

Helen Ryan presented the Knight, Kavanagh, and Page Lancaster District Open Space Reports 2018 and answered questions from Forum Members

Attending: Helen Ryan (Lancaster City Council Public Realm Officer), Pete Turnbull (LGS Forum Chair; Friends of Barley Cop Woods), Jean O'Neill (LGS Trustee; Friends of Lune Bank Gardens; Friends of Ryelands Park), Abi Mills (LGS Trustee; Friends of Greaves Park; Friends of Dorrington Woods; Friends of De Vitre Gardens), Brian Jones (Friends of Lune Bank Gardens; Friends of Carnforth Coke Ovens), Kamilla Elliott (LGS Forum Secretary; Friends of Ryelands Park)

The Open Spaces Assessment Report is complete and published online at:  
<http://planningdocs.lancaster.gov.uk/AniteIM.Websearch/Results.aspx>

The Powerpoint slides presented at the 20 Sept. 2018 Forum have been posted on the Lancaster Green Spaces Forum web page  
<http://www.lancastergreenspaces.org.uk/greenspace-groups-forum.html>

Key points discussed at the Forum:

(In)equity of distribution across the various parts of the Council catchment. For example, for parks and gardens, national standards recommend 0.80 hectares per 1000 population. Lancaster has 0.91; Heysham and Morecambe 0.14; Carnforth/Rural have 0.001. Allotment national standards recommend 0.25 hectares per 1000 population; the district is below that at 0.15 hectares per 1000, but Lancaster is above it at 0.28. Long waiting lists for allotments indicate that supply does not meet demand.

Forum members expressed the opinion that, since the council is not in a financial position to develop new sites, it is all the more imperative that developers take responsibility to develop and maintain new green spaces and that the planning committee hold them accountable to original agreements and to high standards of open spaces provision and maintenance.

Concern was expressed that developers find ways to get out of agreed green spaces provision, whether by pleading poverty (while making millions) or selling land designated for open space in their development to another developer, who is then not be required to use it as green space, since it is such a small parcel of land.

Another concern was raised about changes in council policy regarding who maintains open spaces built by developers. In the past, the council took over maintenance after a period of 5-10 years, but budget cuts mean that the council now looks to developers to maintain the spaces indefinitely. Developers pass on these costs to residents, and residents often feel that these open spaces should be for their exclusive use rather than public use, since they are paying for them. LGS Forum members urge the council to consider these issues and devise a policy for safeguarding public spaces.

On a more positive note, we heard that Leamington Spa Council charges a fixed rate per room to developers to fund open and green spaces and has thereby managed to maintain its green spaces to a very high standard. We hope that the Lancaster City Council will adopt similar strategies and be all the more vigilant in holding developers to original agreements regarding open spaces: for example, if a developer sells land designated as open space, they should be required to allocate another equal parcel of their land to provide that space.

Another major finding of the survey was the lack of youth provision, especially in Morecambe, Heysham, and Lancaster. By contrast, children's provision is sufficient, although not equally distributed.

Helen reported that the Open Space Standards Report is 90% complete, but there have been disagreements about how to structure certain aspects of the report to be used with developers on housing estates. Lancaster Green Spaces Forum members expressed the hope that these aspects would be strengthened to support the needs of the community rather than diluted to serve the interests of developers.

The Lancaster Playing Pitch Strategy is still in process and will produce two similar reports (Assessment and Standards), with classifications by sport. To date information and public views have been gathered; supply and demand information has been completed; what remains is to finalise the strategy and action plan for delivery.

#### Future Forum Events and Meetings

Saturday 20 October 2018: Joint Action Day for Lancaster Green Spaces volunteers and Lancaster University Students at the Eco Hub at Lancaster University. Stay for the whole time or drop in any time 11-3; lunch provided.

The next Lancaster Green Spaces Forum will be hosted by the Friends of Ryelands Park in late January/early February 2019 (*date and time TBD*), beginning with a tour of the park, followed by a meeting with refreshments (either at Fathers' House on Owen Road or in one of the Ryelands Park buildings) at which groups are invited to share their work.

This will be followed by a similar tour and forum hosted by the Friends of Greaves Park in April or early May.

If your group would like to host a tour/forum, please contact Forum Secretary Kamilla Elliott (parksforthepeopleLGS@gmail.com).