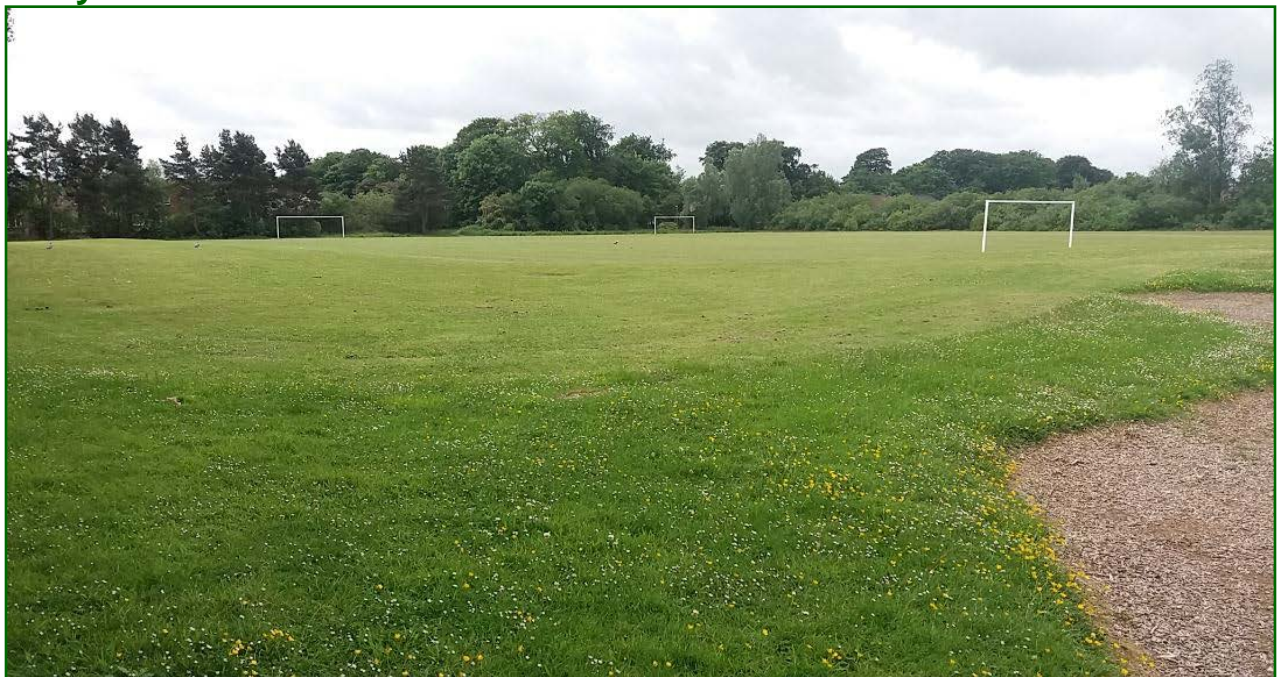


Placemaking – Heatherbank, Ladywell



May 2019



Summary

How people rate the park

The park scores highly for pedestrian access and attractiveness. However, the park scores low for economic benefits and maintenance.

What people like about the park as it is

People generally like the open space, and the variety of equipment provided.

What people don't like

People don't like the litter and vandalism.

Recommendations for action – based on short-term and long-term suggestions

From this consultation and including discussions with other council officers, improving access around the space and addressing litter/vandalism issues will be central to improving it.

Improvements should include:

- Improved entrances with clear signage
- Upgrading the lit path in the north of the park (beside the play areas)
- Increased bin provision
- One or two seats
- Reviewing the play equipment
- Improving visibility into park
- Creating paths around the park. Although pedestrian access to the park is very good, accessibility *around* the park isn't so good, as there are no paths. Therefore, it's recommended to provide a looped walk around the park to create more of a destination.
- Improved links with the neighbouring woodlands

Regular ongoing maintenance is also key to the success of the park in the long term.

Partners

Local partners suggested included the police and all local schools and nurseries.



Introduction

Heatherbank Park is protected as open space in the West Lothian Local Plan (2009) due to its inclusion in the 2005 West Lothian Open Space Strategy, and subsequent refreshes of the strategy. The park comprises two 11-a-side football pitches, a toddler play area (Kingfisher Brae), a juniors play area, fitness equipment, a skatepark, a MUGA and one lit path going towards Inveralmond High School.

