

APSE Parks and Greenspaces Seminar

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The Parks Management Forum

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Watford Borough Council

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THE PARKS MANAGEMENT FORUM
REPRESENTING PARKS PROFESSIONALS

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?

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".



History tells us?

Twentieth Century

- 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



History tells us?

Twentieth Century

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



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





THE PARKS MANAGEMENT FORUM

REPRESENTING PARKS PROFESSIONALS

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 PMF 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. The PMF will act as the lead commissioning, collaborating and coordinating body for the sector in relation to skills, knowledge, continuing professional development, activation in the community, advocacy and wider representation. Its complete independence will allow it to champion the value of public parks and open spaces and steer the best intervention and development amongst the various organisations that work within the parks sector.

The PMF's Board will evaluate entry level for all practitioners to be involved and set the parameters that are required to develop the sector and practitioners' skills.

History tells us?



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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, Newcastle, Edinburgh, Adur and Worthing, Birmingham, LB Hounslow, Bury, North Tyneside, West Midlands, Bournemouth/Christchurch/Poole, Rotherham and many others – Supported by APSE and CFP (UK))
- Parks Management Forum established in Feb 2020
- Website developed www.parksmanagementforum.co.uk
- 1,400 database of parkies collated
- 2,400 on LinkedIn as followers
- Nearly 800 on Twitter #parks_forum
- 200+ founder 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 agreed
- Constitution agreed
- Business Plan being developed – 95% completed
- Meetings with:–
 - GMA
 - NLHF
 - FiT
 - KBT / Green Flag
 - FPA/NT
 - LI
 - APSE
 - Green Flag Wales
 - BALI
 - APPG Chair Lillian Greenwood MP
- The Parks Collective established



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
- 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?

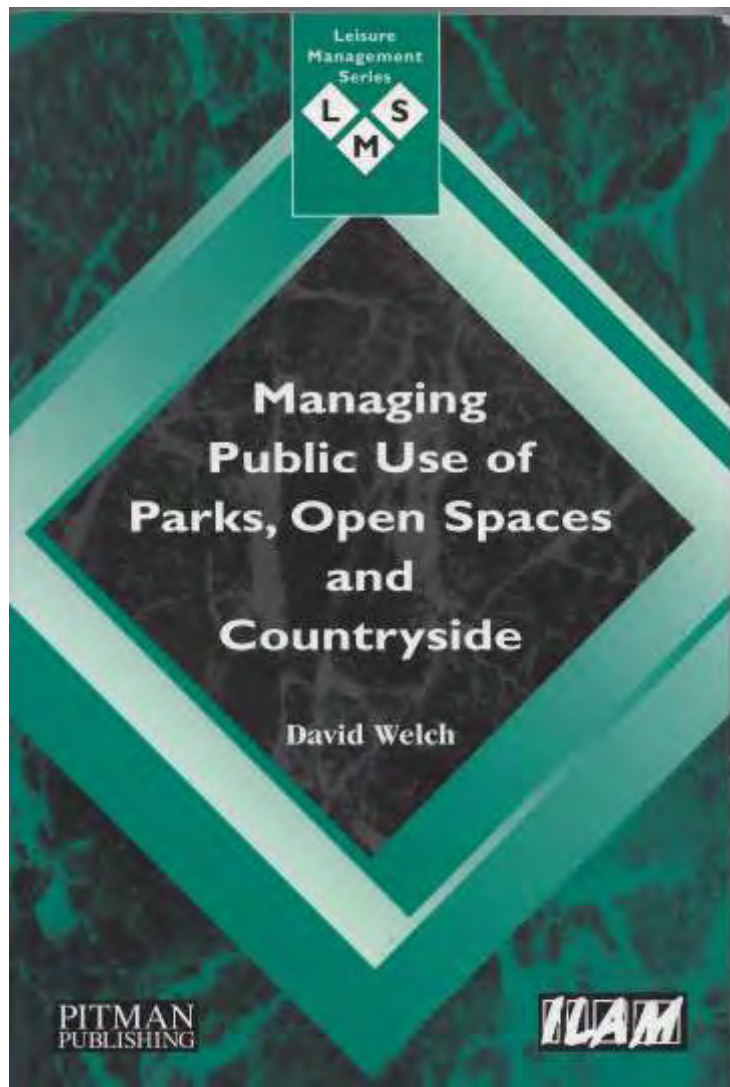
- Re-branding – The Parks Management Association and new logo developed
- New website developed – going live in 12 weeks
- Business Plan completed
- Bid to National Lottery Heritage Fund
- Parks Collective established
- Increased collaboration in the sector
- Membership categories developed
- Sponsorship (commercial and corporate)
- Sustainable

