

APSE Seminar presentation Community Asset transfer

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Parks assets in decline during austerity

- In 1980/ 90's buildings were not maintained
- Antisocial behaviour was rife
- Regular arson attacks as Parks became no go areas
- Spiral of decline as more spaces became uncared for



Dudley Council investing in Heritage Parks from '96 onwards

- HLF projects in Dudley
- Leasowes Park £ 1.6m (1996)
- Wrens Nest National Nature reserve £800k (2009)
- Priory Park £2.7m (2010)
- Mary Stevens Park £3.1m (2013)
- Stevens Park Quarry Bank £1.8m (2018)
- The Council has 35 important parks and Nature reserves, only 4 have had significant investment through Lottery
- Concerns from residents that investment unfair



Heritage Parks in 2013



Problems in 2018/19



Under resourcing of sites 2018/19

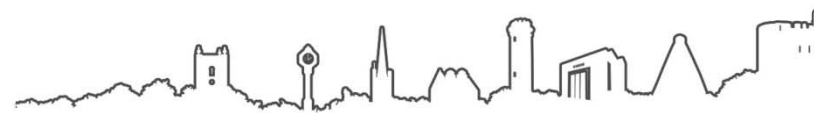


Under resourcing of sites



Dudley
Metropolitan Borough Council

...the historic capital of the Black Country



Capacity building with Friends groups

- Liveability funding in 2003-08 provided the resources to develop Friends of Parks
- Two officers dedicated to capacity building
- 25 groups developed
- Significant training in fund raising, group management, safeguarding, Health and safety, events management.
- Small investments on capital projects £70k- £110k
- Dedicated Grounds team on x2 parks in deprived areas working with NEETs



Buffery Park

- Deprived ward (top 10%) with very few heritage features left in park.
- Sons of Rest (senior Citizens) Building old bowls pavilion and games space tired and un used



Friends Group development

- 10 year lease with Council £1750/ yr and grant aided to group.
- Friends become registered charity
- Renamed the Paradise Centre, notice board, web site, social media
- Replastered, new kitchen, toilet, windows, security, furniture.
- Sub let the centre for day care for adults/ spiritualists church/ yoga/ youth club
- Fund raising for new outdoor gym, tennis courts, play area, war memorial



Bowling Green Transfers

- Funding cuts of £76k in 2016 for bowling greens, 8 Greens left in Dudley.
- Work with local groups to take on maintenance, lease agreement £250/ yr
- Increased memberships through local promotion from 20 people playing to 100 members in Bowling club, all paying £30/ year.
- Increase subscription charges for clubs, no reputation damage to council
- X2 clubs now run independently on parks, a further club assists with maintenance.



Glasshouses and walled garden 2014

- Dudley Mind keen to take on small area of a park to assist with maintenance, after charity funding cuts
- Walled garden at Wollescote Park perfect for clients as secluded area
- Maintain the ceanothus/ rudbekia collection, planting fruit and vegetables, bedding plants, plant sales, compost demonstration



New Lottery project in partnership 2018

- Stevens Park Quarry Bank, deprived area (top 20%)
- Poor quality building and architectural features
- Large capital project bid £1.8m
- Partnership with Emily Jordan Foundation, people with learning difficulties.
- 7 members of staff delivering horticultural training, metal and bike recycling, community café, funded through personal budgets, income from sales



Stevens Park building proposals



Asset transfers in Dudley

- Buffery Park paradise centre- Green Flag park £1, 750, grant aided back to group. **Friends group**
- Huntingtree and KG6 Bowling Greens- leases £250, **Friends and sports club**
- Wollescote Park walled garden and x3 glasshouses £0, no lease because of Trust status. **Dudley Mind**
- Stevens Park proposed transfer of Victorian Farm House and coach house worth £13,500/ yr, agreed peppercorn rent. New café, toilets, recycling centre with income from personal budgets. **EJF**
- Priory Park. Proposed transfer/ lease of community café £5k **catering operator with community credentials**

Transfers which are more challenging

- Green Park Big Lottery funded changing rooms 2008



Asset transfers in progress with Friends



Community Asset transfers in Dudley Council

- There is climate of progress towards CATs inspired by both labour and conservative administrations.
- Brierley Hill Civic Centre, run by Dudley CVS
- Other Town Halls in the process of being transferred
- Quirk review 2007- Risk management
- Community Asset transfer policy and toolkit for DMBC 2013, EOI, then Business case 8 month process (above £250k 12 months plus)
- Sport England Web site toolkit
- Locality web site lots of information



Dudley's appreciation of Friends groups

- 38 different groups working on parks (430 people)
- 15,500 hours annually £110.4k/ year
- Dudley Green Spaces annual volunteer Awards, showing appreciation for work

