

Langton Park

January 2021



Summary

How people rate the park

Generally the park scores very low, with 7 out of 15 categories rated below average. Top-scoring features are: Accessibility, Adaptability, and Safety. Below average scores were given for: Attractiveness, Community involvement, Biodiversity, Economic benefits, Regulating benefits, Variety and Signage. These indicate the themes that currently work well and those that could be significantly improved.

What people like about the park as it is

The most popular elements of the existing park are the location of the park near to participants' homes, the playpark and the open space.

What people don't like / issues raised

The main, overriding issue is the lack of variety – in the playpark and the space as a whole. Seating, litter/dog fouling and lack of planting also featured quite highly.

Recommendations for action – based on all information collected

The park generally scores low and key issues need to be addressed in the short and long-term. By analysing all the information collated, including that from officers and local residents, recommended actions for improving the park are:

- 1) Review play equipment and assess potential of outdoor gym equipment
- 2) Addition of more plants
- 3) Addition of seating / bins
- 4) Addition of entrance signage
- 5) Alternative path to increase accessibility around park

Potential Partners

Suggestions for local partners, who may be able to help with the recommended improvements, include: East Calder Community Council, ECRA, the Primary Schools, youth groups and local businesses.



Introduction

Langton Park was created when the housing estate was built. It is not owned by West Lothian Council, but the playpark, paths, lighting, grass and shrubs are all adopted for maintenance by the council. The park is designated as a Local Park in the West Lothian Open Space Plan and protected as open space in the West Lothian Local Plan (2018).

Langton Park is an irregularly shaped, small park, approximately 0.7ha, completely surrounded by houses. It is situated on a predominantly north-eastern facing slope. It consists of four large areas of grass divided by lit, tarmac paths and a playpark. There are no benches, limited bins and very little planting - with 3/4 trees and one shrub border. It connects with the wider network of open spaces in East Calder via the main pedestrian walkway to the north.

As the council maintains the park, money has been allocated through the Open Space Capital Programme to make improvements to the park in 2021/22. Feedback from local stakeholders will inform the immediate improvements and help to shape a longer-term vision for the park.



Information gathering

Feedback from local stakeholders was gathered via an online survey. The survey period ran from 9th to 30th November 2020.

Emails were sent to all known stakeholders, including East Calder Community Council, local Councillors and council officers. 50 fliers advertising the survey were put through neighbours' doors around the park, and 6 posters were displayed in and around the park. The survey was also advertised through the council's Media team. A total of 43 local people gave their feedback altogether.

Feedback

From Council officers:

- There is potential to increase canopy cover in this park through either planting small copses or 'specimen' trees.
- The timber retaining wall at the playpark was recently replaced at a cost of £9,000. No further Play Capital is planned until 2025.