The park is generally well kept, but is susceptible to litter, dog fouling and vandalism.

The park is bordered by Woodland Trust Scotland woodlands to the north and east, a lit public pathway and housing to the south and a lit pathway and housing to the west.

The park is well networked in terms of habitats and pathways: the woodlands link northwards to all the woodland around Knightsridge, Deer Park and Dechmont Law; the woodlands link southwards, by woodland strips, to Howden Park and on to the River Almond corridor; the pathway in the south of the park comes from Pumpherston, past Craigswood Sports Centre, Harrismuir Primary, Inveralmond High School, past the park and continues on through Falcon Brae to Eliburn.

West Lothian Council has some money to make improvements to the park in 2020/21. This feedback from local people will inform the improvements and help to shape a longer-term vision for the park.



Path into Woodland Trust woodland

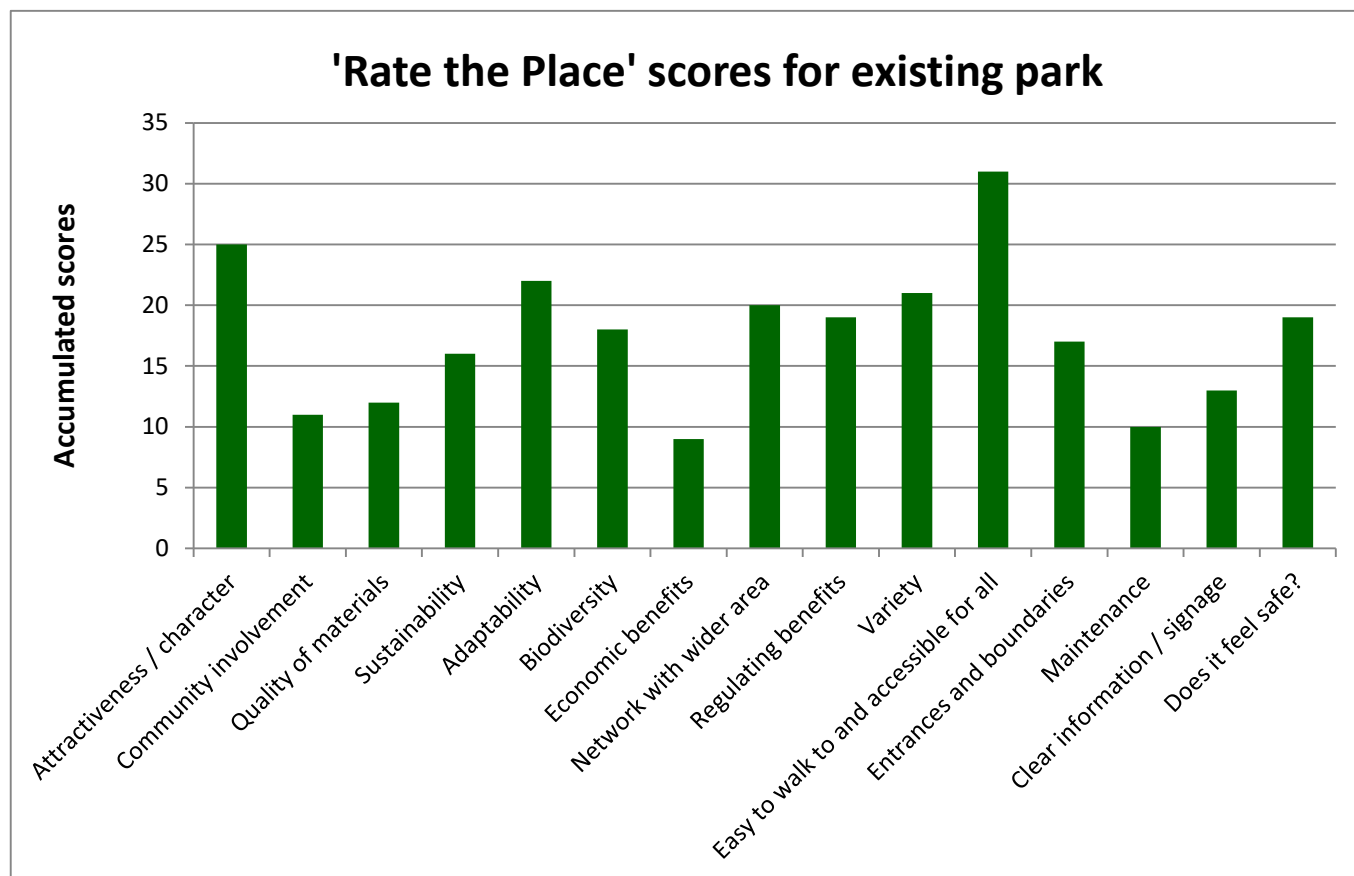
Information gathering

A park event was held on Saturday 4th May, and an online survey ran from 1st May to 26th May 2019. 140 fliers advertising the park event and online survey were put through people's doors around the park and 6 posters were put up in and around the park. The event and survey were also advertised through the Community Regeneration group and council Media. From this, a total of 8 residents gave us their feedback at the park event and 4 through the online survey, with additional comments from council officers and the Community Regeneration Group. As numbers are low, feedback will be used as general indicators for improvements.

Placemaking Results

Most people who completed a survey call the park Inveralmond Park.
Other names included: Heatherbank, Ladywell Park, Invy, Grassy land

Evaluating the place - participants were asked to rate the park as it currently is. The results are shown in the chart below.



Out of a possible 40 points for each item, those scoring above average were 'Easy to walk to/around', 'Attractiveness/character', 'Adaptability' and 'Variety'. An average score was given for 'Network with wider area'. Everything else was perceived to be below average, with the lowest scores for 'Economic Benefits' and 'Maintenance'. With 'maintenance' primarily relating to litter, broken glass and vandalism in the junior play area.

Please see Appendix 1 for a more detailed description of the characteristics that were scored.



