonal Areas Of Interest	
5.4 Good Neighbour	

6.0 Masterplan Objectives	19
6.1 A Coherent Park With A Clear Spatial Structure	
6.2 A Better Used Pond With Improved Water Quality	
6.3 A Play Hub That Young People Can Use And Enjoy	
6.4 A Place Where Activities And Events Can Take Place That Bring The Community Together	
6.5 A Destination Park Where Users Come To Socialise, Keep Fit, And Experience Nature	
6.6 A Park With A Strong Identity That Is Rooted In Its Past	
6.7 A More Biodiverse Park That Is Sustainable For The Future	
6.8 A Robust And Maintainable Park.	
7.0 The Masterplan	23
7.1 The Big Moves	
8.0 Parkwide Strategies	24
8.1 Entrances	
8.2 Play	
8.3 Sport	
8.4 Heritage	
8.5 Buildings And Facilities	
8.6 Ecology And Landscape	
8.7 Cycling And Footpaths	
8.8 Lighting	

9.0 Masterplan Delivery	32
9.1 Clever Investment In Chesham	
10.0 Appendix	33
10.1 In Person Consultation	

Version:	3
Version date:	August 2023
Comment	FINAL



Aerial photo of Lowndes Park - 2023

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Park

Lowndes Park extends to 36 acres of parkland, rising steeply to the north-west of Chesham Town Centre. The eastern end of the Park is known as the Lower Park and includes features such as Skottowes Pond and the Avenue, which originate from the 18th century.

The Upper Park, to the western end of the site, also has historic features including mature trees and provides views over Chesham Town centre and the Chilterns countryside to the south-west. The Upper Park is a Locally Important Landscape Area due to the chalk grassland that is present.

The Park is situated entirely within Greenbelt and is bordered by the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Today, the park plays host to several large events including the annual Schools of Chesham Carnival (2500 attendees) and a regular programme of concerts in the summer.

The park is also a resource for people who are interested in strolling, jogging, cycling, skating, picnicking and dog-walking (particularly in the Upper Park) and provides habitat to support bats, breeding birds and a range of invertebrate groups.

1.2 Site History

Lowndes Park is a historic open space located in the centre of Chesham. The park is recorded as far back as the 12th century, at which time it formed part of the Bury Manor which was owned by a sequence of different families. In the 17th century, the land was acquired by the Whichcotes, who created the main avenue by planting a double row of elm trees. The Skottowes Family then owned Bury Hill House, and built the pond in the 18th century, which was excavated and filled with natural spring water.

William Lowndes bought the land in 1802, demolished Bury Hill House, and let the park for agricultural use in the 19th century. During World War One, the park was used for training soldiers in bridge construction across Skottowes Pond. At the end of the war, the park was the focus of Chesham's Peace Celebrations, which included fireworks, a lunch party, and ceremonial tree planting. In 1920, William Frith - Lowndes let the Lower Park to Chesham Town Council for use as a public recreation ground.

By 1970, the entirety of the Park was dedicated as a Public Open Space and named Lowndes Park. In 1974, the newly formed Chesham Town Council took over the management and maintenance of the park - and from the 1980s to the present day the facilities currently found in the park were added, including the play equipment, toilets and skate park.

1.3 The Project

To give definition to their plans for future investment, Chesham Town Council appointed LDA Design to develop a strategic masterplan vision for the park. This plan has evolved through consultation with local stakeholders will help to prioritise future projects and then guide subsequent investment into the site.

At this early stage of the process, the layouts shown in this document do not represent a 'design' but a strategy to develop the future of the park. These concepts and ideas can then be taken forward, developed and implemented in the future in a more detailed manner, subject to available funding.

1.4 Stakeholder Engagement

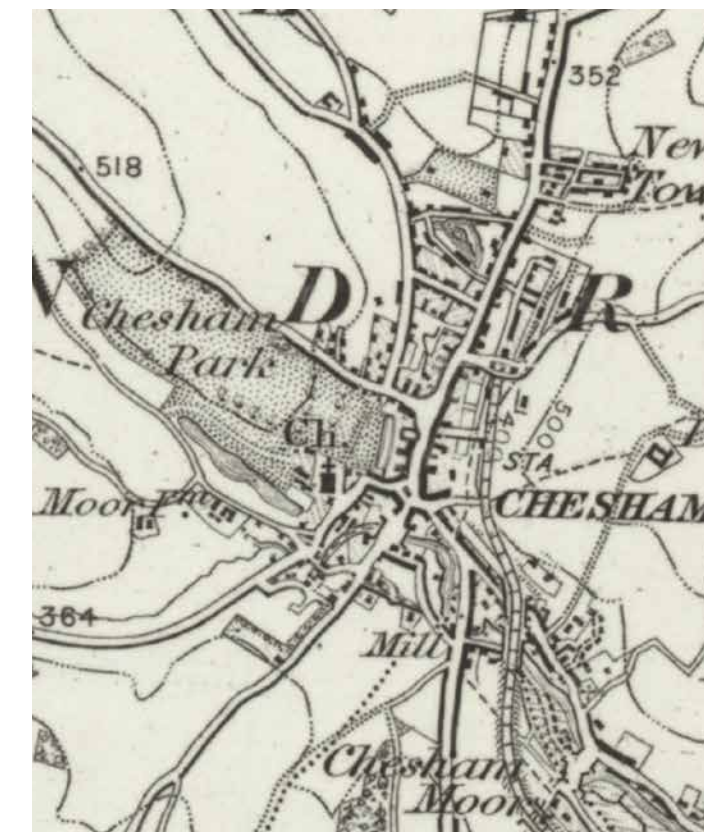
The process of producing the masterplan has involved a variety of inclusive and engaging consultation.

Key stakeholders and relevant teams within Chesham Town Council have all been involved throughout the process. Some of the stakeholder groups consulted include:

- * Schools of Chesham Carnival
- * The Nature Club
- * Chesham and Villages Community Board
- * Thames Valley Police
- * Park Manager
- * Chess Smarter Water Catchment
- * Friends of Lowndes Park
- * Chesham Youth Council
- * Chesham & District Natural History Society
- * Sustainable Chesham
- * Chesham Community Orchard

- * Chesham Regeneration (Bucks Council)
- * Chesham Youth Club
- * Love Lowndes
- * Chesham Environmental Group
- * Chesham in Bloom
- * Chesham Town Council

Online events, in-person workshops and questionnaires have all been utilised to ensure a broad and fair representation of opinion was incorporated into the masterplan development.



Historic map of Chesham from 1885

© ARCGIS



Existing site diagram - Lowndes Park

2.0 The Park then and the Park now

2.1 Context

Chesham is a town located in the Chess Valley, around 25 miles north west of central London. It is the fourth largest town in Buckinghamshire and the largest in the Chiltern District, with a population of around 23,000 people.

The River Chess is a chalk stream that rises near Chesham in the Chiltern Hills, and flows for 11 miles through Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire. There are only around 200 chalk streams in the world, with most of them in Southern England.

Lowndes Park is situated just to the west of Chesham Town centre, and acts as a primary green space for many of Chesham's residents.

2.2 Areas of interest

Skottowes Pond

Skottowes Pond was originally reed-lined when it was created in the early 18th century. It was named after the Skottowes family, who owned a mansion house called Bury Hill House which once stood in the area. During the 1920s, the pond was concreted, and an island was built in the centre. The site was used as a cattle watering hole and to train soldiers in bridge construction during World War One.

The lake is approximately 120m in length and 40m wide at its widest point, with an island 20m long by 5m wide taking up the centre of the water. Other than the general public frequenting the lake to feed the waterfowl, current users of the lake include the Chesham & District Model Boat Club, who have an arrangement with the Town Council to use the lake most Sundays for operating their radio controlled boats. The ashes of Ben Cargill, a young man who was murdered in the park in 2004, are scattered on the island, and there is a small memorial garden on the banks of the pond.

The Avenue

Also known as the Rue de Houilles, The Avenue is the main route through the park at present. Originally, this was a carriageway flanked by elms that were first planted in 1760. The elms were felled and replanted in 1845 by William Lowndes, before being felled again in the 1950s for fear of Dutch Elm Disease. However, once cut down it was found that most of the felled trees were in fact healthy.

Today, the Avenue is a more informal space, flanked by a variety of different tree species. Attached to the Avenue are the Scented Garden, the Performance Area, and the

toilets, as well as paths that lead to the main Play Area and the Sports Area/Skate Park.

In addition, there is a historic shelter and seat attached to the Avenue, which was erected by the council in 1935 to commemorate the Silver Jubilee of George V. The shelter is now in poor condition, and its historical significance is not obvious apart from a small plaque. The Avenue is also a bridleway and forms part of a national cycle route.

Performance Area

The Performance Area is situated between the Avenue and Skottowes Pond, and consists of a flat circular area of hardstanding with a diameter of around 30m. During the summer, a regular series of concerts take place in this area. For these events, a small canopy is erected to facilitate the performance. There is a weight restriction on the paving which means the area is not suitable for vehicular runover.

Play area

The Main Play Area at Lowndes Park is currently located towards the southern end of the park, and is enclosed by fencing. This location means that the Play Area is separate from other areas of the park, and is disconnected from facilities such as toilets. The types of equipment include swings, slides, climbing frames and merry-go-rounds.

Youth Activity Area

The Youth Activity Area, located just to the west of the Avenue, consists of a cycle area where children can learn how to ride a bike, a sports area, and a skate park. The skate park was built in 2014 and has become a popular spot for the skating community in Buckinghamshire, attracting both local residents and visitors from nearby areas.

Wildflower Area

The Wildflower Area is a small area of wildflower planting in the central area of the site where the Lower Park transitions to the Upper Park. One focus of the masterplan will be improving grassland management, and looking at whether some of the large areas of managed lawn could be converted to wildflower meadow enhance the biodiversity of the park.

Community Orchard

Situated in the Upper Park, the Community Orchard has approximately 50 fruit trees including cherry, plum, medlar, pear and apple. The project was initiated by Sustainable Chesham to make organic fruit for residents to enjoy.

The orchard was planted in 2013 and is made up of heritage varieties that have a historical connection to Buckinghamshire. The area hosts a regular Nature Club which allows toddlers to explore nature through themes such as butterflies, birds or blossom.

Rolling Pin

The Rolling Pin is a circular mound in the Upper Park, which is a scheduled ancient monument surrounded by ornamental trees. Long suspected to be a prehistoric Bowl Barrow, recent excavations uncovered the remains of a small building expected to have been built in the 18th century by the owners of Bury Hill Manor. Also found during the excavation was 604 pottery sherds, 3960 glass fragments and 144 bones.