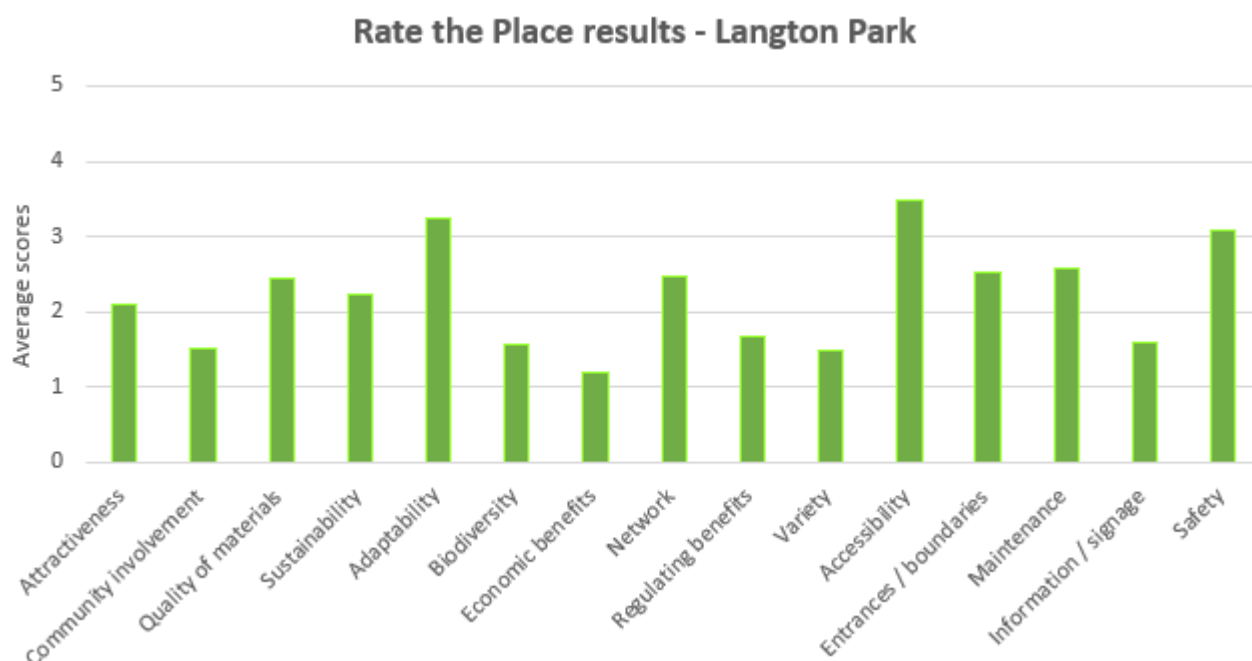
From survey:

Name of the park

Almost all participants call the park Langton Park, with one or two calling it Langton or The Park.

Rate the Place

Participants were asked to rate the park as it currently is, using the council's Park Audit questionnaire. The results are shown in the chart below. 42 people participated in scoring the park.



With a possible top score of 5 points for each category, it can be seen that only 3 park categories score above average: Accessibility, Adaptability and Safety.

Roughly average scores are given for: Quality of materials, Network with wider area, Entrance/boundaries and Maintenance.

All the other categories are below average: Attractiveness, Community involvement, Biodiversity, Regulating benefits, Variety and Signage, with Economic benefits having the lowest score.

These scores give us a clear indication of which themes within the park work well and which themes could be significantly improved.

The park's average community-rated score is 33, which rates below 'fit for purpose' (40 being the cut-off point). This is the same score as rated through the council's park audit process.

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

What do people like best about the park?

When the feedback for this question is pasted into a 'word cloud generator', the resulting size of each word shows how often it is mentioned. The 'word cloud' for Langton Park is shown here, allowing us to see at a glance which elements of the park are currently most valued:



Mostly, people like that the park is near their homes. The playpark and the open space are appreciated, followed by accessibility, the location of the park away from traffic and that children can play there.



What people don't like / issues people raised

The most common issue is the equipment in the playpark. This is followed by lack of seating and a general lack of variety in the park. Litter and dog fouling featured quite highly along with a lack of planting. Some people mentioned issues with young people at the playpark, access and maintenance.



Suggestions for improvements

The most popular suggestion for short term, low-cost improvements to the park is to add more play equipment (although not particularly low cost). This is followed by planting, seating, maintenance and bins. Some people also suggested signage, fencing, access, lighting, an outdoor gym and more variety in general.

The most popular suggestion for longer-term improvements is to increase the variety of equipment in the playpark. This was followed by increasing variety of things to do in the park overall, seating, planting, maintenance and access. Some people mentioned bins, lighting, the hill and landscaping.

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



Recommendations

The park generally scores low and key issues need to be addressed in the short and long-term. By analysing all the information collated, including that from officers and local residents, recommended actions for improving the park are:

- 1) Review play equipment and assess potential of outdoor gym equipment
- 2) Addition of more plants
- 3) Addition of seating / bins
- 4) Addition of entrance signage
- 5) Alternative paths to increase accessibility around park

The playpark has recently had work done to improve safety (replacing the timber retaining wall) and is not due for any further investment until 2025. The suggestions for play equipment will be used to inform future investment.

