



# Stonefield Park Management Plan



## 1. Executive Summary

Stonefield Park is a unique park within Stafford Borough and North Staffordshire as a whole. It is designed around the principles of the Edwardian square town parks and as such has a special atmosphere. Fronted on all sides by terraced housing the park is sheltered from the hustle and bustle of everyday life.

The park was opened in 1928 as an adult's only park by the former Stone Urban District Council which was amalgamated into Stafford Borough Council in 1974. The park has changed very little since its opening day and has escaped the whimsical and often ad-hoc improvement trend that many parks still suffer from today. Today the park is no longer an adult's only park and is enjoyed by all ages.

This management plan for Stonefield Park will drive excellence and improvement and give strategic direction over the next five years so that the vision is achieved and Green Flag Award status is gained and retained.

## 2. Introduction

Stafford Borough Council (SBC) has placed high importance on the Management and Maintenance of Stonefield Park.

The aims and objectives of the future management of Stonefield Park will ultimately dictate the management operations that will drive continuous improvement.

This Management Plan is arranged into three main parts:

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### **3. Background**

Stafford Borough Council (SBC) is situated within Staffordshire and covers an area of over 230 square miles. It is centrally placed within the North Staffordshire sub-region of the West Midlands. It is a predominately rural district with Stafford and Stone as its key urban centres.

In socio-economic terms, Stafford Borough has a relatively low level of deprivation, except for a number of wards in the north and south west of Stafford town. Unemployment remains relatively low and levels of prosperity higher than national averages.

As a Borough we are also becoming more ethnically diverse with 7% of the population classified as black/minority/ethnic and this is the second highest in Staffordshire.

Life expectancy in the borough has increased from 76.7 years to 78.7 years for males and from 81.1 years to 82.6 years for female (between 2000 and 2009).

Stone is situated midway along the Trent and Mersey Canal and is located alongside the River Trent. Stone is the second largest market town within the Borough with a population of 16,385 (2011 census). As our second largest market town it provides a range of sport, recreation and community facilities, as well as providing a focus for the wider rural area.

Stone has been identified within the Local Development Framework (LDF) as a growth area, with the need to provide a total of 1000 new homes over the plan period (2011-2031).

### **4. Policy Context**

#### **4.1. National**

##### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The importance of such spaces is underpinned within the framework. The importance of open space for promoting healthy communities, which are active and socially inclusive, is recognised.

##### Cleaning Neighbourhoods Act 2005

Stafford Borough Council has enacted its powers under the Cleaner Neighbourhoods Act 2005. On the 8th November 2010 three new dog control orders became live in addition to the Dog Fouling Order. These orders are; Dog exclusion, Dogs on Leads and Dogs on Leads by Direction.

Within the play area within Stonefield Park no dogs are allowed.

##### Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014

The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 is a new approach to crime, policing and community safety. Within this legislation Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPO) are available for Council's to use.

The Council will be investigating how to use this new legislation in terms of controlling dogs and drugs and alcohol in the park.

#### **4.2. Local**

##### Stafford Borough Council Corporate Plan

The SBC Corporate Plan 2012-2015 is the overarching plan which sets out what the Council will be looking to achieve over the time period. The vision is to lead a community and Borough that is Prosperous, Safe, Healthy, Clean and Green. This Plan has four main priorities, they are:

- Prosperity
- Clean, Green and Safe
- Health and Wellbeing
- Leading and Delivering for our Communities

To achieve these aims parks and open space can support the following actions and targets:

- P3: Promote environmental quality as an economic asset
  - P3.3: Protect the quality of the built and natural environment
- CGS2: Reduce our carbon footprint and encourage our residents to be more environmentally aware
  - CGS2.1: Seek opportunities to reduce the carbon footprint in our services and for residents
- HW2: Encourage our residents to have an active and healthy lifestyle
  - HW2.2: To deliver comprehensive sport, health and wellbeing programme to encourage residents of Stafford Borough to take part in regular sporting and cultural activities and events

##### Stafford and Surrounds Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2013 – 2015

Parks and open spaces also support the Health and Wellbeing Strategy specifically the live well priority ensuring that a healthy standard of living for all is available for all and that people in the Borough engage in regular physical activity.

