

**Garden's Trust Historic Landscapes Assembly
19th November 2021**

The Parks Management Association

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Setting the context: where are we currently?

“When I started it was all about horticulture. I can't even remember the last time I specified what type of tree we needed”

“Now it's very much about what goes on in the park. It's about activity, it's about negotiating leases, it's very much around engagement rather than maintenance. We're always having to evolve”

Some naïve Head of Parks from Watford Borough Council Sept 2016

Setting the context: where are we currently?



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Tony Leach, Chair, London Parks & Green Spaces Forum

"Over the past 18 months, 25 per cent (of London Parks Managers) have either left or their jobs have been deleted. We are losing people with park-specific skills who are often being replaced by staff responsible for leisure or sport or those lower down the food chain with less knowledge".

Setting the context: where are we currently?



History tells us?

20th and 21st Centuries

- Britain in Bloom – driven by Horticulture
- **Parks Departments**
- Amalgamation into **Leisure Services Departments** as part of CCT – change is in the air

BUT

- The advent of **Streetscene Services** – ruled by binmen, highwaymen and engineers
- Austerity
- Covid19
- Climate emergency

History tells us? 20th and 21st Centuries

- The revival – 1996 and the Heritage Lottery Fund
- £1 billion invested
- A new “role” - Parks Development Officers / Managers
- Staff in parks again?

BUT

- Dedicated Parks Funding has gone

History tells us ?



Professional representation

- ILAM
 - Urban Parks Forum
 - GreenSpace
 - CABE Space
 - Green Flag / Keep Britain Tidy
 - The Parks Alliance
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- The 2019 Survey – 600+ responses, 97% agreed we need our own representation

History tells us?





Slide 8. Today's Park Manager!





THE PARKS MANAGEMENT FORUM
REPRESENTING PARKS PROFESSIONALS



PARKS
MANAGEMENT
ASSOCIATION

OUR MISSION

To represent those individuals and organisations working in the public parks and open spaces sector, whether in the public, private or third sector. The PMA remains independent and will aim to work through a steering group of parks professionals acting in the interest of public parks in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.



OUR AIMS AND DEFINED ROLES

- To promote the role of well-trained, qualified and suitably experienced parks practitioners' at every level within parks management, maintenance and development;
- To celebrate the central role quality and well-run parks play in our neighbourhoods for all sections of our communities and raise their value regionally and nationally;
- To recognise and endorse the contribution of quality parks and open spaces to healthy lifestyles and physical and mental wellbeing;
- Promote and endorse best management principles and practices and play a role in facilitating roll out among practitioners';
- To embed the effective role parks and open spaces have as green infrastructure, natural capital and ecosystem services, endorsing sustainable development and protection;
- To lobby for long-term resources for ongoing maintenance, management and development and play a role in finding solutions with government and relevant organisations – **“one voice – one lobby”**;
- To encourage and enable community involvement and empowerment of local people and park users;
- To collaborate with similar minded organisations to achieve its aims; and
- Specifically, to be THE representative body for those professionals working in the parks and green spaces sector.



OUR PROGRESS

- A working group established (Nottingham, Rugby, Watford, LB Hounslow, LB Ealing, Sheffield, Manchester, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Adur and Worthing, Birmingham, Bury, West Midlands, Bournemouth/Christchurch/Poole, Rotherham and many others – Supported by APSE and CFP (UK))
- Parks Management Forum established in Feb 2020
- Became Parks Management Association in 2021
- Website developed www.parksmanagement.org.uk
- 1,400 database of parkies collated
- 2,700+ on LinkedIn as followers
- Nearly 800 on Twitter #parks_forum
- 250+ paid up members, with support from BALI, and the Royal Parks, as well as many others



OUR PROGRESS

- A working Board – with chairperson
- Bank account - £11,200 raised from Founder Members
- Terms of Reference, Constitution & Business Plan agreed
- Meetings with:- GMA, NLHF, FiT, and many others
- The Parks Collective established – but this needs work
- National campaign launched - One Minute Brief
- Spoke at the APPG on parks and green spaces
- Written to every MP in England and Wales
- Website developed with knowledge hub