Additional planting will help to boost the park scores for Attractiveness, Biodiversity and Regulating benefits – this could be trees, shrubs and/or perennial plants such as bulbs. Incorporating some edible plants (e.g. fruit trees) in the general planting of the park would help to boost the park score for Economic benefits and increase the Variety of things to do in the park as well.

A few seats will allow people to relax in the park, watch children at the playpark and take a rest when going up the hill.

Entrance signage will help to give the park an identity, and a couple of extra paths in the park, to link up the paths going through the park, would give the park a better design structure and enable alternative routes for park users. A measured walk could also be incorporated to encourage people to exercise.

To improve community involvement in the park, local residents could organise small events (e.g. guided walks, Easter Egg hunts, etc) or practical projects such as planting days, litter picks, etc. Or by fundraising for public art, for example. This can either be done through the Community Council or a dedicated Friends of the Park group, which the council is happy to help support.

Lighting was suggested by a few local residents, however there is already lighting on all the paths within the park.

Next Steps

This report will be posted on the parks webpage www.westlothian.gov.uk/parkinfo

Based on the feedback and recommendations in this report, park plans will be drawn up and people will be given the opportunity to vote on the final plan.

The 35 people who opted to join the park email list will be kept informed of park improvements. Anyone else who would like to join the list can request to do so by emailing becky.plunkett@westlothian.gov.uk

Potential partners

Suggestions for local partners, who may be able to help with the recommended improvements, include: East Calder Community Council, ECRA, the Primary Schools, youth groups and local businesses.

A full list of all suggested partners can be found in Appendix 2 at the end of this report.



Appendix 1 – Rate the Place 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?*

Location

- It is handy to take the dog out quickly
- Local to me
- It local
- Location
- Close to houses so local children can use it without them having to go far.
- It is close to my house and accessible to all
- It's location and the fact it has a couple of things for toddlers and young children
- Closeness to surrounding homes.
- Play park close to home
- Close to my house, safe open space
- The location.
- Close to houses
- It's location
- It's close to my house
- Easy to get to from home. Mainly for under 12 years. Well used.

Playpark

- Equipment
- Play park, but it could be much better. More for older kids
- It has some good features in the play park but the play facilities could definitely be enhanced - skate or bike tracks could be good.
- a fairly adequate variety of swings etc for a small child although there is certainly room for improvement in that respect.
- The climbing frame and flying fox
- My little girl loves coming to this park the best part would be the basket swing
- The park is a convenient small play area for kids. That's all it is.

Away from traffic

- Safe distance from traffic
- no main roads near by so feel safe to let kids play - it's surrounded by houses which makes it feel safer
- It's free of traffic pollution

Not much

- Very little.
- Not much
- It is just an open area with grass so nothing to add

Green / open space

- It's a green area where more and more of village is being taken over by house building
- It's Green
- It is a valuable green space.
- open space
- Two lovely stretches of grass where people can enjoy fresh air and children can play in the special play park which has been recently upgraded
- There is a lovely open space just begging to be nurtured and used by the local community. Space that could be used by all ages and enjoyed at not a great expense to the community or to the council.

Accessible

- Accessible
- Well kept paths give good access and locals are always seen using the route through the park.
- ...is accessible with buggies and wheelchairs without going through mud, grass or gravel
- Paths

Space for children to play

- Suited to my youngest child
- Generally it is a great space for younger children
- It is a very popular place for children to have a kick-around or an informal game of football.