##### A Green Infrastructure Strategy for Stafford: The Strategic Plan

This Strategy includes proposed actions that will enhance, expand and protect the Borough's green infrastructure and deliver multiple benefits that respond to local needs and opportunities. Parks and open spaces helps meet the key objectives of:

- Networks of open spaces, natural corridors, access routes and watercourses will be enhanced and created;
  - Provide recreational opportunities for new and existing communities
- Local landscape and heritage features:
  - Act as attractive green and open spaces where communities can come together

Stafford Borough Council: Biodiversity Strategy 2012-2015

This Strategy works towards creating a greener Borough, rich in wildlife for residents to enjoy, which will contribute to their prosperity, health and wellbeing.

Within this Strategy there is a specific section on Parks and Open Spaces recognising the contribution these areas can make towards biodiversity.

## 5. Site Location and Description

<b>Stonefield Park</b>	
Location	Located on Field Terrace (of Radford Street), Stone, ST15 8HG
Boundaries	Albert Street Field Terrace Old Road Victor Street
Postcode	ST15 8HG
Total size of park	0.7ha
Entrance points	Field Terrace Road Albert Street
Gates locked	April 9am - 8pm May to August 9am - 9pm September 9am - 8pm October 9am - 6pm November to February 9am - 4.30pm March 9am - 6pm
Buildings	Bird aviary Pavilion
Toilets	Located behind the pavilion, open daily during the parks opening hours
Staff Base	Pavilion
Sports Facilities	Two tennis courts Bowling green
Play Facilities	Toddler and junior
Refreshments	Kiosk – open when Park Facilities Officer on duty

