

Creating the 21st Century Park Professional



The Modern Park

“When I started it was all about horticulture. I can’t remember the last time we 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.”

Paul Rabbit Section Head for Parks, Open Spaces and Projects
Watford Borough Council.



'An endangered species'?

Park specific jobs have gone and posts have gone upwards to directors of leisure, sport or even waste – or gone downwards to people in acting-head posts Park Managers are an endangered species

Horticulture Week 2012

“Several senior parks managers have left the service through redundancy, retirement or **disillusionment**. These kinds of losses are widespread and the outcome will be a decline in maintenance standards”.

Dr. Stewart Harding, The Parks Agency

“Over the past 18 months, 25% (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”

Tony Leach Chair, London Parks and Green Spaces Forum.



The Parks Inquiry

- Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government tasked with producing report on ways to ensure future sustainability of parks.
- **Departmental Group** - Defra, DoH, DoE, Home Office etc.
- **Parks Action Group** – includes **APSE**, HLF, Groundwork, Parks Alliance, LGA, Nat.Fed. of Parks and Greenspaces, National Trust, Natural England, Fields In Trust
- APSE responsible for chairing Skills and Knowledge work stream
- Main objectives:
 - Identifying opportunities to promote knowledge and skills through the parks sector.
 - Consider ways in which best practice can be shared across the parks sector
 - Review the decline in parks managers roles and identify ways to build capacity

Opportunity to speak directly to parks professionals through Advisory Groups.

Aims of the Focus Group

- Identify the roles and responsibilities of current parks professionals.
- Identify where parks service currently sits in the council structure.
- Identify where there are gaps in knowledge and experience
- Identify current training provision (formal/informal)
- Identify gaps/needs in training provision
- Membership/list of professional organisations currently used.

How do your views fit with current thinking?

SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED

Budgetary management

Contract management

Performance management

Customer expectation management

Community engagement/volunteer management

Awards and funding applications

Procurement negotiation

Income generation

Events Management

Partnership management (FOP's, Public Health, HWBB etc.)

Environmental considerations (biodiversity, climate change, flood alleviation etc.)

Parks of the Future