Other

- It is small but functional
- The grassy area is well maintained and only the edges of the paths are tidied by spraying with weedkiller.
- Seating area would be appreciated especially above the swing park as- there are some beautiful sunsets it would be nice to sit and watch.
- Perhaps an outside gym or something like this would also be welcomed? It could be a great attraction especially if Covid is with us for a long time!
- I think there should be an outdoor gym to encourage people to get fit it will help people mental health reduce the risk of heart disease bring down diabetes and many more. Let's get east Calder healthy and active

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

Play area

- Children's play area in need of updating.
- Park could be gated to stop toddlers wandering off.
- It's not big enough or has enough equipment for there to be more than 6 children to be in the park all at the same time playing on the equipment.
- Need more variety and equipment for children over 6.
- Limited variety in activities for older children
- Equipment is very limited in both what age range can access it and what is actually there.
- Odd mix of equipment in the park. Well suited to younger children but not much for older. Climbing wall and 'seesaw' are a bit of a nothing. No challenge or fun for older children but too difficult for younger children to access.
- There needs more variety for baby pre-school and older children.
- Nothing special and not enough attractive for children over 6. Also too big for tiny children.
- Limited amount of equipment and more for under 5
- Little to no inviting equipment for young people of varying ages to have fun / exercise on.
- There is lack of play equipment for children 4 + my little girl loves coming to this park but now she is getting a little older she's outgrown all the baby items which leaves little for her to use.
- The random equipment, I feel the park is bitty, the swing is for babies. The slide is small but steep, the mushrooms are a bit pointless next to the very small climbing thing.
- The climbing wall is pointless.
- The park at Craig's hill almond park I think has a great variety for all ages. Climbing frames for toddler and junior, and a separate area for older.
- The park needs updating - maybe a flying fox, bigger slide, climbing frame for bigger kids (ie 8-10) and some benches
- Range of activities for younger children - my son is 7 and needs more things for him to do.
- limited play equipment
- Limited amount of equipment
- nothing for older children to use
- The ground covering. My 3yr old daughter has just started 18 months of chemo for a brain tumour and due to there being an area with bark, she now can't use the park. It holds a fungus/mould called aspergillus. It could cause a lung infection which could be fatal. It also impacts asthma sufferers and others with weakened or low immune systems.

Litter / dog poo

- It is full of dog poo and short of bins the same people don't Kleenex up bins are in short supply and normally full of household rubbish
- there is always a lot of broken glass, rubbish and dog poo lying around
- Lots of people walk dogs but there is only one bin which often become full resulting in bags being left on the ground.
- Amount of dog dirt
- One of the dog refuse bins was lost due to fire it would be great to have that back.
- Dog poo
- Often broken glass
- the bin is not covered so litter gets blown around,

Planting

- Not wooded enough
- The planting could also be improved with more diversity to attract more wildlife. A wildflower meadow would be lovely!
- [lack of] plants
- No trees or bushes
- no flowers, shrubs to encourage wildlife
- There is a lack of greenery, i.e. shrubs and flowers. It can be very windy, some sort of wind break would be good.

Seating

- A bench would be nice also
- Lack of facilities for parents to watch children.
- no seating
- Lack of seating
- no sitting area
- No seating
- Lack of a couple of park benches when old ladies like myself could take a break after wrestling up the steep hilly part.
- No seating which could be used by all ages.
- No seating.
- There are no benches for the parents to sit at
- ...lack of seating or picnic tables

Lack of character/variety/spirit

- Bare, sparse & neglected
- just grass needs open gym etc
- The appearance and that I rarely see it used
- Lack of activities available
- It's just an open space - nothing to add
- Lack of character. Would benefit from plants and more of a community feel
- Is not a park it's a patch of grass with tiny playground.
- There's not much to do
- A bare open space
- Nothing in such a nice area that's inviting for families to use in favourable weather.
- Could include more equipment, seated area, better access, encourage environment and nature.

Young people

- At night it is poorly lit and older teenagers hang around.
- Park much too close to houses. Being situated on one side of and at the bottom of, a grassy hill, and therefore not visible from many angles, it is an attraction to older children who use it as a gathering place. They abuse the park equipment and the language is foul.
- The park is sometimes dominated by older children who are not actually playing but just using the area as a meeting place. This makes it a little disconcerting for the younger children who actually want to play on the equipment.
- Older kids hang about here...
- no CCTV (even fake) to prevent youth vandalism and burning litters.