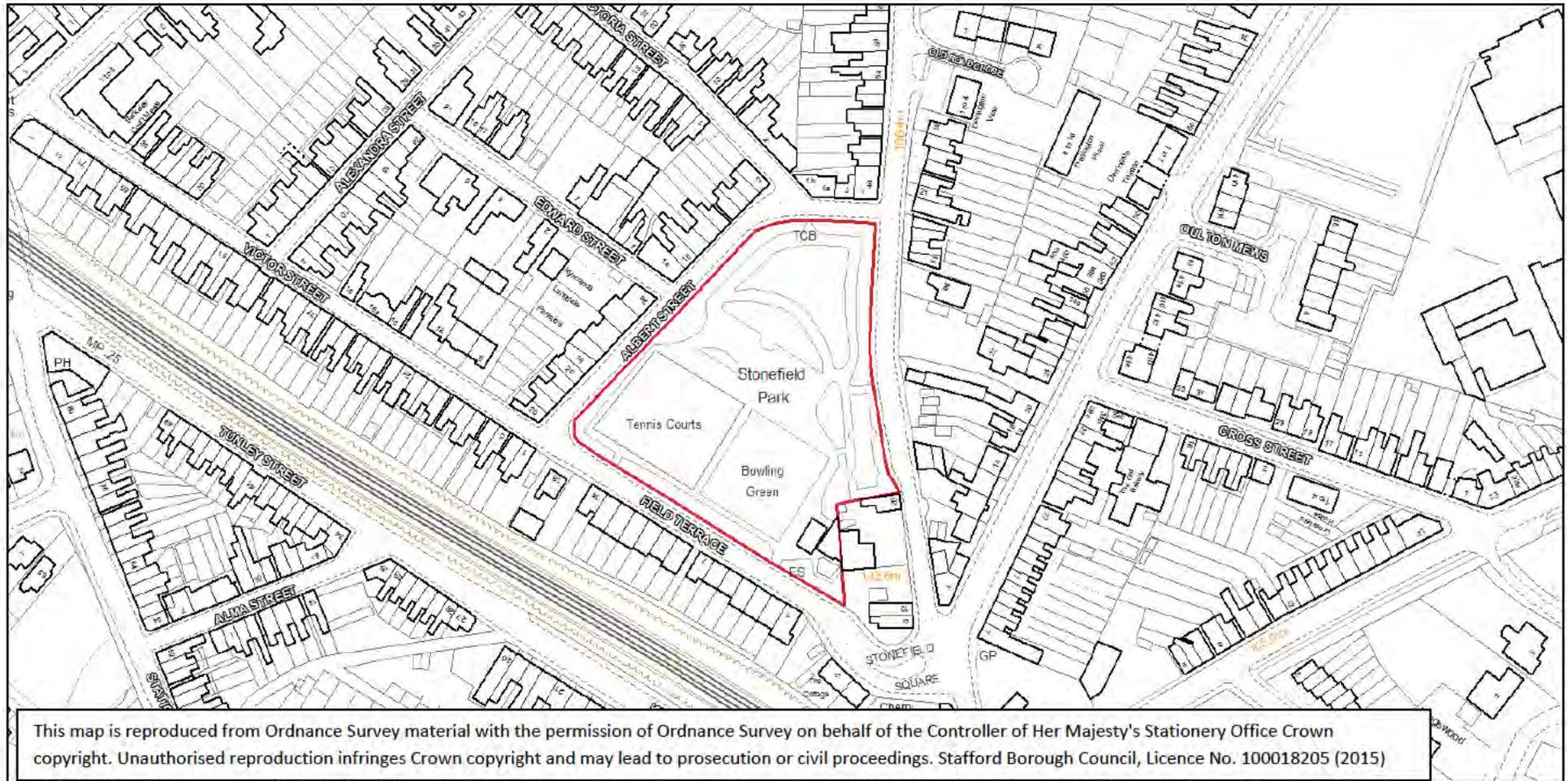


Figure 1: Map of Stonefield Park, Stone.

## **6. History**

Stonefield Park is a traditional pocket park based upon the principles of the Edwardian Squares. The park covers an area of two acres tucked away in the heart of a traditional residential neighbourhood which is predominately constructed of terraced houses located 10 minutes' walk north of the town centre.

Stone Urban District Council, (now part of Stafford Borough Council), purchased the land for the park in 1923 from Jowels Brewery for £1,000, which today, (2012), equates to £44,710.

The park was originally designed and opened as an adult's only park on the 24th March 1928 by Sir Ernest Johnson. This is evidenced by the large proportion of hard surfaced paths from promenading and lack of any children's provision. At the time of opening the park contained a Bowling Green, two grass tennis courts, octagonal bandstand base and formal floral flower gardens. The physical layout of the park has not changed over the decades.

Throughout the period that park has been used as a vital community resource. In the 1940 there is evidence of use by the Girls Training Corp's who were based in the adjacent Old Road, continuous use by the Stone Town Band you still play in the park for important civic functions including Britain in Bloom,

Over the past 30 years Stafford Borough Council has developed the site into a park for all ages without compromising the integrity and design layout of the park. To accomplish this facilities have been improved and added. A rose garden on the edge of the park has been replaced with an under 8's play area, the grass tennis courts have been replaced with green tarmac, the bandstand base has been removed and a bird aviary has been added.

The park is a highly valued asset within the community and this is demonstrated by the high feelings which surface whenever change is discussed.

## **7. Physical Features**

### Aviary

The exact date of the first aviary isn't known but the facility is highly popular with visitors to the park particularly small children. A public consultation on the aviary was undertaken in 2012. Following the results of this the aviary was demolished in November 2012 and is enlarged and re-built. This provided an aviary which has a much larger living area for its inhabitants and a greater viewing area for members of the public whilst removing a dark secluded area of the park.

### Bowling Green



The bowling green is one of the first features a visitor to the park sees upon entering the site from the main entrance off Field Terrace. It is an original feature of the park and has been continuously used since the parks opening in 1926.