Skatepark
and
MUGA

What people like best about the park

Generally, people like the open space and also the different activities on offer.

What people don't like / issues people raised

Litter and broken glass was the most disliked feature of the park, along with firesetting and vandalism of play equipment.

Who uses the park?

The current main park users are children playing, Inveralmond School pupils spending lunchtimes in the park and people walking dogs. The football pitches are also let out (through Inveralmond High School) to practising football teams.

Suggestions for improvements

The most popular suggestion for improving the park in the short term is different play equipment and more bins to address litter issue.

Other suggestions included signage, seating and planting. Some people suggested regular patrols of the park as well.

Suggestions for longer-term improvements included play equipment, community events, improved security and patrols.

All suggestions can be viewed in Appendix 2 at the end of this report.

Recommendations

Given the park scoring, suggestions for improvements and known issues, priorities for park spending would be:

- Improved entrances with clear signage
- Upgrading the lit path in the north of the park (beside the play areas)
- Increased bin provision
- Improving visibility into park
- One or two seats
- Reviewing the play equipment
- Paths around the park. Although pedestrian access to the park is very good, accessibility *around* the park isn't so good, as there are no paths. Therefore, it's recommended to provide a looped walk around the park to create more of a destination.
- Improved links with the neighbouring woodlands



Park entrance at Heatherbank

A 'Friends of the Park' group, if established, could organise small scale events and activities in the park, along with informal park patrols. In the absence of such a group, community events in the park will be suggested to the various existing organisations in Ladywell.



Path to be upgraded



Flying fox out of action, due to vandalism

Next Steps

The recommendations above will be addressed with the available budget, in 2020. Feedback will also be held for future reference, if/when future funding becomes available.

Partners

Suggestion for local partners to aid in the park improvement process were the Police, Inveralmond High School, Harrysmuir Primary and Ladywell nursery.