Access

- The access to the play park is poor for people with buggies transporting children. The path network around the park doesn't seem to join up and connect to the playpark itself that well from the various approaches.
- That you have to climb into it, or accessible for pushchairs and wheelchairs, no decent path to access park, park completely open so dogs can get in run around and do the toilet.
- Horses & Riders also regularly use it as a short cut, damaging the grass and using narrow footpaths that kids, dog walkers and cyclist use, which is dangerous. Cyclist also use it as a short cut, but race down the hill which isn't very safe either

Maintenance

- The shrubbery and trees are poor quality and never really maintained. The grass is often cut when it's too long and never cleared for recycling. It gets trailed everywhere.
- Lack of proper maintenance. Department responsible consistently manage to cut the grass either whilst raining or very soon afterwards. Then looks a mess!

Other

- ...someone moving garden fence and taking part of park and getting away with it, so wrong
- Delighted to have some green space nearby.
- The area is generally very muddy, drainage seems to be poor.
- The surrounding grassy area is vast but the park is situated right at the back of housing!

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

Playpark

- More swings
- Better facilities for younger children
- Clean and paint equipment
- Better variety of equipment
- Few more wooden things to play
- Rubber bark or rubber ground covering over all areas
- Zipwire
- More swings
- Standard swing
- Flying fox
- More baby swings
- Roundabout
- Pre-school climbers
- Play park improvements
- Sandpit
- More variety in the play equipment
- Take inspiration dalkeith park
- Zip slide
- Swings for older children
- Seesaw
- Climbing frames
- Zipwire
- Soft surface for kids
- Roundabout
- Play equipment for children
- A roundabout
- Improve climbing wall
- Take inspiration from ballgreen park

Planting

- Bulb planting
- Some
- extra bushes surrounding the area would enhance the appearance.
- Fresh plants
- Plant some trees
- Plants
- More planting.
- Seating tables
- Seating area
- Flower beds
- Plant flowers/bushes to attract wildlife
- More trees
- Enhance planting
- Annual flowers/bulbs
- More plants
- Small trees
- Prepare a bed for plants / shrubs to make it more attractive
- Better plants
- Some landscaping

Bins

- Bins
- More bins
- More bins
- Replace dog mess bin set on fire earlier this year. NOT a dog owner.
- Bins
- New bins
- Replace the dustbin at the bottom of the 3way path at the bottom of the hill. This was burnt down some time ago.
- Refuse bins
- Covered bin
- More bins

Colour

- Bright colours
- Some brighter more attractive equipment

Seating

- Seats
- Seating
- Seating for parents/carers
- Bench
- Seating
- A seating area or bench
- Provide seating
- As above - a couple of park benches well sited so as not to interrupt the activities for other users.
- Seating area
- Seating.
- Seats in the swing park
- Place picnic tables nearby
- More seats
- A little picnic area
- Seated area
- Couple of benches
- Park benches or similar for community gatherings
- Bench

Maintenance

- Tidy existing and only bushed area
- Cut grass better
- Grass cutting
- Grass cuttings cleared away
- Edging of grass
- Paint to freshen up
- Better maintenance
- Tidy up the "flower bed" at the top of the path leading into The upper part of Overton Crescent.
- Equipment cleaning.

Signage

- Signage
- Notice board promoting improvement plans
- Signage to slow down cyclist/stop horses.
- Better signage
- Nature lesson boards

Fencing

- Secure park
- Fencing

Access

- Expand path network
- Create access for pushchairs and wheel chairs

Lighting

- Lighting poles are all of different vintages - old and rusty to brand new stainless steel
- Increased lighting

Variety in general

- More variety
- Add some play or leisure features

Outdoor gym

- open gym
- exercise area

Other

- Skatepark
- Larger area / more space around equipment
- Stepping stones
- Gates
- Request community volunteers
- Less secluded to discourage anti social behaviour