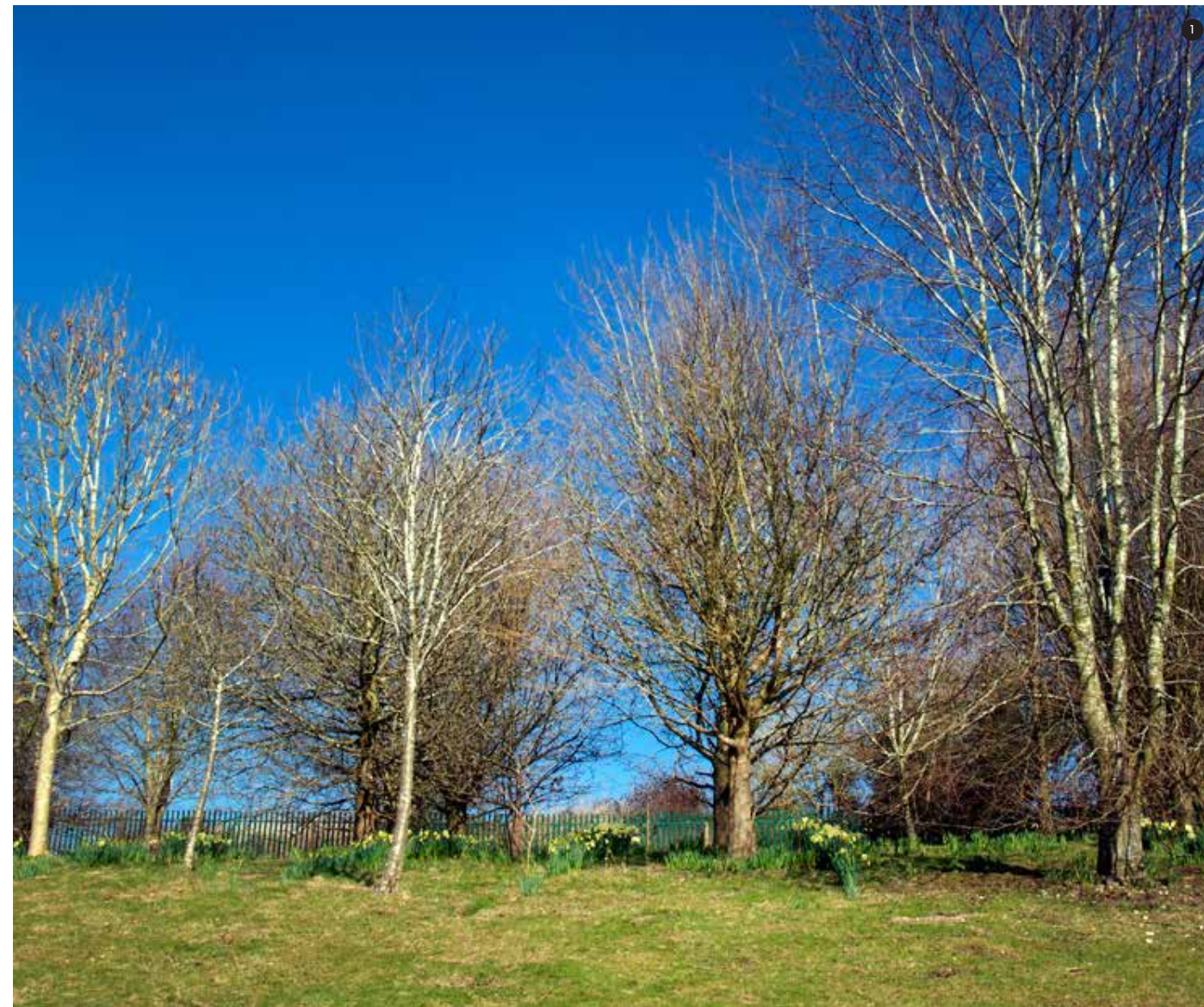
The small building was likely built in this location due to the excellent views over Chesham and beyond to the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Also in this area is a Pudding Stone, which dates back 50 million years and is a remnant of a layer of 'Silcrete' that was on top of the natural chalk. These stones gave the town its name - in the Middle Ages, Saxon settlers named their new hamlet Caesteles-hamm, meaning 'the water meadow by the stone heap', which has evolved into modern-day Chesham.

The Dell/Sovereign Coppice

In 1992, the 40th anniversary of the Queen's accession was celebrated by the planting of 40 trees, known as the Sovereign Coppice, in the Upper Park. The 40 trees, composed of 12 native species, were planted in the shape of a crown as a living reminder of the occasion they commemorate.

The Dell is south of the Sovereign Coppice, and is a small hollow with mature trees. Together they form part of the Upper Park, which is popular with dog-walkers and leads out towards the Pednor Loop (a 10km route popular with walkers and cyclists) and the wider Chilterns countryside.



© FRIENDS OF LOWNDES PARK



© CHESHAM TOWN COUNCIL



© CHESHAM TOWN COUNCIL



© CHESHAM TOWN COUNCIL

- 1 Sovereign Coppice
- 2 Skottowes Pond
- 3 The Avenue
- 4 Rolling Pin



3.0 Site Analysis

3.1 Entrances / Connection to Town

There are currently seven entrances into Lowndes Park.

The St Mary's Way entrance is a key gateway to the site as it is the entrance that is closest to the Town Centre and the Tube Station. St Mary's Way is one of the busiest roads in Chesham (two lanes wide in each direction), and this entrance is located next to a zebra crossing with poor visibility looking South. The entrance itself is partially blocked by a Belisha Beacon and a railing, which doesn't help to draw pedestrians into the site.

Once the visitor has entered the park, the path forks into two directions - one sloping steeping sharply down towards the pond, and the other leading towards the Avenue. This entrance is therefore not very accessible and could be greatly enhanced to improve the connection with the Town Centre and create an arrival point which would invite more users into the park.

Archena Gardens are named after a town located in the Murcia region of South-East Spain, with which Chesham was twinned in 1995. This entrance is also connected to St Mary's Way, which acts as a barrier between the town and the park. As you walk along St Mary's Way, or Church Street which runs perpendicular, it is not immediately obvious that there is an entrance to the park at this location, as it is obscured by two layers of hedgerow, a brick wall and a railing.

As a result of this, and the lack of crossing points, the entrance is not used as frequently by visitors, even though it is still located close to the Town Centre. In order to improve this entrance, it should be opened up to create a gateway with clear sightlines to the park/pond, whilst still maintaining a buffer to St Mary's Way.

Enhancing the connection between Lowndes Park and Chesham Town Centre should be a future aim which will make the park more accessible and used by larger numbers of people. This would be in conjunction with work being undertaken by others, including a Local Cycling, Walking and Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) that is in development. A new entrance in between St Mary's Way Entrance and Archena Gardens Entrance could be explored for this purpose, as well as to link the park with a potential new mixed use development in what is currently Star Yard Car Park.

Similar to Archena Gardens, the Park Road entrance is also not directly connected to a crossing point, meaning users often cross a busy road with cars just coming off a large roundabout. The entrance leads straight onto the Avenue, which is a Public Bridleway and part of the National Cycle Network. However, the split railing arrangement means this entrance feels closed off and is not easy to navigate for cyclists.

The Chess Valley Walk and Bury Lane Entrances are only accessible via narrow, cobbled side roads off Church Street without clear signage. This results in them feeling quite hidden and concealed from view for any passing pedestrians. In addition, the Chess Valley Walk entrance is a pedestrian only gate which is often closed, which could be for confusing for cyclists trying to access the Avenue, who then have to use the Bury Lane Entrance and navigate through the park without signage.

Chartridge Lane is a steeply rising road to the north of the park. Currently, the entrance at this location is a narrow gate, with a sign and a bin. This entrance is often used by students of the Chiltern Hills Academy, as going through the park provides the best route for them to access the Town Centre, rather than walking down the busy Chartridge Lane. However, there is no hard landscaping in the park at this location meaning the entrance often becomes muddy, particularly in the winter months. Similarly the Pednor entrance, which leads out into the countryside of the Chilterns, is narrow, unpaved and at the bottom of a steep bank which results in it being slippery and inaccessible.

In general, the entrances at Lowndes Park could be enhanced by opening them up, improving crossing/connection points, and resolving surfacing/level issues to allow greater accessibility.

3.2 Path Network / Circulation

As stated previously, the Avenue is the main route through the park, and is a public bridleway that also forms part of the National Cycle Network. However, the entrances either side of this path close it off from the wider network and may mean that the park is bypassed completely by some users.

Apart from the Avenue, which is around 5.5m wide, the other paths within the park are generally narrow tarmac routes which range from around 1.2-2m wide. These paths connect the Avenue to the eastern entrances and the features to the west such as the Play Area, Skate Park, Sports Area and Cycle Area.

The existing path network does not extend into the Upper Park, which limits the accessibility of this area for cyclists, wheelchair users and those with pushchairs. This contributes to the feeling of a divide between the Upper and Lower Parks, rather than one cohesive whole. Several of the paths also lead to dead-ends which limits circulation through the site, and there is currently no disabled access to the Performance Area or main Play Area.

The paths surrounding Skottowes pond are around 1.7m wide, which is not wide enough to accommodate a twin pushchair and doesn't allow for much useable space within the area.

Overall, the path network at Lowndes Park could be greatly improved by being extended into the Upper Park, widening of the paths at specific areas, connecting the entrances and forming part of a more coherent park. In addition, a series of play/nature/fitness trails with a strong wayfinding strategy would help to draw visitors into areas that are currently underused, in order to get the most out of the park.

3.3 Grassland management

At present, the vast majority of the park is lawn grassland, which is heavily managed and regularly mown. This has the advantage of creating lots of useable space, although much of this space is on a gradient, and mowed lawn is disadvantageous from an ecological perspective.

There is a wildflower area in the park, as well as planting beds by the Performance Area and eastern entrances, however these are limited in size.

3.4 Water quality

A pond survey found the water quality to be largely poor, with problems attributable to silt accumulation, leaf litter and bird faeces. As the pond is a focal point of the park, and the first thing visitors see as they enter, water quality and general improvements to the pond will be a key aim of the masterplan.

There is a dilapidated cascade structure situated half way along the western edge of the lake which was originally designed to import borehole water. However, this cascade was vandalised and now lies derelict, adding to a general sense of neglect.

3.5 Play

The main Play Area is located in a corner towards the southern end of the park, and features slides, swings and a merry-go-round. Some of this equipment looks quite old, and the range of options for children is limited. The location of the play area is away from the toilets/main entrances, and the condition of the path/gate to the space means it is not wheelchair accessible and is difficult for those using pushchairs to access. There is also a lack of equipment for disabled children.

The play provision for older children consists of the Skate Park and the Sports Area, however they can often be seen using the Play Area intended for younger children. The Skate Area is well used, whereas the Sports Area is in a state of disrepair and requires refurbishment/replacement.