THE PARKS COLLECTIVE

Collaborative working – a co-ordinated voice for parks and greenspaces

- APSE
- Fields in Trust
- Landscape Institute
- Chartered Institute of Horticulture
- The Royal Parks
- Greenspace Scotland
- Greenspace Wales
- National Trust
- National Lottery Heritage Fund
- Chief Leisure Officers Association
- Play England
- Keep Britain Tidy / Green Flag
- National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces
- Local Government Association
- Manchester University
- University of West England
- Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful
- Keep Scotland Beautiful
- Town and Country Planning Association
- Keep Wales Tidy
- Grounds Management Association
- Ramblers Association



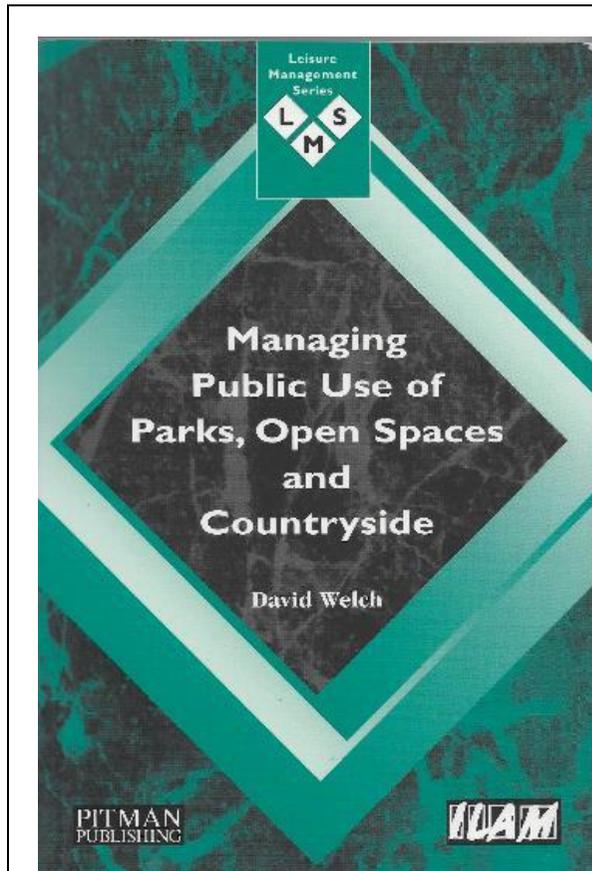
WHAT'S NEXT?

- Re-branding – The Parks Management Association and new logo developed - DONE
- New website developed – DONE
- Business Plan completed - DONE
- Bid to National Lottery Heritage Fund – BEING CONSIDERED
- Parks Collective established – HAS MET 3X BUT NEEDS WORK
- Increased collaboration in the sector - ONGOING
- Membership categories developed - DONE
- Sponsorship (commercial and corporate) - BEING CONSIDERED
- Long term Sustainability

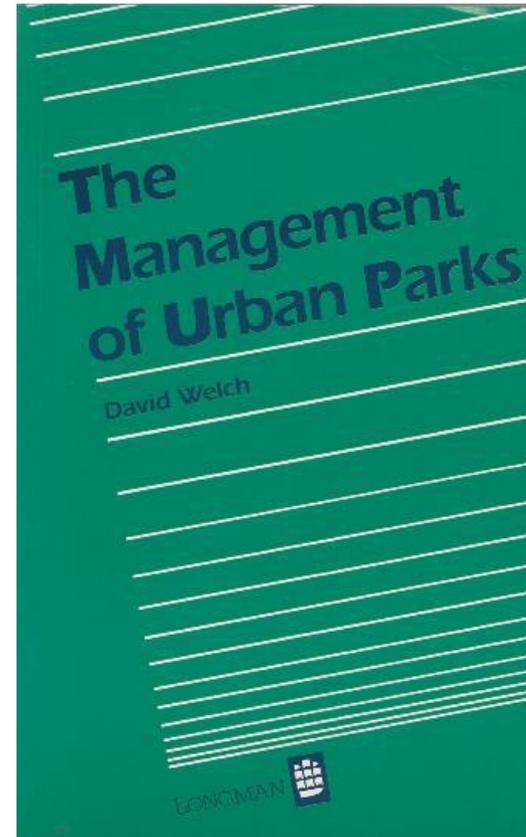
WHAT CAN YOU DO?

JOIN!!!





Nearly 30 years old



History tells us?