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

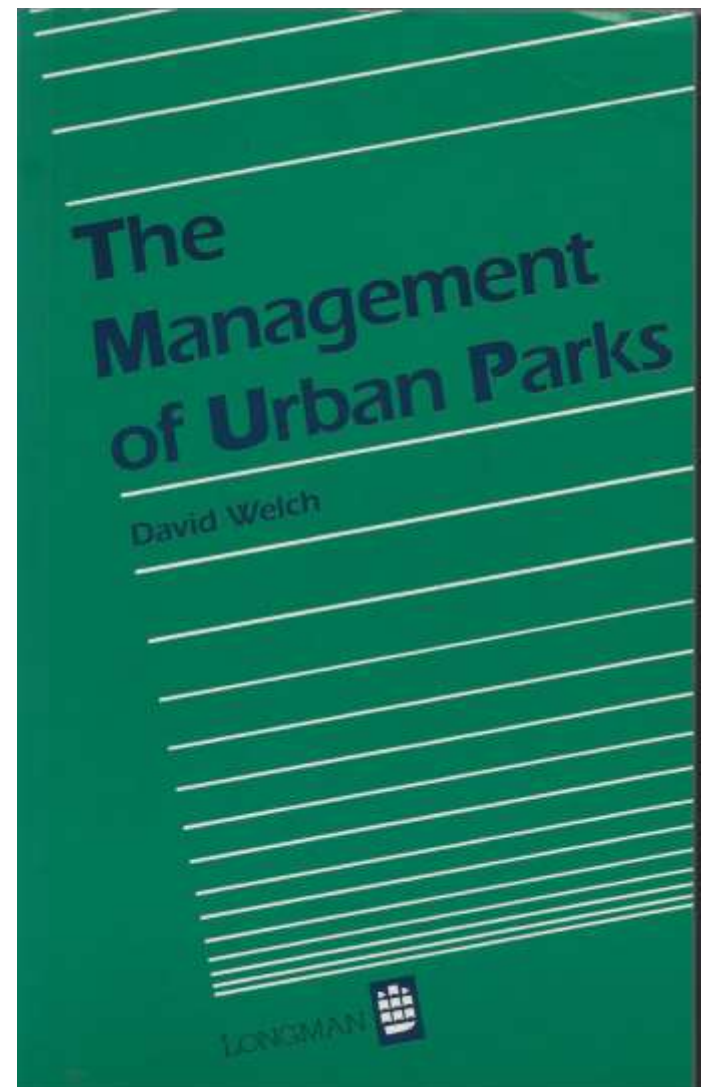
JOIN!!!



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Nearly 30 years
old



History tells us?



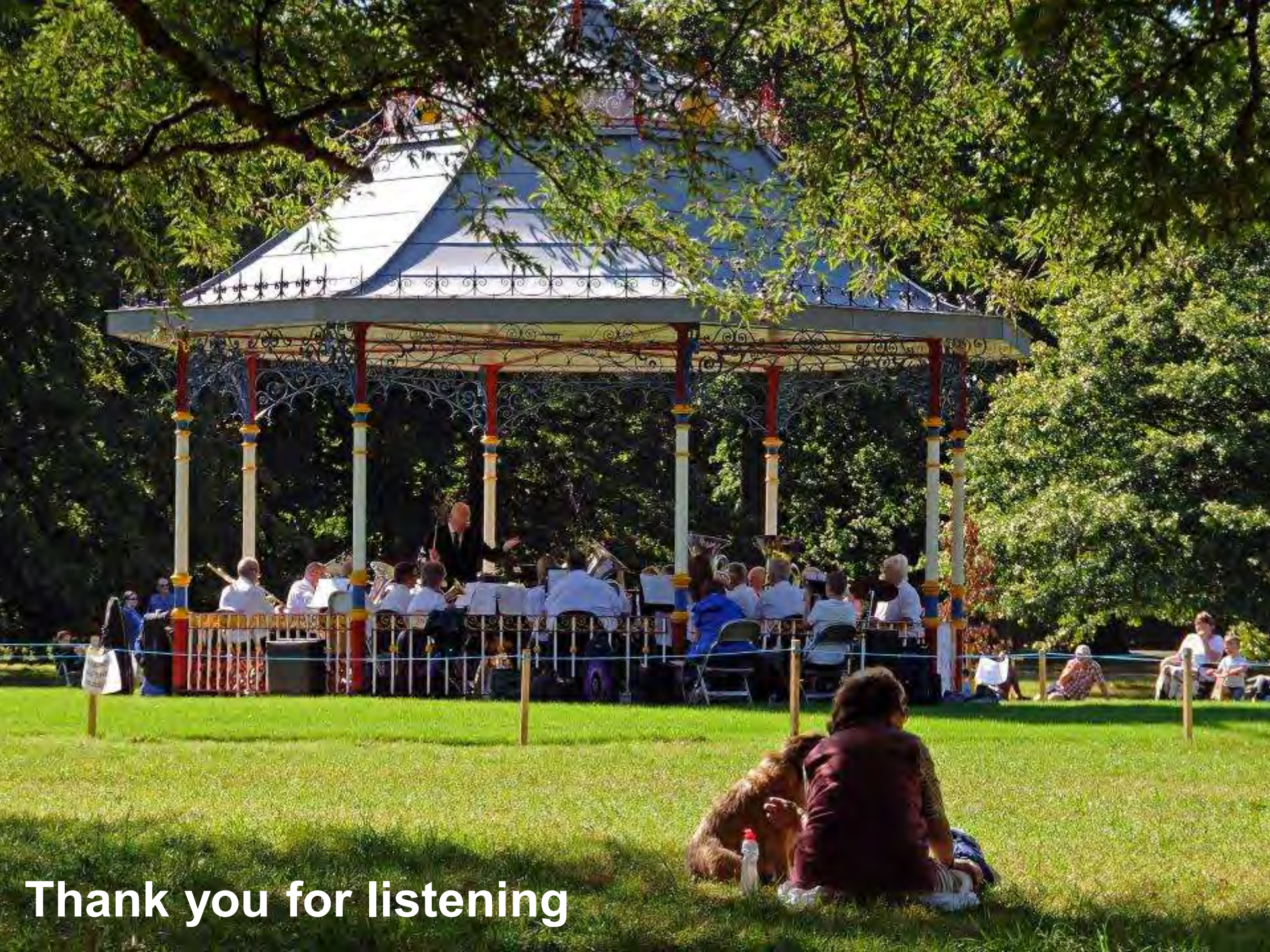
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What makes a 21st century Park Manager?

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.”





Thank you for listening