¹ Inside St Mary's Way Entrance

² Main play area

³ Archena Gardens entrance

⁴ Chartridge Lane Entrance



Existing Site Diagram



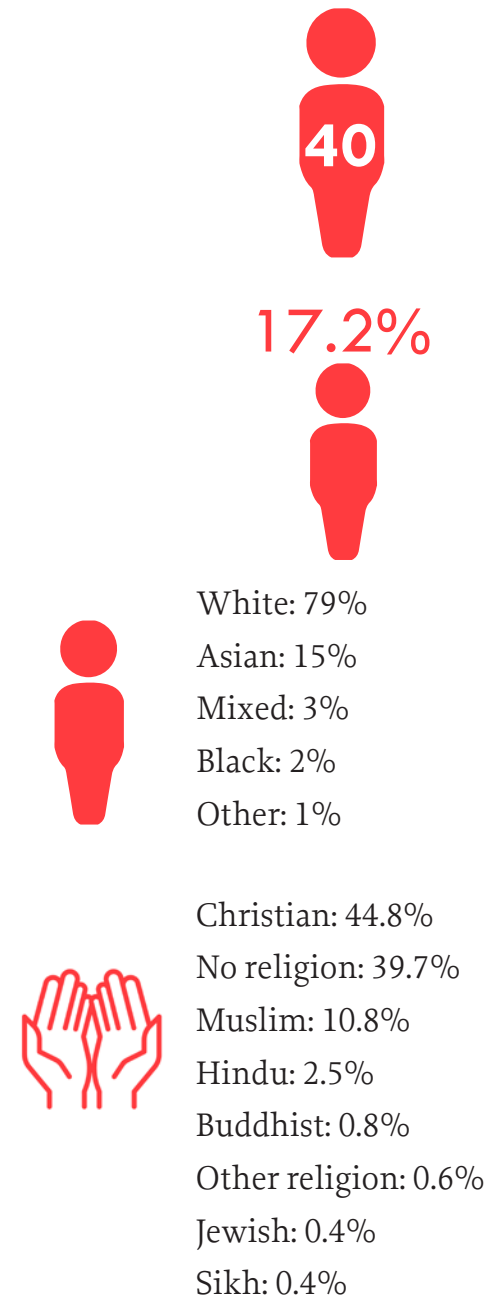
Existing site diagram - Lowndes Park

3.6 Demographics



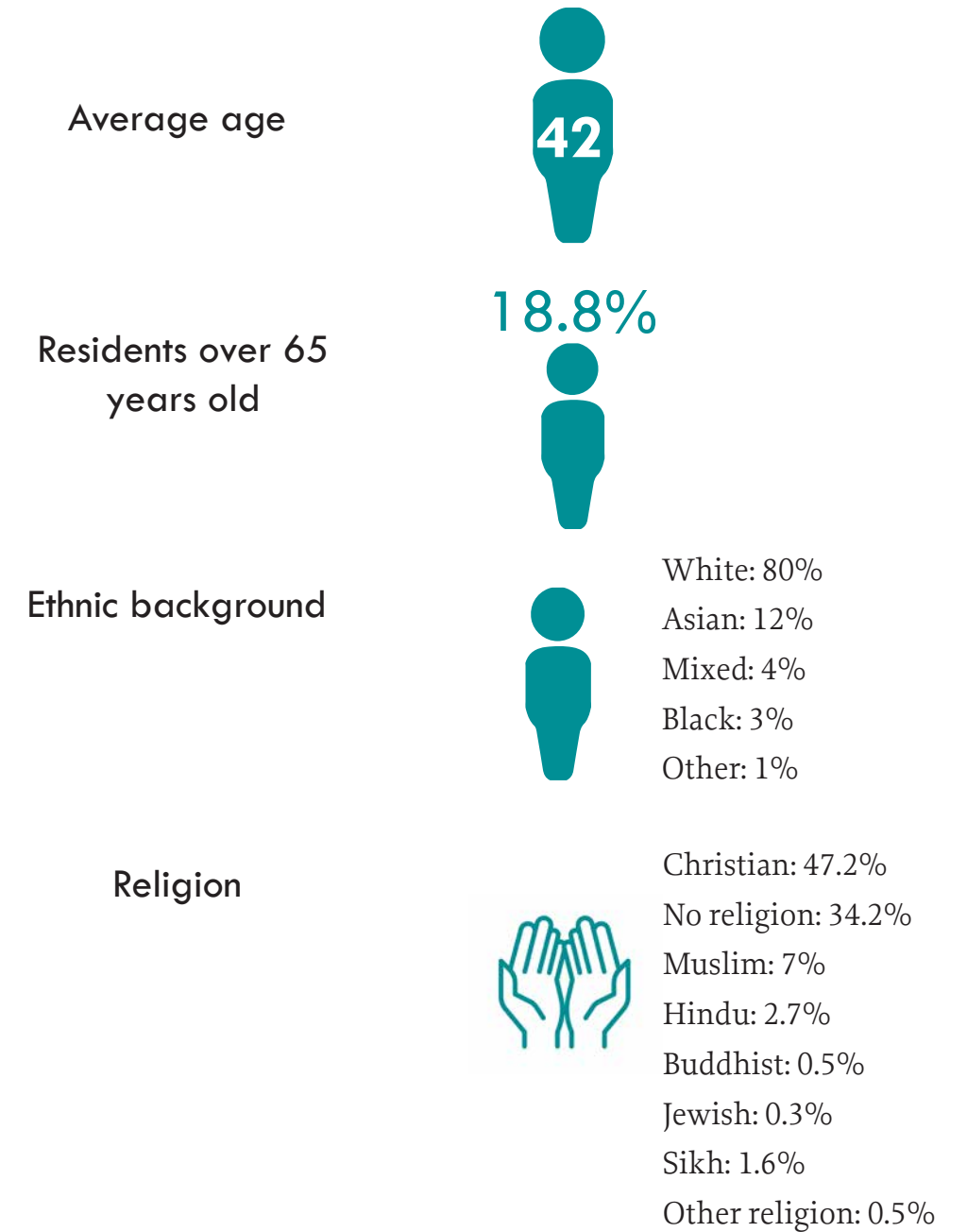
Map of Buckinghamshire

Local Context: Chesham

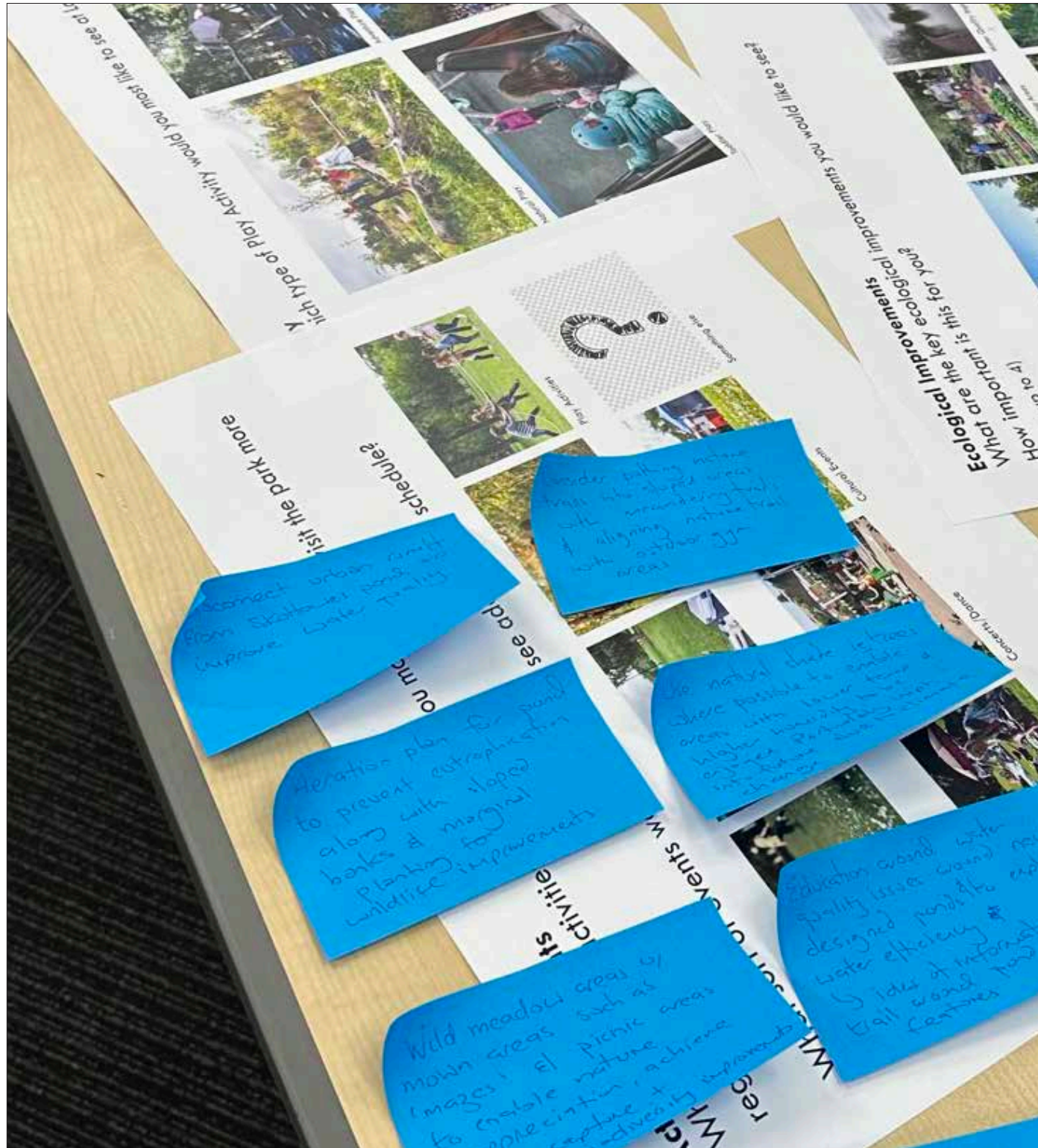


2021 Census Data (citypopulation.de)

Wider Context: Buckinghamshire



4.0 Stakeholder Consultation



Online consultation - Tuesday 16th May 2023

In person consultation - Wednesday 17th May 2023

4.1 Questionnaire

During the first stage of the Stakeholder Engagement process, we created a questionnaire to be circulated by the council to any relevant persons or stakeholders who wanted to have a say in the project.

The questionnaire included general questions such as how close the respondent lives to the park, how often they visit, and what they use the park for, as well as questions relating to how the park makes them feel and the emotions they associate with the area. In addition, we received responses to questions asking which areas of the park needed the most improvements and ranking the most important things for the space in the future.

All respondents lived less than 20 minutes walk away from the park and the majority (91%) said that they visited on a weekly basis. In response to how the park makes them feel, 64% said 'Happy', with positive comments such as 'inside the park there is a feeling of green space and views, and almost infinite possibilities for seeing wildlife at almost any time of the year.'

21% of respondents said they feel sad or neutral when visiting the park, with one comment stating 'The park has a feeling of neglect. The state of the hedge along Park Road / Chartridge Lane is particularly upsetting.'

In response to what they generally use the park for, 46% said walking and 30% said relaxing, with other popular responses including attending events and volunteering.

As shown in the pie chart (right), according to the respondents the area of the park that needs the most improvements is Skottowes Pond (36%), followed by the Wildflower Area (20%). However, due to the limited number of responses to the questionnaire, it is important that this data is considered in conjunction with the feedback received in the online and in-person engagement sessions.

4.2 Online engagement event

On Tuesday 16th May 2023, we conducted an online engagement event which was attended by representatives from Schools of Chesham Carnival, Chesham and Villages Community Board, and Chesham Town Council among others.

During the session, we asked a series of questions on play, entrances and facilities, amongst other topics including how they would like investment prioritised in the future. Key points from the session include:

- * Attendees think it's important to encourage people into the Upper Park as it's underused. However, the Upper Park is heavily used by dog walkers during certain times of day.
- * Improving biodiversity a key suggestion.
- * Chair of carnival committee asked for more dedicated performance areas that are flat.
- * In terms of activities - fitness classes are already taking place in the Lower Park and the idea of gym equipment/ fitness trails are popular among attendees.
- * Health and well-being as well as cultural (food and drink) events were suggested.
- * When children were asked they stated that they wanted a flat area to kick a football around.
- * Some feel there is a current disconnect between the town and the park. St Mary's way is the busiest road in Chesham and acts as a barrier to the park.
- * More activities are required for young people within Chesham.
- * Attendees would like to see a combination of natural, adventure and toddler play. Water play not considered viable.
- * Natural play suggested to be further up the park following a play trail.
- * Playground location preference was closer to the toilets and has better sightlines. A previous survey showed responses that preferred the play area to remain in the same location.
- * Archena Gardens entrance 'not used' and 'not open'.
- * Western entrance gets very muddy and is quite hidden.
- * Main entrance is not very accessible - it curves steeply downwards which is difficult for wheelchair users.
- * Suggestion to bring consistency to entrances with a uniform aesthetic that looks more inviting.
- * Idea of a cafe with inbuilt toilets a popular one - but cafe must be viable with enough footfall.
- * Water quality and grassland management improvements are key aspirations.
- * Log circle/learning area could be added to community orchard to make it more of a destination.
- * Long term plan for trees is required with climate resilient species.
- * Suitability of George V shelter was questioned as it could attract anti-social behaviour.
- * Play area suggested as the priority to be tackled first, with entrances, facilities and ecological improvements close behind.
- * 'Events bring communities together, so they're a really important part of what we do as a town.'
- * Digital information suggested to be considered (QR Codes) in wayfinding strategy.