It is heavily used by local teams and for casual play. The green is open for 26 weeks of the year from Easter Monday until the last weekend in September. The green is surrounded by seasonal shrub bed and this is supplemented during the summer months with formal bedding from plating urns and baskets. There are a number of benches overlooking the green for spectators. As a result the green has one of the nicest surroundings of all Stafford Borough Council greens.

### Formal Gardens and Promenade

The formal gardens are a traditional feature of the park and are a delight to visit during the summer to view the array of summer bedding providing a profusion of stunning colours. All the bedding plants are currently grown in house at the Councils nursery facility at Riverway. The floral bedding at Stonefield Park has been regularly awarded and praised by the Britain in Bloom judges.



The promenade was the location of an open air bandstand and overlooks the entire park. The date of removal is not known. Today the area contains ample benches to watch games of bowls and tennis.

### Park Pavilion and Toilets



The pavilion is not original to the park. When the park opened the area where the pavilion is located was laid to tarmac as part of the parks promenade to overlook the bandstand and the bowling green.

The pavilion contains a small community room which is used by bowlers and for community meetings and the Parks Office and refreshment sales area.

Club bowlers are key holders to the community room ensuring that when the park is not supervised they can gain access to the room. At all other times the room is open for free use when there is a member of the parks team on site.

The parks toilet block is located behind the pavilion and are open daily during the parks opening hours.

### Play Area

The play area was introduced to Stonefield Park in the 1980's as part of a drive promote the park as family friendly park and challenge the perception that park is an adults only facility.

The Play area is small but designed to cater for the youngest of age groups. It's location on the edge of the park was chosen after public consultation and ensures that the insertion of the area does not undermine the deign ethos of the park.



In 2015 the play area was closed and different play equipment and new surfacing was installed. The play area now has:

- A basket swing
- 2 Springers
- Multiplay unit
- Cradle and flat swing
- Carousel
- Seesaw

There is a need for a larger play facility in the locality but this cannot be located within Stonefield Park without destroying the traditional park environment.

## Tennis Courts



The park has always contained two tennis courts. However the playing medium has varied between grass and red compacted shale. In 2010 the courts were renovated to remove the grass playing surface and replaced with tarmac. This decision was taken due to the consistently reducing availability of the courts due to the weather impacting upon the playing surface. As such the courts were rarely used. Since the conversion to tarmac the court usage has increased by around 150% and is leading an increase in the number of children using the site.

## **8. Management of Stonefield Park**

The management and maintenance of Stonefield Park is provided via the Parks Services division of the Leisure and Culture Services at SBC. The day to day running of the park is achieved by a multi-disciplinary approach with the following Officers:

- Parks and Open Spaces Development Officer: based at the Civic Centre, Stafford and has an organisational and developmental role for the park;
- Parks and Open Space Implementation Officer: based at the Civic Centre, Stafford and oversees the use and development of play areas and the overall development of the park;
- Head Parks Facilities Officer: based at the Civic Centre, Stafford. Manages the Parks Facilities Officers and the daily operations of this part of the service;
- Grounds Maintenance Staff: undertake all work related to fauna and flora cleaning and maintenance of the park.

Together the workforce has a range of complementary skills, ranging from horticulture to parks management and development, infrastructure design and biodiversity issues. Appendix 1 illustrates the staff structure.

The Parks Facilities service is currently operated 7 days a week, 52 weeks a year except for Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Years Day. At the time of writing the number of Park Facilities Officers is:

- 4 permanent full-time;
- 1 permanent part-time;
- 2 full-time fixed term;
- 1 part time fixed-term;
- 2 part-time fixed term seasonal; and

- 1 permanent kiosk attendant.

The Head Parks Facilities Officer manages the day to day operations of the ranger service.

The Head Parks Facilities Officer once a year undertakes an audit of the park. This is takes the form of an overall assessment and inspection of the park, identifying any maintenance work that needs to be addressed and identifying any risk areas.