Appendix 1 - Place evaluation, characteristics explained

No.	Measure	Some things to consider 'yes' answers = higher score, unless stated
1	Attractiveness	Is the park generally attractive? Does it have a consistent or unique character?
2	Community	Does the community help to make decisions about the park? Are there frequent community events? Is there evidence of community involvement?
3	Quality	Are features and facilities robust and long-lasting?
4	Sustainability	Is weedkiller used in maintenance? (lower score) Is every bit of grass cut short? (lower) Recycling bins on site? Are there signs that materials / resources are reused on site? (e.g. grass clippings on shrub-beds)
5	Adaptability	Could spaces within the park be changed easily to suit different uses over time?
6	Biodiversity	Are there different shapes, sizes and types of plants within the park? Do you regularly see different insects / birds / other animals in the park?
7	Economic benefits	Does anyone charge for activities or events here? Does anyone sell things here? Do people collect wood or berries? Do people fish? Do people grow food here?
8	Network	Is the park connected to other green areas nearby, or rivers/burns? Is it connected to walking/cycle paths?
9	Regulating benefits	Are there trees / shrubs / plants at different heights? (to filter air/water, soak up rainfall and store carbon) Are there areas that visibly hold water when it rains? Are there flowers to support bees and other pollinators?
10	Variety	Is there a good variety of things to do in the park? e.g. sport/ walk/ sit/ learn/ play/ watch wildlife / picnic/ cycle/ eat/ run / climb / socialise / walk dog / good views
11	Accessibility	Is the park easy to walk to and get around? Is most of the park accessible to buggies / wheelchairs?
12	Entrances / boundaries	Do you know you're in a park? Are entrances and boundaries well defined? Are they attractive?
13	Maintenance	Is the park well-maintained? Is there much litter, vandalism or areas of neglect? (lower)
14	Signage	Is it clear who looks after the park and how to contact them? Is there any information on wildlife/ history, etc?
15	Safety	Do children and older people regularly use the park? Can you see across the park? Are there areas that feel unsafe? (lower)

Appendix 2 – All survey answers

1) *What do you like best about this park?*

- The climbing rocks
- Skatepark (running up and down it)
- Football
- Fields / kicky pitch
- Exercise bits
- The activity's
- Great area for younger kids to play and socialize
- Being able to let my dogs off lead
- The space is very open and there are areas for different ages. It is also local and if you have a dog you can bring them too.

2) *Is there anything you don't like?*

- Litter / glass
- Broken glass
- Yes – the litter
- I do not like that the flying fox is gone
- Nothing
- Often significant rubbish and litter left behind after the official football teams who play there have left. Often scorch and fire marks around the trees and grass areas. Not cleared for significant periods of times.
- Too much litter, too many remains of fires (especially wheelie bins) in the park and the surrounding woodland, broken glass in play areas and play equipment is frequently vandalised. Is also used by people using illegal off road bikes and quads. It is also used heavily by people to set off fireworks. There had been four bins (one dog waste and three general waste) in the field, but that was reduced to one bin last year.
- The destruction by older children, when they dominate the area and push younger children out. The broken glass and rubbish around the place. No seating.

3) *List three low-cost things that you would do to improve this park, that could be done straight away*

- Swings
- A roundabout
- A really big slide from the top of the climbing rocks
- A roundabout for the kids
- A rope swing
- More holds on the climbing rock
- Signs – stop littering and pick up dog dirt
- Have greater accountability for those official football teams who use the pitches - if litter is not picked up/cleared after games they should lose the right to host their games there
- Regular review of the area for litter/fire residue
- More bins.
- More bins & empty them
- Plant roses
- More wild flowers and shrubs.
- Landscaping
- Random spot checks in evening/weekends to ensure area is not being misused (e.g. bonfires etc)
- Gates to deter illegal bikes.
- Seats

4) *What three changes would you make in the long term that would have the biggest impact?*

- Slide – from the top of the rock
- Play park for dogs
- Go Karts
- Trampoline
- Pool
- Chute for older children
- Security cameras to make sure none of the park property is damaged
- CCTV to help catch those who set fires and to make park safer.
- Organised community events
- More community events (maybe fun dog shows, barbeques, fundraisers).
- Community fun events
- Random spot checks in evenings/weekends to ensure area is not being misused
- More patrols to help catch those who litter and don't pick up after their dogs.
- Clarity/communication to local areas over teams/clubs/associations that use the area and who to contact if any problems - increased transparency to local residents on any official use of the area
- Cut grass more often
- Cut all the grass (so you can see dog dirt / glass, etc)
- Nature/fairy trails in the woods

5) *Which local groups could help to put your ideas above into action? (Please name them e.g. 'Hillside Primary Parent Council')*

- The police
- Harrysmuir Primary
- Nurseries (inc Ladywell nursery)
- Inverlmond HS

6) *Other info – from speaking to people in the park*

- Path access from northeast corner of park as many people come from this side, but it's difficult to get through with a buggy/wheelchair.