4.3 In-person engagement event

We organised and ran an in-person consultation event at Chesham Town Hall on Wednesday 17th May 2023. It was attended by representatives from Friends of Lowndes Park, Chesham Youth Council, Chesham Regeneration (Bucks Council), Love Lowndes and Chesham in Bloom among others.

- * During the interactive session, we asked attendees to write their thoughts on Post-it notes and stick them on the relevant print-out. Below are a selection of comments from these notes:
- * 'Park needs to be a destination.'
- * 'Replace toilet block with new facilities that are set into the slope to reduce their visual impact, possibly near to a new small takeaway café'
- * 'Top of the park needs flatter paths and routes – better access.'
- * 'Consider putting nature trails into sloped areas with meandering trails and aligning nature trail with outdoor gym areas.'
- * 'Park should be for pedestrians and cyclists. Improve access to the park for cyclists.'
- * 'Water feature – fountains for summertime, perhaps solar powered or only triggered when people walk across it.'
- * 'Priorities: 1. Entrances 2. Infrastructure 3. Ecology'
- * 'Improve routes through the park (pedestrians/cyclists)'
- * 'More wildflower / natural grassland areas - cheaper to maintain, better for biodiversity and improves soil/water quality.'
- * 'Skottowes Pond feeds into an internationally rare chalk stream. The pond should be a focus.'
- * 'Aeration plan for the pond to prevent eutrophication along with sloped banks and marginal planting for wildlife improvements.'
- * 'Disconnect urban runoff from Skottowes Pond to improve water quality.'
- * 'More focus on the ecology and habitat.'
- * 'Use natural shade i.e. trees where possible to enable areas with lower temp and higher humidity to be enjoyed. Particularly important in future due to climate change.'
- * 'Wild meadow areas with mown areas such as 'mazes' and picnic areas to enable nature appreciation, achieve carbon capture, and biodiversity improvements.'
- * 'Bat boxes or bird boxes, log piles, bug hotels, bee scrapes at the top of the park.'

In addition to the written comments, we also collated verbal responses that were spoken during the session. Key points from this discussion include:

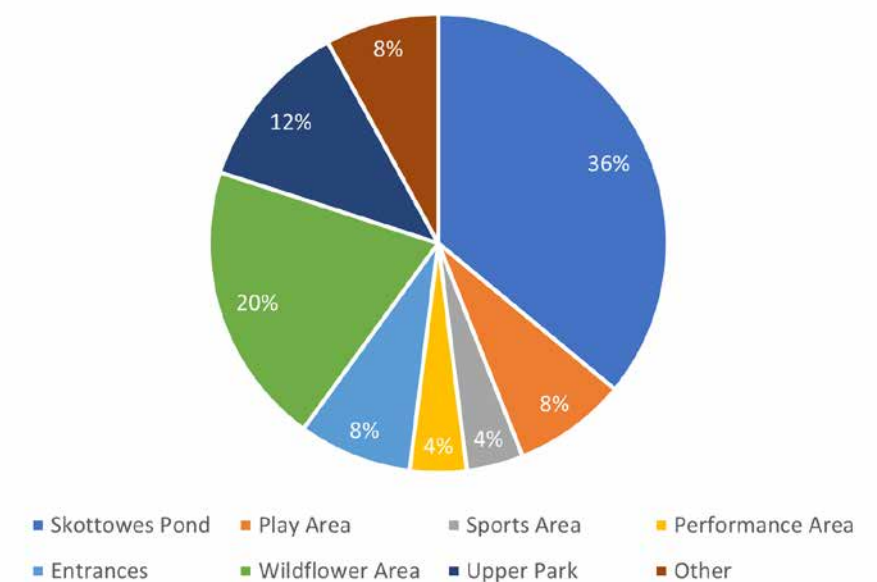
New/improved toilet facilities were very popular among the attendees. It was suggested that this could be combined with a cafe/kiosk. Topographic play including play tunnels were suggested as a way of incorporating the level changes. Low level, motion detected solar lighting was put forward as a way of improving safety while minimising light pollution.

There were mixed views among the attendees regarding a cycle hub being located within the park. Most agreed however that more cycle parking is required. A community space was suggested, perhaps in the form of a link to the existing Temperance Hall. A pump track was suggested as this can be ridden by bikes, scooters, skateboards and other wheeled vehicles. SuDS were suggested as a way of capturing urban runoff before it reaches the pond.

More interpretation boards could be added to provide some sense of space and place. Similarly, some form of artwork/sculpture with the same purpose.

Some attendees were keen to highlight that the proposals should be feasible within any future budget constraints. A key point from multiple attendees was that they want a 'cohesive' park that functions as one park rather than two.

Which area of the park needs the most improvements?



5.0 The Vision for the park

5.1 Challenging Change In Chesham

A recent World Wildlife Fund (WWF) report found that global wildlife populations have plunged by 70% since 1970. As these nature losses continue, population rises and climate change will increase the demands of the people of Chesham.

Lowndes Park has a key part to play in meeting these needs - covering 36 acres of parkland directly west of Chesham Town Centre. We are currently at a critical point where nature decline can be reversed to support the population.

Close contact with nature is of vital importance to people. More frequent visits to green spaces have been proven to reduce stress (regardless of age, sex or socio-economic status), improve emotional states (increased happiness, reduced anger) and physiological systems (reduced blood pressure). Green spaces also provide a natural setting for an activity or exercise, thereby promoting increased physical activity, which in turn leads to many physical and psychological benefits.

Allocating 70% of the park to nature can help ensure that these benefits can continue to be provided for future generations. The park will not only adapt to climate change but also try to mitigate the impacts of it - new types of habitat will be increasingly important for wildlife driven by the prospect of a dry future.

It is widely acknowledged that winters are going to become increasingly wet with higher incidences of storm events and that summers will become longer, drier and hotter. In response to increased storm events the park will be expected to integrate a responsible approach to water management where water is captured and stored for when it is needed in the dry months, rather than simply being discharged into the surface water drainage system or Skottowes Pond. Furthermore, future plants and trees must be climate resilient and able to cope with predicted changes in conditions.

Whilst providing for nature is a key aspect of the masterplan, of equal importance is providing for the people of Chesham in a more direct manner by creating a park that everyone can use and enjoy. To do this, the masterplan will bring a programmatic diversity that reflects an increasingly intensive use of the park. This will allow for a variety of uses which creates a broad range of visitor experiences.

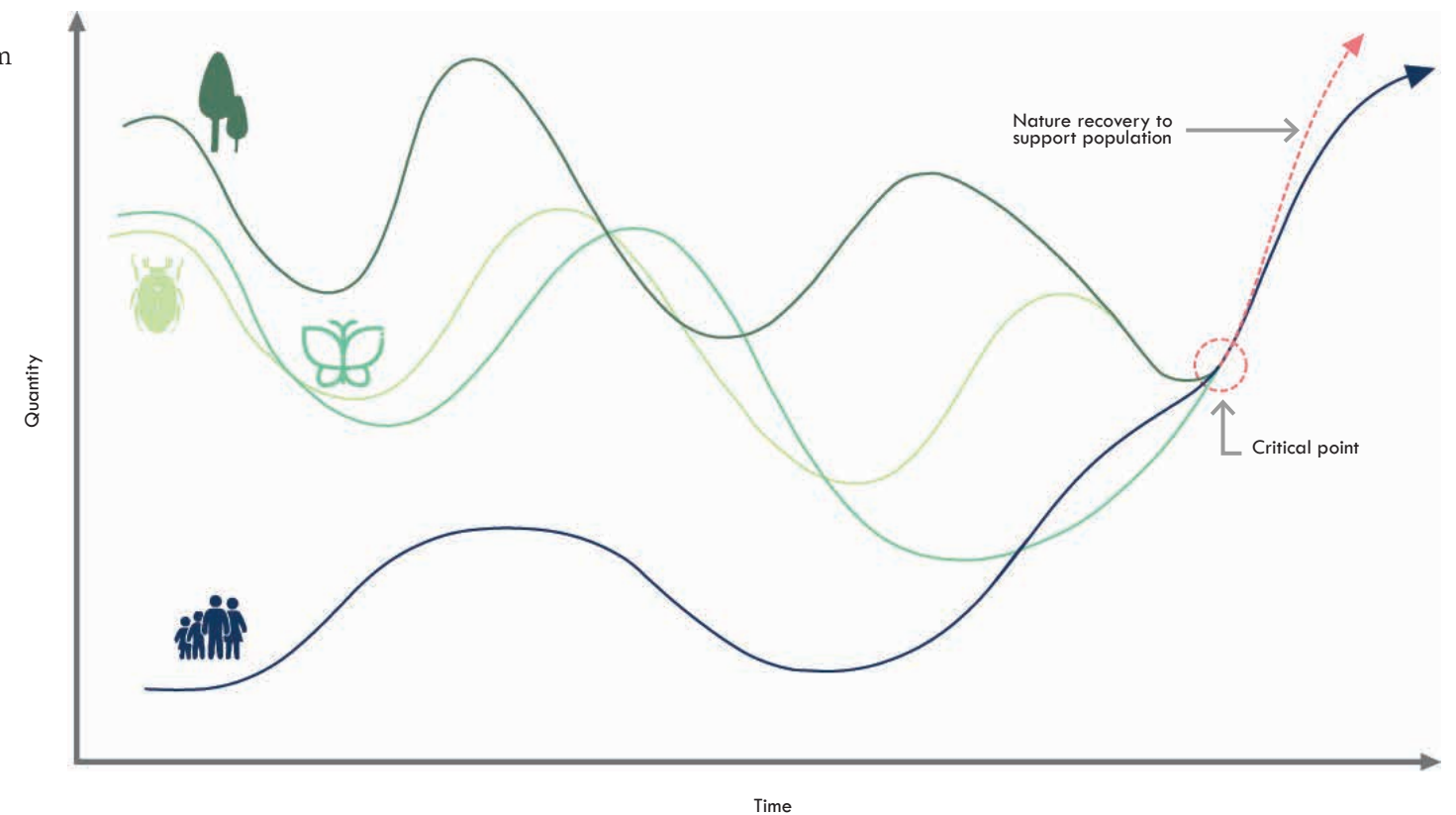


Diagram illustrating the trends of nature and population over time in Chesham

5.2 Zoning Concept

In the future, a visit to Lowndes Park might include a brisk jog on the fitness trail through Chilterns parkland, followed by a workout on the outdoor gym equipment and an afternoon reading on the lawn by the pond. A different day in Lowndes Park could start with a visit to an outdoor classroom by the community orchard, followed by a snack of locally cultivated fruit and then pond dipping in Skottowes Pond.