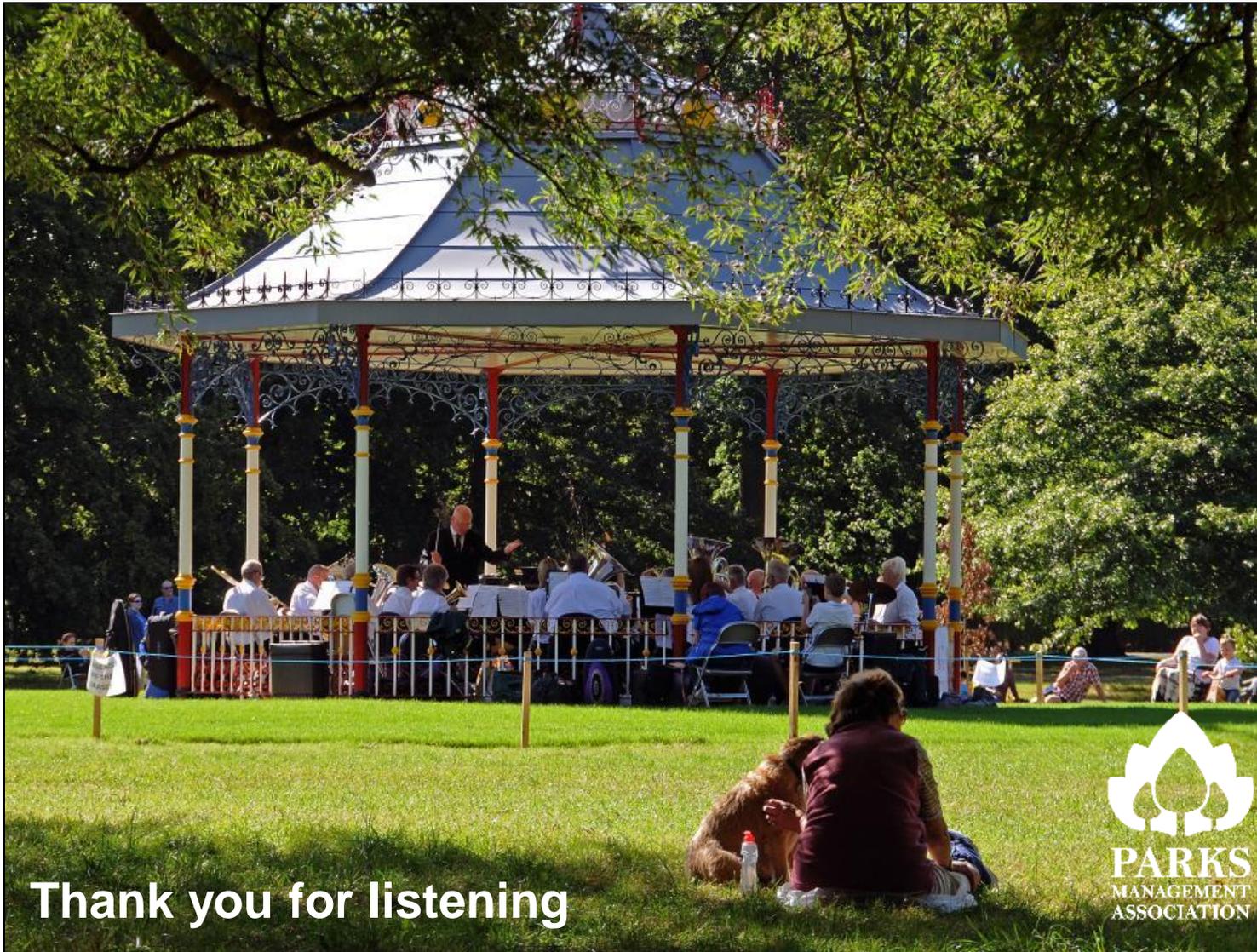


What makes a 21st century Park Manager? A mis-guided Guardian readers view

“Parks should be managed by voluntary organisations plenty of people out there who want to do a bit of Gardening and grass cutting. I would quite like a go on a sit on lawn mower. Sack the council gardeners and get people do it for nothing. A bit of gardening is also great form of exercise and it makes you happy, so could save the NHS a bob or 2.”

A Guardian readers view





Thank you for listening