The Parks Facilities Officers are the ambassadors for Stonefield Park and their role includes ensuring the park is safe, clean and accessible at all times. Specific tasks include:

- Ensuring buildings e.g. toilets are clean and useable;
- Inspecting and cleaning the play area;
- Clearing of pathways;
- Litter collection;
- Preparation of sports facilities for users;
- Collecting fees; and
- Being a contact point for members of the public

Appendix 2 provides further detail of all the duties the Parks Facilities Officers undertake.

The park has an onsite Parks Facilities Officer who acts as the sites park ranger and the park is fully supervised from April to the end of September and from October to March is supervised on reduced hours reflecting the lower usage. This service is managed by the Head Parks Facilities Officer.

Stonefield Park has a planned maintenance schedule carried out by the Parks Facilities Officer on sites that day. They are able to respond to key maintenance tasks and special task as they arise.

The Friends of Stonefield Park Group also have working parties where they undertake agreed maintenance work within in the park. To date this has involved removing old bedding, planting new bedding, brushing paths and shrub pruning.

The Parks Facilities Officers take pride in their parks and the role they play in ensuring the park is at its best.

During winter six meetings are held with the Head of Parks Facilities Officers and the Parks Facilities Officers. These meetings are utilised to discuss any issues that have arisen during the summer months, discuss any future developments of the parks and also to invite speakers to update staff on relevant matters.

The Councils Streetscene department currently undertake all of the grounds maintenance operations.

## **9. Friends of Stonefield Park**

In 2015 the Council publicised the idea of creating a Friends of Stonefield Group. A lot of interest was generated and the formal Friends of Stonefield Park (FOSP) launched in the summer of 2015 and already there are approximately twenty members.

The aim of FOSP is to provide a way for users of the park and the Council to come together with ideas and practical improvements for the park. FOSP decided very early on that they wished to be a 'hands on' group and as such regular working parties are held in the park where members of the public help the Council Streetscene and Park Facilities Officer with tidying the park, planting out the flower beds etc.

The FOSP have chosen to be as informal as possible and as such the Council meets with the group when required. These meetings can either be arranged by the FOSP or the Council. These meetings provide a valuable opportunity for the Council to feedback and engage with people who are committed to Stonefield Park.

FOSP have a dedicated Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofStonefieldpark> which regularly is updated by the group showing the work they have been undertaking.

## **10.Environmental Issues**

### **10.1. Sustainability and recycling**

Self-watering baskets are utilised together with peat free compost to reduce reliance on natural resources.

Peat-free compost has been trialed for the bedding plants. Unfortunately the growth rate in the plants was poor and the compost did not hold moisture and therefore dried out very quickly resulting in an increase in watering. Additionally nutrients within the compost ran out mid-season and consequently the health of the plants deteriorated.

All green waste is recycled through a recycling centre and used by the Biomass project on agricultural land. This product is made from natural, reclaimed vegetable fibres, which may eventually be used within the council parks as mulch compost. At present the output from the biomass project is not of a sufficient quality to use within the parks, this is to do with disease being in certain plants that are not killed during the biomass process.

Where possible mulching is undertaken on shrub beds, this is undertaken when work requires on site material to be chipped. This prevents using fuel to bring in mulch or take mulch off site.

Waste is separated on site by the ranger into compostable and recyclable waste and this is collected by Streetscene for inclusion into the recycling scheme.

A reduction of 75% of the use of chemicals has been achieved so far. Chemicals are now only routinely used on the bowling green and this is limited to weed and fungal control and feeding of the green in any normal year.

## **10.2. Biodiversity and Nature Conservation**

Whilst Stonefield Park is highly formal in nature the park does offer Stone Town a green oasis.

Appendix 3 contains the biodiversity considerations for the park when undertaking regime changes and future developments, through the implementation of the management plan and through community consultation it is hoped these changes will occur.