A different visitor to the park might go for a stroll through the ornamental maze and wildflower meadow before meeting up with a group of friends to watch a performance from the lawn by the pond. Another park user might visit the pump track with their bike or scooter, before having a go on the parkour equipment or enjoying a game of football or basketball. Another still might take their children to the play hub and enjoy a cup of coffee in the sunshine while watching them play, perhaps returning later in the day for a game of table tennis.

This diversity of different experience will allow Lowndes Park to be a well-used and well-loved park that welcomes all. In order to facilitate this, the masterplan will create different zones of activity, with some areas more active and others more quiet.

Using the Avenue and a new central east-west route as an axis, the Lower Park will be divided into four distinct zones that, while separate, blend into each other and encourage movement through clear sightlines and circulation. These four zones include:

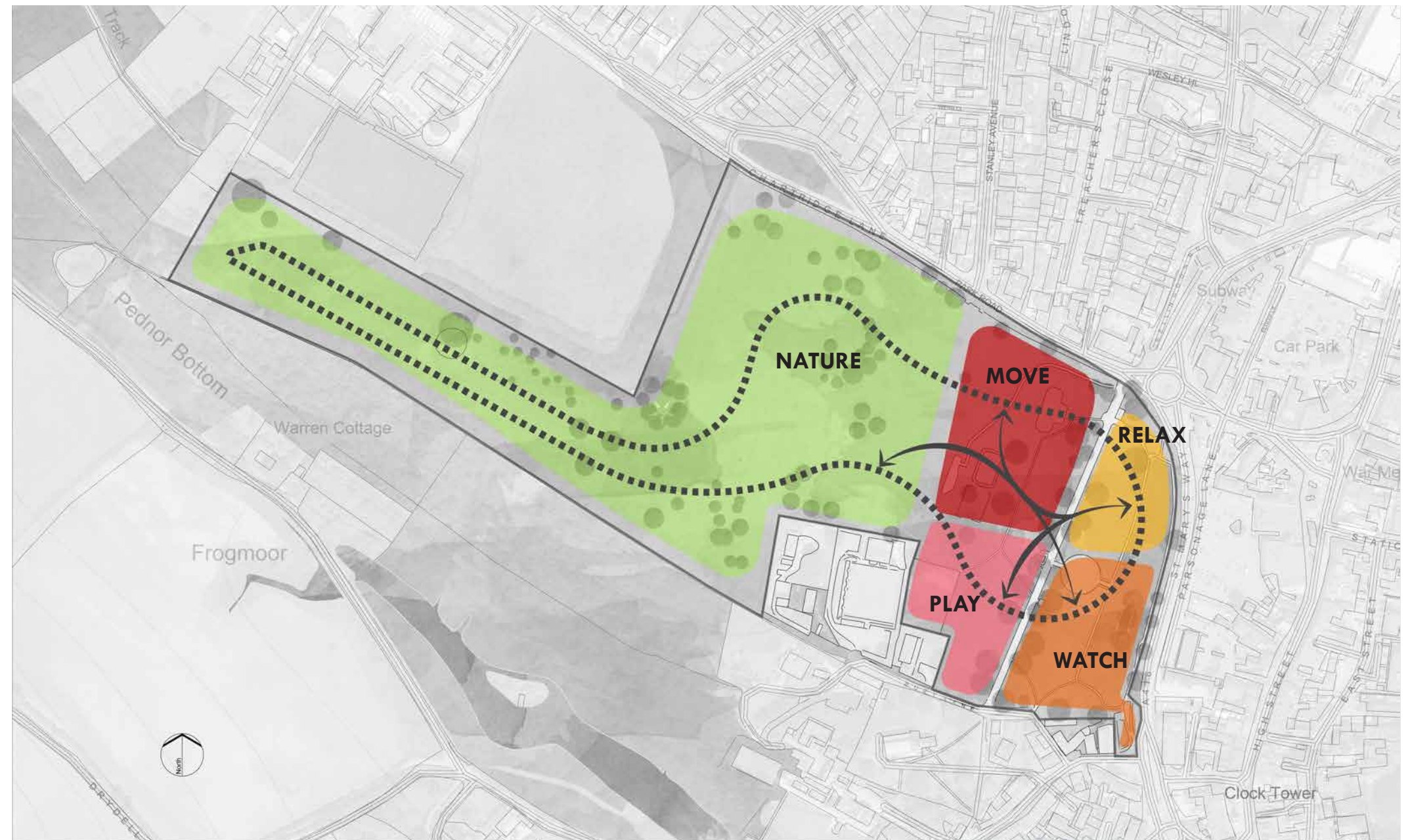
Move - An active zone where visitors can come to exercise and play games. Could include outdoor gym facilities, MUGAs, parkour equipment and a pump track.

Play - A zone for children to enjoy a variety of play equipment for different age groups while parents watch from the nearby cafe.

Watch - This zone allows observation and participation in performances, as well as watching nature through pond dipping.

Relax - A quieter zone for relaxation and contemplation, with generous seating and planting.

In keeping with the concept outlined on the previous page, the largest zone is set aside for Nature - roughly 70% of the park. Whilst a key aim of this zone is to improve biodiversity, it's equally important that users visit and enjoy the Upper Park. Seasonal areas of interest, along with an improved path network and wayfinding, will ensure that this zone is enjoyed just as much as those in the Lower Park.



© MIDWEST LIVING



© ANDREW WATSON



© LDA DESIGN

¹ Ornamental maze

² Natural play example

³ Quieter zone for relaxation

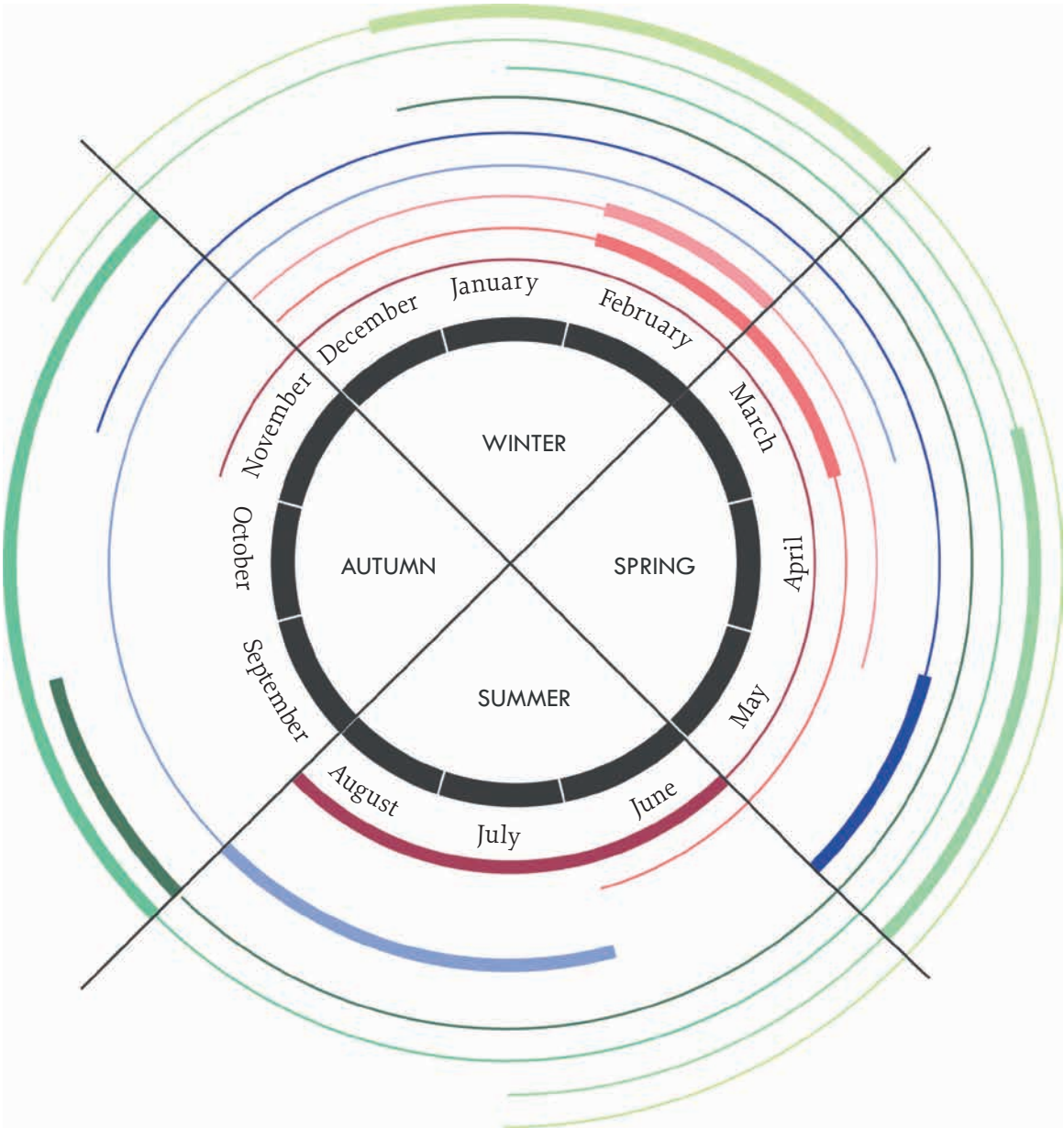
5.3 Seasonal areas of interest

An important factor in improving the use and enjoyment of any park is the provision of activity and interest throughout the year. The adjacent diagram shows potential events and moments of significance across the calendar for visitors to appreciate and enjoy.

This includes explosions of colour, such as the blossom of cherry trees in February to March, or the blooming of wildflowers between May and June. Similarly, the Sovereign Coppice will draw visitors in October, and the autumnal colours of the trees will be on full display in September to October. These natural events will play a significant role in drawing visitors into the Upper Park, and allowing them to appreciate the wilder area of the park at different times of year.

As well as natural moments, there will also be times of the year where people are at the forefront. These include the Schools of Chesham Summer Carnival, which has over 2500 attendees, and the popular series of Summer Concerts. Summertime bowling could also take place in the park as a part of the suggested connection with Chesham Bowling Club. Winter events such as a Christmas Parade or a Pop-up Ice Skating rink would increase the use of the park during the colder months.

In order to improve awareness of these moments/events, a calendar could be posted in the park and linked to the digital information included on the new wayfinding/ signage.



- BLOSSOM IN COMMUNITY ORCHARD, FEB-MARCH
- WILDFLOWER MEADOW, MAY-JUNE
- SCHOOLS OF CHESHAM SUMMER CARNIVAL
- SUMMER CONCERTS, JULY- AUGUST
- SOVEREIGN COPPICE - OCTOBER
- NEW AUTUMN TREES , SEPT-NOVEMBER
- CHRISTMAS PARADE , DECEMBER
- POP-UP ICE SKATING RINK , DEC- JANUARY
- SUMMERTIME BOWLING, JUN- AUGUST

- ¹ Performance in Lowndes Park
- ² Autumn trees in Lowndes Park
- ³ Wildflower bloom



© FRIENDS OF LOWNDES PARK



© FRIENDS OF LOWNDES PARK



© FRIENDS OF LOWNDES PARK

5.4 ‘Good Neighbour’

A key factor in any masterplan is how the site fits into, and works with, its surroundings. We have identified the opportunity to create connections with four existing establishments which border the park, allowing them to coexist in a mutually beneficial relationship.

Firstly, a link could be established with Chiltern Hills Academy. This is a secondary school that is located on Chartridge Lane, bordering the Upper Park. An improved Chartridge Lane entrance to the park, with hardstanding paths leading through to the Lower Park, would improve the connection with the Academy and the Town Centre, and encourage students into the park. A link could be created between the private playing fields belonging to the Academy, and the park’s fitness/play trails. This fitness trail links into the popular Pednor Loop 10km route, and could form part of the Academy’s running clubs/ classes.