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

Playpark

- Upgrading the equipment to more attractive modern design
- Better equipment for all ages
- Play frame/big slide
- Make park bigger
- Park bigger
- More play equipment
- Make park bigger
- Make it bigger
- Climbing frame
- New bigger park
- Treehouse
- Bigger playing area
- Put in rubber matting instead of bark
- Rubber ground
- Replace bark with alternative surface to allow children and adults to visit whilst under going chemotherapy treatment
- Better equipment
- New preschool items
- Have bigger frames etc for older children
- Climbing frame
- Increase size
- Flying fox
- Babyplay
- Play equipment
- Items that disabled children may be able to use
- Climbing frames
- Install accessible play equipment for wheelchair users
- Make bigger
- New older kids items
- Extend to accommodate the bigger frames
- More swings
- More equipment for those with disabilities
- More variety of play equipment
- Better equipment
- Flying fox
- Extend the variety of play equipment to provide equipment for all ages and abilities
- Enclose for safety there is a big drop that could seriously injure younger children
- New baby items

Maintenance

- Better grass cutting
- Maintenance retained at current or better levels
- Grass cutting
- Regular maintenance
- Grass to be kept tidier
- Trimmed edges of above

Bins

- Bins
- Waste bins

Lighting

- Better lighting at night
- Better lit for security purposes

Hill

- the steep hill
- Hill gets really slippery during severe weather - some means of reducing that

Landscaping

- Landscaping to create areas for sitting/socialising, perhaps next to the kids park
- Landscaped areas

Variety

- More variety in activities to suit all ages
- Small BMX track
- Build skate or bike tracks
- Skatepark
- Outdoor gym
- Outdoor gym equipment
- More variety
- Sports/ dry area
- More variety
- Basketball net
- Tennis courts
- Useable for wider age group
- More interactive activities
- Better use of the space

Seating

- Seating to enjoy park & chat with other users
- Picnic tables
- Picnic area
- Benches to sit and reflect
- Benches
- More seats for adults
- Benches
- benchesst
- Seating
- Seating for adults

More plants

- More trees
- Better planting to encourage wildlife, go some way to replace the damage being done with the new builds in Calderwood.
- Plant some trees
- Tree planting.
- More trees
- Plants to encourage birds
- More trees
- Encourage nature, grow flowers, plants etc
- Flowers like ballgreen

Access

- Improving path access
- Create an entrance for pushchairs and wheel chairs
- A place to park bikes;and buggies while children play
- More user friendly for buggy and wheelchairs
- Wheelchair friendly

Other

- Less secluded
- No scope for anything other than above
- It is a happy parkland area and my suggestions don't aim at big, long term impact.
- Toilet
- CCTV
- dog poo
- Starting point for Gala Parade
- not flat grass land
- Establish community allotment or garden
- Move the park to the centre of the huge grassy area at the top of the hill so local residents can enjoy a bit of privacy in their own garden. Because of the path that runs past the park, if older children are gathered the situation can become unsafe if you need to pass by.

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

East Calder Community Council

- Community Council.
- East Calder Community Council
- Community Council and volunteers from various local social media groups. There are also several landscaping firms locally who could help plan and implement plus the children from local schools and youth clubs could tell us what they would like.

Advertise

- Place a request in Konnect and Social Media for business support.
- Additional request in village for group of volunteers to can perhaps help with flowerbed maintenance, etc. Maybe contacting Friends of Almondell for help and suggestions.
- Advertise for physically able to carry out work when plans are being put into practise

ECRA

- ECRA
- Eddie

Schools, youth groups

- St Pauls School
- East Calder Scouts, East Calder Ps and St Paul's PS to help planting, litter picking

Businesses

- Veitchs and hobbies could be approached regarding landscaping and plants. They might also be able to point in direction for seating and tables.
- Kompan

Others

- The Rotary club might donate or fund raise for equipment.
- Local residents eg on Overton Crescent are a very nice, co-operative group. Many put a great deal of effort into their own properties, and gardens in particular. I feel confident that some would be willing to undertake small projects such as I suggested above

Don't know

- NA
- Unsure
- ?????
- I'm sorry but I'm not sure who could help.
- Nonidea