Conservation will be a primary consideration when selecting grounds maintenance materials and consumables, e.g. herbicides, biological pest control and crop protection, nursery products, sustainable sources of bark mulch and compost.

The Council has surveyed all of the trees within the park enabling a proactive approach to the tree management to be undertaken.

There have been no formal surveys of the parks flora undertaken. However given the formal nature of the site and informal surveys there is unlikely to be any rare species on the site. Furthermore the flora found on site is likely to be similar to that found on other formal sites, throughout the Borough.

Chemical use is kept to a minimum within the park and is confined to the Bowling Green only.

## **11. Health and Safety**

Stonefield Park must be a healthy, safe and secure place for all members of the community to use.

Health and Safety policies are in place, in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act. At each park the Parks Facilities Officer has access to information on the following:

- Play Area Inspections;
- Repairs and Maintenance;
- Guidance on handling and disposing of sharps;
- First Aid Facilities;
- Accident Reporting;
- Leptospirosis (Weils Disease);
- Emergency procedure for fire;

- Lone Working Procedure;
- Storennet Radio;
- Insurance;
- Bookings Procedure;
- Income Collection.

A welfare folder is available for reference and support that provides information to the onsite Parks Facilities Officers regarding the Corporate Policies and includes:

- Employee Support Service
- Harassment & Bullying Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Disciplinary Procedure
- Data Protection Act
- Time off for Public Duties Policy
- Sickness Management Policy
- Statutory Sick Pay
- Grievance Procedure Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Violence at Work

Certain elements of the park require particular inspections, these are discussed below.

### **11.1. Entrances**

The importance of the welcome provided by the entrances cannot be underestimated. Entrances must be attractive, easily recognised and make users feel comfortable passing through, if they are not users will not enter the park. Entrances are;

- readily identifiable
- attractive and welcoming
- open and free from over grown vegetation and litter
- well lit to help orientate the park user in low light levels or at night, (main entrances only)
- signed free from dog fouling and graffiti.

Entrance signs show the opening and closing times of the park, byelaws, contact details, a brief history of the park and the park Notice Board Area. The park entrance signs also list the contact details of the Council.

### **11.2. People**

Visible people provide a feeling of security and this is enhanced with open views across the park. These open views provide reassurance in the sense that visitors can see who is around and provides mutual reassurance to other users.

The park benefits from the presence of a Park Facilities Officer who acts as a deterrent and helps to reassure visitors by their presence. This benefit is increased when the Officers engage in conversation and greetings with users. Due to the size of Stonefield Park and its location, the Park Facilities Officers get to know many of the users of the park and are able to help them with any specific needs.

### **11.3. Play Area Maintenance**

The Parks Facilities Officers carry out detailed weekly recorded site inspections to ensure that the equipment and facilities are safe to use and fit for purpose. There is a schedule of Play Safety Inspections as follows:

<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Type of Inspection</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
Daily	Visual	Parks Facilities Officers	This inspection enables the identification of obvious hazards that can result from vandalism; use or weather conditions and the hazards can take the form of broken parts or broken bottles etc. The ranger would remove any debris and empty the bins and any defects are verbally reported to the Parks and Open Spaces Implementation Officer.
Weekly	Visual and Physical	RPII Routine Inspector	Visual inspection. The inspector has a van with limited spares and tools to enable routine maintenance and repairs to be undertaken. These records are forwarded to the Parks and Open Spaces Implementation Officer and any urgent works are reported to the Operational Inspector.
8 Week inspection	Visual and Physical	RPII Operational Inspector	This inspection checks the operation and stability of the equipment, especially for any wear. The inspector also undertakes repairs and maintenance to the equipment and impact absorbing surfaces and reports directly to the Parks and Open Spaces Implementation Officer.
Annual	Detailed in line with ROSPA guidelines		In September each year an independent inspector is contracted to undertake an annual inspection including a Risk Assessments of the site and equipment. The annual inspection is done to establish the overall level of safety of the equipment, foundations and surfaces, e.g. effects of weather, evidence of rotting or corrosion, and any change in the level of safety of the equipment as a result of repairs made, or of added or replaced components.