Secondly, a relationship with the Chesham Bowling Club could be established whereby the existing facilities of the clubhouse are modified/re-purposed to allow a cafe that extends into the Park. The Bowling Club is strategically located in a central position within the park, and an area of extensive spill out seating and cafe facilities would act as meeting point for people to gather. This location, along with the security and existing infrastructure of the Bowling Club, makes it an ideal opportunity to establish a cafe in the park.

Another advantage of this location is its proximity to Chesham Guide Hut, a local children’s activity centre. In a similar way, this centre could be provided with spill out space within the park that acts as a play hub for all children to use and enjoy. This could take the form of a forest school, giving the added benefit of providing children with hands-on learning experiences in the natural environment.

Lastly, a link could be created with Temperance Hall (also known as The Little Theatre By The Park). This consists of a community hall with raised stage and rear storage area. The relationship would include the use the play and performance areas within the park for community events.

Through these connections, Lowndes Park would act as the canvas for the community by collaborating with an early years education centre, a later years education centre, a local recreation club, and a community theatre.



- ¹ Picnic seating with clear sightlines
- ² Play Hub example
- ³ Fitness trails

© RUNNERS WORLD

6.0 Masterplan Objectives

6.0 Masterplan Objectives

The masterplan vision will be guided by a number of separate but related objectives which were informed by the views expressed by stakeholders in the consultation events. These objectives will be woven into the design of the masterplan. They are to create:

- * A coherent park with a clear spatial structure;
- * A better used pond with improved water quality;
- * A park that links with its surroundings including better entrances and improved circulation;
- * A play hub that young people can use and enjoy;
- * A place where activities and events can take place that bring the community together;
- * A destination park where users come to socialise, keep fit, and experience nature;
- * A park with a strong identity that is rooted in its past;
- * A more biodiverse park that is sustainable for the future;
- * A robust and maintainable park.

6.1 A coherent park with a clear spatial structure

The current park has been assembled in an ad hoc fashion and this is apparent in its layout. Key elements lack visual connectivity and most are concentrated in the Lower Park, leaving the Upper Park underused.

The main entrances lack clear sightlines - for example from the Archena Gardens entrance it's not possible to see into the park at all, and the main Play Area is not visible from any of the entrances. The arrangement of key elements in the Lower Park, and the lack of accessible paths to the Upper Park, reinforces the sense of two parks rather than one. The objective is to establish clear routes through the park and to unite the park and its various elements by spreading them out in a cohesive manner and making them visually connected. The masterplan will also feature a number of trails through the park - for experiencing nature, exercising and playing - meaning that the full extent of the park can be enjoyed.

6.2 A better used pond with improved water quality;

Skottowes Pond currently suffers from poor water quality, which results in a lack of biodiversity and limits the use of the pond for the general public. The pond is situated at a key location in the park - the area closest to the Town Centre and the main entrances. In addition, the pond feeds into the River Chess, an internationally rare chalk stream. Therefore, improving the water quality and making the pond more useable should be a key aim of future development.

Water quality issues in the pond are caused by a number of factors. These include the large population of waterfowl who live on the pond, which contributes to the lack of plants resulting in nutrient rich water causing algal blooms. There is also little to no circulation or movement of water meaning the pond is effectively stagnant for much of the year, and numerous drains enter the pond via urban runoff.

Restoration options for Skottowes Pond include softening the concrete banks through the creation of marginal vegetation shelves and/or re-naturalisation of one or more of the banks. This would also allow an increase in the pond's biodiversity through creating micro-habitats for aquatic invertebrates. Sustainable Urban Drainage systems (SUDS) such as rain gardens could also be incorporated to capture surface runoff before it reaches the pond, along with the long term management of the waterfowl population. Lastly, boardwalks through the pond could be added with dipping platforms that bring an educational benefit to children.

6.3 A play hub that young people can use and enjoy

One of the common responses from the consultation events is that more space for activities for young people is required within Chesham. The current play provision within Lowndes Park is relatively limited, and the main Play Area is located in a corner of the site that is quite inaccessible.

The masterplan for the park needs to include a play offering that caters for all age groups and ability, in a location that is convenient and accessible to all. A mixture of Natural Play, Adventure Play and Toddler Play should be combined, with incidental play on the way trails taking young people on a fun journey through the park.

6.4 A place where activities and events can take place that bring the community together

The programme of events that take place in Lowndes Park, including the summer programme of concerts and the annual carnival, is considered one of the more positive features of Lowndes Park. There is also a historic precedent of the park hosting significant events, as the park was the focus of Chesham's Peace Celebration at the end of World War One.

The masterplan should look to build on this by providing the space and facilities to host events and welcome large numbers of people into the park. One way this could happen is an improved performance space, with a larger footprint, better access, and reinforced paving to allow vehicular runover. New and improved toilet facilities were another popular suggestion during the consultation, and this would be required in order to accommodate large scale events within the park without having to bring in portable toilets.

6.5 A destination park where users come to socialise, keep fit, and experience nature

Lowndes Park is in a great location - close to the Tube Station and Chesham Town Centre but also next to the countryside of the Chilterns AONB. This location should be maximised by drawing more people into the park, as well as providing for those who live in the surrounding area.

During the consultation process, the idea of cafe was a popular one, although in order for a permanent cafe to be viable, there must be an increase in footfall. As a meanwhile solution, a flexible space could be provided with the facilities to accommodate pop-up businesses that could hire the area on rotation. This area would include seating to allow visitors to gather and socialise, increasing the dwelling time in the park.

Outdoor gym equipment was another popular suggestion, and this could be incorporated into a fitness trail that leads through the park. Similarly, a nature trail with signage leading out into the countryside (and Pednor Loop) would encourage visitors to experience the nature of the area. Digital information could also be included via QR codes that are placed on interpretation board and signage. These links would provide further information on the history of the area, as well as any suggested trails/routes. Historic aspects of the park such as the Pudding Stones and the King George V Shelter could be enhanced through refurbishment and the addition of information boards. The Avenue could also be replanted with trees to restore it to its original condition.

6.6 A park with a strong identity that is rooted in its past

Lowndes Park and Chesham's identity as a Gateway to The Chilterns should be enhanced and solidified in the new masterplan. This will be articulated in a number of ways: re-worked entrances will make the park feel more welcoming and create a uniformity that will become recognisable.

There is also the opportunity to create a coherence with the Town Centre - Chesham Community Board are funding a 'Welcome to Chesham' board as you enter via the train station which could create a link with the park.

6.7 A truly biodiverse park that is sustainable for the future

Enhancing the park from an ecological perspective will be a key aim of the masterplan. The park covers 36 acres and is a great opportunity to improve the biodiversity and sustainability of the area.

One way of doing this is by altering the way the grassland is managed and maintained. At present the vast majority of the park is mown grassland. A transition to include wildflower meadow and other forms of biodiverse planting would result in a significant improvement - both ecologically and aesthetically. This could be done in different ways, such as the creation of an ornamental maze.

Sustainable urban drainage will ensure that rainwater is retained in the park rather than being fed directly into the stormwater drainage system, and will reduce urban runoff feeding into the pond. New planting and trees will respond to the prospect of a dry future, and new habitats will be created throughout the park.

6.8 A robust and maintainable park

The masterplan must be realistic and present a vision that is both actionable and sustainable into the future. Proposals should aim to be feasible with budget restraints and materials should be selected that have long lifespans and minimal maintenance demands.

Maintenance costs and any equipment required should be considered and minimised as much as possible. An example of this is reducing the amount of mowing that is required as a result of the transition from mown grassland to more wildflower meadow planting.

*

The Masterplan



Masterplan - Lowndes Park



Lowndes Park - Proposed Visual (artist's impression)

ORIGINAL AERIAL IMAGE: THE CHESHAM SOCIETY

7.0 The Masterplan

7.1 The Big Moves

The incremental evolution of Lowndes Park has resulted in a park with a limited structure or identity; a park with ad-hoc topographical depositions, irregular footpaths and dated entrances. Lowndes Park could be a park with a robust structure, offering a diversity of programme and a timeless elegance that attracts a wider audience. It could also be a sustainable park that acts as an exemplar for the next generation of parks. In addition, Lowndes Park could have an identity, which is emblematic of its past and mindful of its social, cultural and environmental importance going forward.

Lowndes Park has the opportunity to get the structure right, project a confident identity, and inject a programmed diversity that serves as the lifeblood of public space. These are the 'big moves', the imperatives to get right in order to secure the long term success of the park; Structure, Identity, and Programmatic Diversity.

Structure

In the existing park, the Avenue acts as the main route through the park and a key north-south axis. In the proposed design, this has been built upon with the addition of an east-west route, leading the visitor from the new entrance next to Chesham Town Centre, to the heart of the park and the new cafe. Due to the steep topography leading to the Upper Park, an accessible ramp runs alongside this to allow all users into the centre of the park.

These two axes provide a basis for the structure of the park, which is then layered with a widened path network that links the key areas of the site and the entrances. Three other factors work to improve the circulation and draw visitors into the Upper Park - these are upgrading the quality of the surfacing to the footpaths, adding new signage and wayfinding, and providing seating along the key routes.

Two new entrances have been proposed which strengthens the connection to the surrounding area and

respond to key desire lines into and out of the park to the north and east. This improved perimeter permeability will create easy access to the centre of the park.

Identity

Entrances also play a key role in defining the identity of a park. The arrival sequence piques the curiosity and anticipation of the visitor, and raises the expectation of regular park users. Like the front door of a residential property, the entrances and boundary of the park create that all important first impression of a place.

The entrances at Lowndes park will utilise a consistency of materials and layout which provide a recognisable uniformity. Sight lines into the park will be opened up, with generous seating, tree planting and activity at the internal edges of the site. The wayfinding and signage will also include park maps and information, both at entrances and further into the park.

Lowndes Park's historical elements will be enhanced, along with additional interpretation boards to inform visitors as to the history of the site. Going forward, the park may become known as a space for the community to come together, with a variety of activities and seasonal events, whilst maintaining a focus on biodiversity.

Programmatic Diversity

Offering the visitor a variety of experiences is crucial to creating a successful park. As outlined in the Vision for the Park, the masterplan will create a number of different zones with varying levels of activity. Coupled with this, is the opportunity to enrich what is already a successful calendar of events, create incidental park activities, introduce more biodiversity and habitat types, and provide the opportunity to play and exercise in a myriad of different ways.

Whether they are following a fitness/play trail, navigating through the ornamental maze, enjoying a coffee near the play area, or simply relaxing by the pond with a book, visitors to Lowndes Park won't have a shortage of different options in how to spend their time.



-  CENTRAL AXIS
-  CENTRAL ACCESSIBLE RAMP
-  LINKS TO KEY ENTRANCES
-  NEW ENTRANCES

8.0 Parkwide Strategies

The following pages will illustrate a number of strategies across the park, using diagrams and images to support a brief explanatory statement for each strategy. The strategies that will be illustrated are as follows:

- Entrances
- Play
- Sport
- Art
- Ecology and Landscape
- Cycling and Footpaths
- Lighting



8.1 Entrances

Fundamental to the success of the masterplan for Lowndes Park will be to create a more connected, accessible green space with inviting entrances at key entry points. The park entrance strategy establishes a hierarchy of entrances - primary, secondary and tertiary entrances. Each of the entrances include wayfinding components that will ensure a comprehensive sense of familiarity, consistency and identity reinforcing the family of entrances.

