

Sustainability Forum: 10th July 2024

Theme: Green Spaces

The evening was divided into two parts, an update on activities since February and a presentation on the developing Green Spaces Strategy with time for questions, followed by a roundtable and feedback session. The slides for the presentations are attached, and a brief summary of the presentation is included here.

The next Sustainability Forum will be on the evening of Tuesday 22nd October 2024 (6:15pm for a 6:30pm start).

Update since 7th February meeting:

- HCCSP have launched a retrofit guide – which can be found here: www.hccsp.org.uk/retrofit
- Local Nature Recovery Strategy Consultation – to be held in Rickmansworth and St Albans locally. The dates for these has now passed but you can get involved in the consultation [here](#). Scroll down to see the link to the local nature recovery survey under ‘what’s happening now’.
- St Mary’s Church Watford Climate conference – 5th October.
- Great Big Green Week was between 8th and 16th June. There were over 45 events, with over 45 organisations over 9 days across Watford and Three Rivers. Watford Festival was the highlight.
 - FoE and others are already looking forward to next year and have started planning

Watford Green Spaces – Gemma Woodfall, Arkwood:

Please see the attached slides details of the Green Spaces Strategy, which was described in the presentation.

Roundtable Discussion:

Below sets out the responses across the three groups on the questions posed:

What are the main strengths of Watford's green spaces and playgrounds?

- Rolling programme of outdoor gyms
- Variety of spaces: playgrounds, fitness and outdoor gyms, football, basketball, astroturf, cricket, bowling
- Access to cafe's
- Access to toilet facilities
- Rivers
- Splash parks in hot weather
- Nature reserve in Cassiobury Park
- Diversity of parks across the borough
- Sports activities
- Open to everyone
- Oxhey Park doesn't have lighting (very low in activity)
- Biodiversity from the railway land edge and corridor, e.g. Croxley line
- Inclusive

- Variety
- Got lots of them
- Using greenspaces for activities and to see biodiversity
- Whippendell Woods: good for woodland walks, good for woodland butterflies e.g. White Admiral
- Walking on and connection to Ebury Way

What do you think are the current challenges?

- A dedicated website for all climate and biodiversity projects, suggest www.watfordtowncentre.com
- Finding volunteers to help look after our greenspaces
- Radlett Park doesn't have enough trees.
- Adequate levels of light for safety
- Lighting: correctly balanced for safety versus dark skies and biodiversity
- Concern on safety esp. Cassiobury Park
- People and litter: Effect on the environment and animals!
- Getting parks publicised: people should know where their local park is but many don't
- Canal: working with Canal and Rivers Trust
- Walking routes: railway blocking crossing
- Leavesden Road cut through to Callowland Recreation Ground is dangerous for people on bikes and for children/ school community

What do you see as the main opportunities?

- Having a 'friends of' group for every park
- Corridors for connection: roads, rail, water
- Climate resilient trees and planting
- Shading from trees
- Sign posting to parks and wayfinding
- A campaign around 'Getting to know your local park' as there are lots of people who don't know about parks and greenspaces
- Joining up green spaces and creating green corridors
- Lots of small spaces could be joined up
- Creating cycle ways and signage
- Competition for children collecting litter: create partnership with Keep Britain Tidy
- Working with organisations around rewilding e.g. HMWT etc
- Link to land at the top of Bushmill Lane (or is this outside of Watford borough?)

What would you like to see covered in the strategy?

- Street lighting
- Lighting in residential and business areas
- Bioclimatic outdoor strategies - how to use green infrastructure to improve thermal comfort (shading, cooling, insulating)
- See the connections between the greenspaces, travel, wellbeing, etc, so we can publicise
- Ensure community involved with development of the greenspaces
- Development to provide enough greenspaces to support people/ new communities

Other observations and questions from attendees

- Will the Strategy align with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy? *The team will be consulting with the leads of the Strategy.*
- Will the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership be consulted? *Yes, they are a key stakeholder and will be part of the consultation process.*
- Concern around light pollution and biodiversity loss in relation to new development, which should not be detrimental
- Will there be any consideration in the Strategy around the amount of greenspace required in new development? *Yes, the Strategy will provide policies around quality and quantity of greenspace.*
- Recommend that the Strategy is taken to the climate conference in October

AoB:

There was a single item of AoB, from audience member Carla Clarke, who is developing a proposal on Hertfordshire University Student Internships and the Climate Change Emergency. The details of the project are:

The project will provide each and every University Student with a meaningful internship

The internships are intended to provide the Students with the opportunity to be inspired, and develop the necessary skills to go onto to be the next generation of experts in designing; robots; artificial intelligence; healthy environmentally friendly homes; infrastructure; logistics parks; health & social care etc within Herts. This is necessary following the Climate Change Emergency, for our species and all biodiversity to flourish in a natural way.

The Students will redesign the consultation process, to ensure it provides a meaningful and measurable platform's to facilitate and empower local democracy. The students will also design a dedicated web page, by engaging with the people & stakeholder. To ensure it works for them. And host all the consolidated Local Plan's such as Watford Green Space Strategy the home page of www.watfordtwncentre.com and www.watford.gov.uk.