Primary entrances will be provided on St Mary’s Way and Archena Gardens, A new entrance will be created from Star Yard car park across St Mary’s Way into the park via a footbridge across Skottowes Pond. This will improve the connections between Lowndes Park and Chesham Town Centre. The primary entrances will consist of signature decorative screen, new paving, seating, railings, trees and an information panel with park maps and wayfinding. Bollards will be required to deter unauthorised vehicles entering into the park.

Secondary entrances will be provided at either end of the Avenue (Rue de Houilles) and consist of a 2 metre high information panel, seating, new railings and paving.

Tertiary entrances will be provided at Pednor , Chilterns Hill Academy, at Chartridge Lane, Stanley Avenue and Bury Lane. These entrances will be similar to the secondary entrances but without the seating.

Throughout the park at major intersections of footpaths, fingerpost signage will be provided with walking times to key destinations such as the Skottowes pond, the rolling pin, play areas and sports hub, as well as providing directions for the fitness and play trails.



- PRIMARY ENTRANCE
- SECONDARY ENTRANCE
- TERTIARY ENTRANCE
- NEW ENTRANCES



Victoria Park Footbridge (LDA Design)



Primary entrances-



Secondary entrances-



Tertiary entrances-

8.2 Play

There will be provisions for play throughout the park and peripheral areas both as formal play and inventive / embedded play.

A large play area will be located in the heart of the park adjacent to the new café area. As this is partly where the existing play area is located, the area is already relatively flat, making it easier and more cost effective to improve the facilities in this area. Improved entrances to the south and east of the park, along with enhanced pathways, will also make the location more accessible and draw people into the centre where the main play area is located.

It is intended that the play area will be a day out event, with lawn spaces for picnics and exciting play equipment for all ages and abilities. Play trails will meander through the park connecting the formal play areas and informal embedded play, such as fallen logs, balance beams, sculptural play elements as well as inventive play such as rolling down the landforms and pond dipping in the lake. These incidental play spaces will help to provide for different age groups away from the main play area.

Plenty of seating and resting areas will be included for sociability, picnic tables and benches will be provided for waiting parents and carers with clear sightlines to the play areas. Social swings will be provided near the new the cafe area for young teens to hang out on.

- Formal Play Area
- Incidental Play
- Play Trail



8.3 Sport and Fitness

A sports hub is located near the Park Road entrance providing multi-use games area, pump track, low climbing wall, climbing boulders, parkour equipment and an outdoor gym which will include popular fitness items like cardio and strength equipment as well as accessible pieces.

The sports hub will be enclosed by a 300m track which will be used for walking, running/ scootering/ roller blading, offering a fun way for adults and children of all ages to explore the space.

The existing skate park will be retained at its current location and refurbished/ enhanced with additional features, connected by an accessible ramp with urban games features located off the main track creating more seating and socialising opportunities for young teens to hang out.

By arranging the sport uses in close proximity to each other, the pitches can be lit at night with minimal disturbance to the nocturnal wildlife of the park caused by light pollution.

- MUGA
- OUTDOOR GYM
- PUMP TRACK
- YOUTH ACTIVITIES
- FITNESS TRACK
- FITNESS TRAIL



8.4 Art

Historic features such as the Rolling Pin, The Stone Trough and Pudding Stone will serve as inspiration for arts throughout the park. There will also be provision throughout the park for more contemporary interventions as well as opportunities to reuse the materials salvaged from the site.

- Opportunity for art
- Opportunity for art inspired by historic features



© OLAFUR ELIASSON



© JEPPE HEIN



© HEINE JONES

8.6 Ecology and Landscape

The park is currently made up of habitats of amenity grass, ornamental planting, meadows, woodland and scattered trees. The biodiversity strategy is to increase the variety of habitats throughout the park.

It is proposed in the first year, large areas of the lawn should be left unmowed, allowing it to grow as shown in the adjacent images. These areas can then be oversown with wildflower seed in the second year, facilitating the establishment of the meadow and improving biodiversity.

The Upper Park will continue to be maintained as chalk meadow for both the benefit of wildlife, creating a mosaic of Chilterns grasslands. These areas are subject to further soil testing, and will be managed appropriately as local habitats according to the soil typology present.

The Sovereign Coppice will be retained, with sympathetic additions of planting such as woodland bulbs that will compliment the natural habitat. A natural path could meander through the wooded area to improve the accessibility and circulation as well as providing woodland play opportunities.

The orchard is a valuable resource for the community and provides a rich nectar and food source for pollinating insects. Incremental improvements such as the opportunity to plant new trees and the introduction of a learning area are the only suggested improvements in this part of the park.

The ornamental planting at Archena Gardens will be enhanced with additional climate resilient planting that offers a greater variety of seasonal variation. Rain gardens will be incorporating along the Avenue to capture surface water run-off.

These Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) could also be introduced between St Mary’s Way and Skottowes Pond to capture run-off, thereby preventing polluted water from reaching the pond. The biodiversity of the pond would be improved by softening the eastern bank and introducing marginal vegetation shelves and aquatic planting. In addition, floating nesting islands could be introduced to Skottowes Pond providing sheltered refuge for birds and habitat for microorganisms, which use algae, carbon and excess nutrients in the water as a food source, purifying the water and improving the overall water quality of the pond. Lastly, to further improve the water quality, the park’s wildfowl population should be managed and the local population should be discouraged from feeding the birds.

- Chalk Meadow
- Scrub / Woodland
- Aquatic Planting/ Floating Island
- Herbaceous Perennials for Play
- Buffer Planting
- SuDS Planting
- Pond
- Ornamental Planting
- Orchard
- Flower Meadow



Burgess Park (LDA Design)



Floating nesting island

© BIOMATRIX WATER



Example of unmowed lawn

8.7 Cycling and footpaths

The footpaths will be designed to provide space for cyclists and pedestrians to coexist without the need for deliberate delineation.

A cycle route is proposed along the Avenue (Rue de Houilles), entrance barriers will be provided at either end of the avenue to signify the priority for pedestrians.

A quieter cycle route is proposed to cut through the park between the new entrance at Stanley Avenue and the entrance at Pednor Loop.

The consultation response highlighted the need for more cycle parking within the park. Cycle parking will be provided at the St Mary's Entrance, Archena Gardens entrance, play hub and the sports Hub.

The masterplan creates an inclusive and accessible park. No formal footpath has a gradient greater than 1:21 ensuring wheelchair users can use the key areas of the park, including the wheel ramp which leads to the cafe in the heart of the site. Due to topographic constraints, it's not possible for all suggested routes leading to the Upper Park to be 1:21 - these are to be trails/suggested routes rather than formal footpaths. The information at the entrances will be presented in a legible manner for all users of the park.

A new footpath network improves connections throughout the park with the aim to offer clear connectivity and destination routes such as the Chiltern Link recreational route from Herberts Hole.

The Avenue (Rue de Houilles) is 5 metres wide ensuring a variety of uses can take place at any one time. All other formalised footpaths are 3 metres wide to allow for shared pedestrian and cycle use.

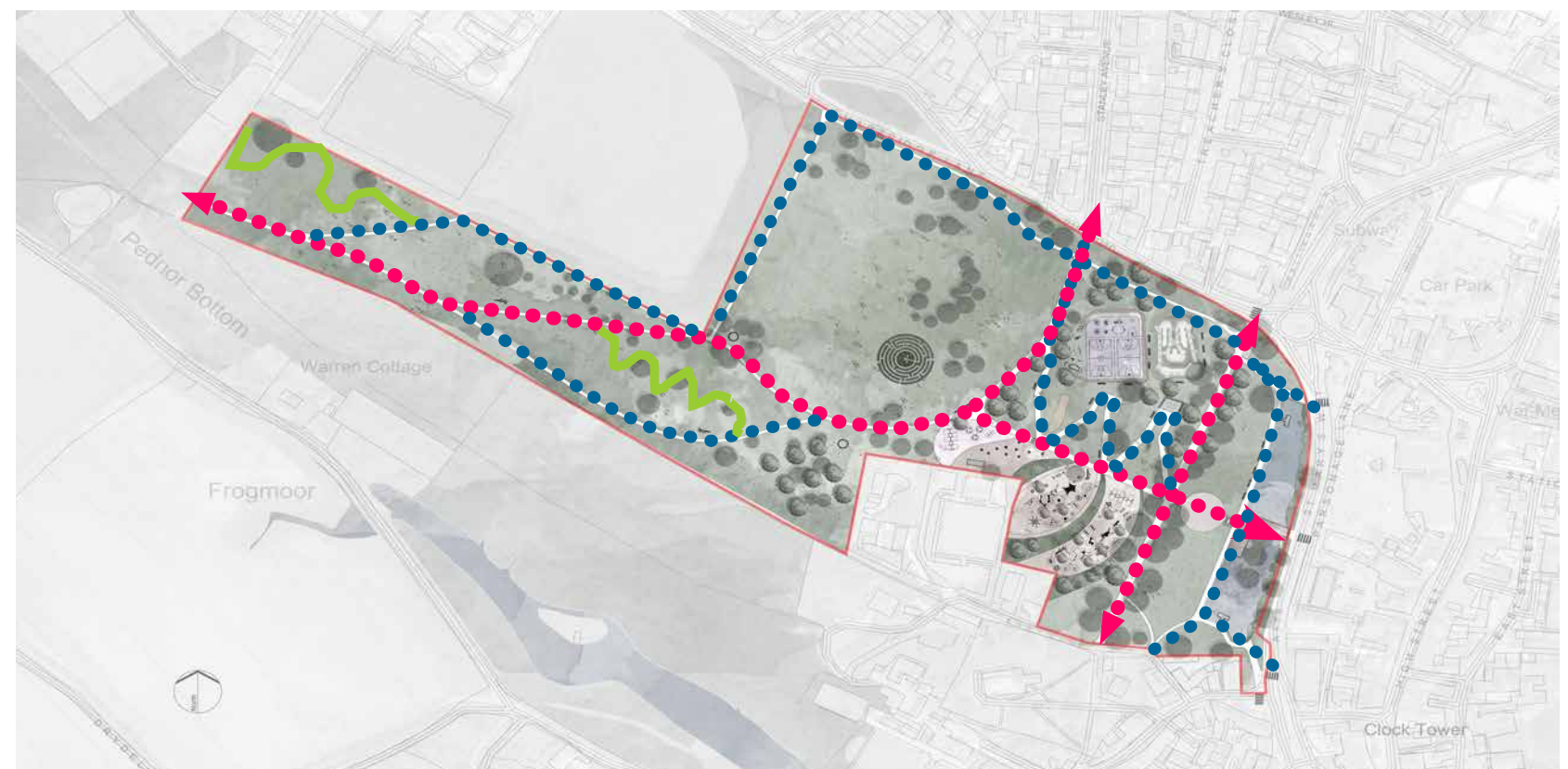
The consultation response highlighted a desire for fitness, play and natural trails, a tertiary path structure is proposed through some of the more sheltered areas of the park.

Finally, a new wayfinding strategy that links to the Town Centre and incorporates Digital Information (QR Codes) will guide visitors around the park, encouraging them onto the trails into the Upper Park, and providing them with historical information about the Park.

- ● ● ● Cycle Connections
- ● ● ● Main Cycle Route
- 🚲 Cycle Parking
- Wheel Ramp



- ● ● ● Primary connecting route
- ● ● ● Secondary route
- Tertiary route



Wayfinding example

© GNEE STEELS

8.8 Lighting

Throughout the design process, the strategy for lighting has been to restrict the use of light to the key entrances and along Rue de Houilles to enable these spaces to be used after dark.

Current best practice is not to light park routes, as it leads to a false sense of security. For instance, a park user on a lit footpath can see ahead of them and behind them, but the rest of the park is in shadow. Light pollution is also an issue for biodiversity, as it affects nocturnal birds and animals from populating the park.

- Sports Lighting
- Lit routes in and around park
- Primary & Secondary entrances



9.0 Masterplan Delivery

9.1 Clever Investment in Chesham

We recognise it is not possible for all the park improvements to be implemented at the same time, it is important to identify which projects should be prioritised to allow the masterplan to be adopted in a strategically phased manner.

The diagram to the right shows a suggested phased timeline for this investment. One of the first investments should be play - including equipment for children aged 0-4 and 5-11, as there is currently a lack of facilities for these age groups within the park and these improvements were a popular suggestion during the consultation.

The stakeholders also highlighted Skottowes Pond as a key priority during the consultation process, so work should begin on improving the water quality in order to facilitate other uses of the area. This could include the introduction of SuDS to capture runoff, modular vegetation shelves, and management of the wildfowl population. In addition, the link with Chesham Bowling Club should be created in order to establish a cafe in the centre of the park. This will increase footfall and provide a base for future investment.

The second phase should focus on enhancing the entrances, paths and wayfinding. Improving the visibility and connection to the town will also have the effect of drawing more people into the park, and once the visitors have arrived, the path network and wayfinding will provide more interest and circulation through the site.

A new central eastern entrance, between St Mary's Way and Archena Gardens entrances, would facilitate the connection with the town, and would lead to a boardwalk across the pond. The eastern bank of the pond could also be softened at this point, further improving water quality.

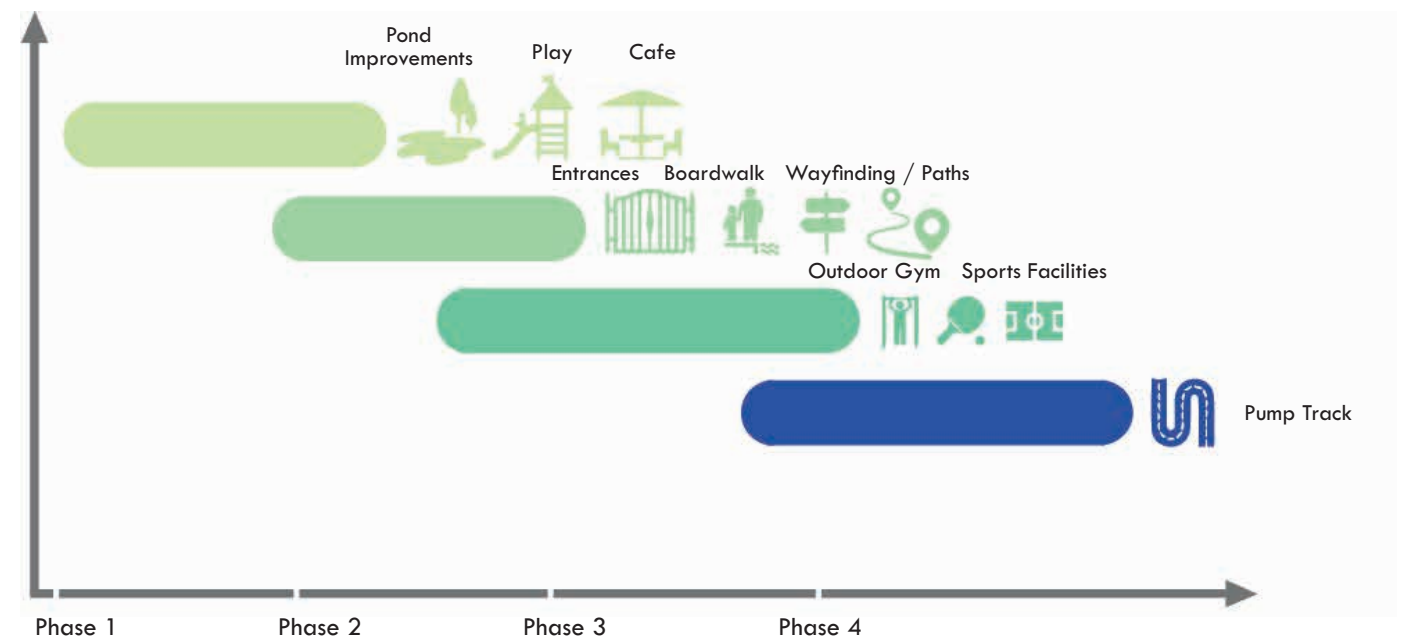
Next, expanding and enhancing the sports and exercise facilities should be prioritised. This could include new MUGAs, outdoor gym equipment, table tennis tables, and parkour equipment.

Lastly, a pump track could be added to replace or add to the existing Skate park. This caters to more users than a Skate Park as it can be used by bikes, scooters and in-line skates as well as skateboards and other types of wheeled vehicles.

9.2 Next Steps

In the next stage of the process, we would expect to conduct further consultation - firstly with Chesham Bowling Club to find out whether or not a cafe connection is feasible. Alternatively, a relationship could be established with the Chesham Vale Division of the Girl Guides who own the Guide Hut, who will be consulted along with all adjoining neighbours and other key stakeholders. This would include Make Space for Girls, as well as local youth and community groups such as The Theatre Shed.

In addition, further information will allow development of the plans in more detail. For example, soil surveys will facilitate the development of the ecological strategy, and traffic/highways information will inform the types of new crossings on St Mary's Way. Lastly, once we have a better idea of the funding available, we can update the masterplan delivery and adjust the layouts accordingly.



10.0 Appendices

10.1 Comments from in person consultation

The majority of the comments from the in person consultation were verbal - these were factored into the development of the masterplan, and summarised earlier in the document. Below are all the written comments on Postik notes or paper handed in at the end of the event:

Activities / Events

Which type of activities would make you more likely to visit the park more regularly?
What sort of events would you like to see added to the schedule?

Response 1
Possible boule rink, but only if the equipment was issued in the park by someone – same as for table tennis.

Response 2
Park needs to be a destination.
Signage / information boards. Footpaths – community orchard.
Chesham
‘Gateway To The Chilterns’

Facilities

What do you think of the current facilities at Lowndes Park?
What new type of facility would you like to see?

Response 1
Replace toilet block with new facilities that are set into the slope to reduce their visual impact.

Response 2
Kiosk / toilets / café

Cycle track
Exercise trail (for all age groups)
Refuges – for groups to gather.
Top of the park needs flatter paths and routes – better access.

Response 3
Consider putting nature trails into sloped areas with meandering trails and aligning nature trail with outdoor gym areas.

Response 4
Park should be for pedestrians and cyclists.
Sustainable development.
Arboretum.

Response 5
Redesign of toilet block, possible near to a new small takeaway café.

Response 6
Better toilet facilities would be required if a park run was consented as there could be a lot of runners.

Entrances

What do you think of the current entrances at Lowndes Park?
How could they be improved?

Response 1
Main Southern boundary fencing needs to be replaced as many members of the public trespass into neighbouring properties.

Response 2
Improve access / sighting at crossing into bus area / Star

Yard.
It is unsafe as the traffic is too close before – you see the traffic.
Response 3
Improve access to the park for cyclists.
Water feature – fountains for summertime, perhaps solar powered or only triggered when people walk across it.

How would you like to see investment prioritised in the future?

Response 1
Priorities:
1. Entrances
2. Infrastructure
3. Ecology

Response 2
Need Improvement:
- All entrances to the park
- Skottowes Pond
- Path width up hill
- Routes through park (pedestrians / cyclists)

Ecological Improvements

What are the key ecological improvements you would like to see?
How important is this for you?

Response 1
Dry gardening and rainwater gardening – capturing water off the toilet roof.
SUDs.

Response 2
More wildflower / natural grassland areas.

Management is proven to be cheaper to maintain and it is better for biodiversity.
Soil quality would also be improved, reducing run-off, preventing flooding and water quality.

Response 3
More focus on the ecology and habitat.
Skottowes Pond feeds into an internationally rare chalk stream. The pond should be a focus.

Response 4
Tree planting to plan for shade in the future.

Response 5
Aeration plan for the pond to prevent eutrophication along with sloped banks and marginal planting for wildlife improvements.

Response 6
Use natural shade i.e trees where possible to enable areas with lower temp and higher humidity to be enjoyed.
Particularly important in future due to climate change.

Response 7
Spend most time in the pond area.
Pond tired and dirty.

Response 8
Disconnect urban runoff from Skottowes Pond to improve water quality.

Response 9
Area for herbs which are good for pollinators.

Response 10

Wild meadow areas with mown areas such as ‘mazes’ and picnic areas to enable nature appreciation, achieve carbon capture, and biodiversity improvements.

Response 11

Education around water quality issues around newly designed ponds, and to explain water efficiency.
Idea of informative trail around pond features.

Response 12

Skottowes Pond biodiversity enhancement.
Restrict access on roadside and new softbank with aquatic planting.
Dipping platform for schools etc – educational benefit.
Improved wildflower areas.

Response 13

There are bats in the park, but you really need a bat detector, but this could be another leaflet / app.

Response 14

Bat boxes or bird boxes.
Possible pond area providing it captures run off from an artificial surface.
Log piles, bug hotels, bee scrapes at the top of the park.

Response 15

Skottowes Pond should be a priority for improvement. Currently suffers from poor water quality. There is a lack of habitat (concrete banks etc.), and the pond can pollute the chess via its overflow.

Water quality issues in pond caused by:

- Road runoff (numerous drains enter into the pond).
- High density of wildfowl.
- Supplementary feeding of wildfowl.
- Lack of maintenance which has led to sediment accretion and nutrient enrichment.

Restoration options for Skottowes Pond:

- Soften at banks through creation of marginal vegetation shelves and/or re-naturalisation of one or more banks (removal of concrete).
- Restoration and possible enlargement of island.
- Installation of SUDs on runoff drains or re-routing all road drains away from ponds.
- Long-term management of wildfowl and supplementary feeding by public.





Lowndes Park - Proposed Visual (artist's impression)

ORIGINAL AERIAL IMAGE: THE CHESHAM SOCIETY

LDĀDESIGN

London
209 – 215 Blackfriars Road
London SE1 8NL
+44 (0) 20 7467 1470

Bristol
Hanover House
Queen Charlotte Street
Bristol BS1 4LG
+44 (0) 117 203 3628

Cambridge
The Courtyard
17A Sturton Street
Cambridge CB1 2SN
+44 (0) 1223 949054

Exeter
Kings Wharf
The Quay
Exeter EX2 4AN
+44 (0) 1392 260 430

Glasgow
Sovereign House
158 West Regent Street
Glasgow G2 4RL
+44 (0) 1412 229 780

Manchester
Ducie House
37 Ducie Street
Manchester M1 2JW
+44 (0)161 359 5684

Oxford
Worton Rectory Park
Oxford OX29 4SX
+44 (0) 1865 887050

Peterborough
17 Minster Precincts
Peterborough PE1 1XX
+44 (0) 1733 310 471

www.lda-design.co.uk

LDA Design Consulting Ltd
Registered No: 09312403
17 Minster Precincts, Peterborough PE1 1XX

LDA Design is a ISO 9001 / ISO 14001 accredited company