#### **11.4. Sport Facilities Maintenance**

##### Bowling Green

The parks gardeners are required to maintain a safe, smooth, pest and weed free playing surface throughout the period and within the terms of the Contract, and shall undertake all operations in accordance with good practices for the maintenance of fine turf.

The Playing Season runs from April to the end of September each year. Maintenance operations must be carried out before 10.00am.

The bowling green will be maintained to a height of 5mm during the bowling season and during the closed season will be maintained to a height of 8mm. Winter maintenance is carried out between October to March / April.

Chemical use is kept to a minimum and is only used for the purposes of feeding and moss/weed killing. All applications of pesticides are recorded in the spraying logs held at Streetscene.

##### Tennis Courts

Stonefield Park contains two tarmac tennis courts. These are open all year round during the parks opening hours. These courts were constructed in 2011 on the site of two grass tennis courts.

The surface of the courts was changed to encourage yearlong usage as opposed to summer usage only in dry weather.

#### **11.5. Aviary Maintenance**

The aviary is a popular attraction with park users with all the birds being captive bred and having been acquired over a number of years through donations from members of the public. Park Staff are required to maintain the aviary and have due regard to the health and security of all birds and the Health and Safety to the public. This includes daily inspection, provision of fresh food and water and cleaning of receptacles and application for fresh litter as appropriate.

During the summer the birds are checked twice daily to ensure that they have sufficient water.

The aviary has perches and ground cover for the birds to encourage natural behaviour.

### **11.6. Buildings Maintenance**

The Parks Facilities Officers have a maintenance reporting procedure whereby any repairs needed are forwarded to the Head Parks Facilities Officer who in turn forwards these to the Public Building Maintenance Section.

Monitoring of the buildings is undertaken daily through the parks visual inspection regime, during the parks daily opening. The park contains three civil structures:

- Aviary
- Pavilion
- Toilet Block

Well-structured and regular monitoring identifies potential difficulties at an early stage and enables revisions to be made to structures, specifications etc. and allow for large-scale capital works to be planned. This will prevent a return to the gradual downward spiral of the park as a whole but will also safeguard the restored elements of the park for the future.

Property services are responsible, for all PAT testing and other checks relating to services and building infrastructure. Service contracts are arranged corporately to ensure value for money is obtained. This includes services such as insurance, all utilities and safety checks.

### **11.7. Infrastructure Monitoring and Maintenance**

This relates to all built facilities within the park, but predominately the following:

- Path surfacing
- Play and sports equipment
- Buildings
- Lighting

The Parks Facilities Officers regularly check path surfacing and associated drainage as part of the monthly Health and Safety Inspection. Obvious danger points such as trip hazards and potholes are to be repaired, receive temporary works or cordoned off from the public. These reports are held on the central computer system.

The main zones/areas of the park (discussed earlier) vary considerably in character and maintenance requirements. The costs for maintenance and inspection sit within various budgets and not a specific budget for the Park.

Play and sports equipment checks are detailed in the maintenance issues section.

Equipment maintenance is the responsibility of all members of staff and equipment must be stored away clean and in a serviceable condition before the end of each working day. Defects are reported to through Streetscene, who will arrange for repairs to be made.

### **11.8. Dogs**

Dog fouling is always a concern for users and managers, especially to those with young children who visit the park.

The Dogs Fouling of Land Act 1996 covers Stonefield Park. The Council has trained officers who are trained in the enforcement/fixed penalty notice procedure.

Dog fouling is not currently a problem in Stonefield Park and this is in no small part due to the work of the Parks Facilities Officers and the respectful users of the park.

The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 enables Council's to implement Public Space Protection Orders. Under this Act Orders relating to dogs can be applied, these may relate to dog exclusion zones and dogs on leads.

The Council will be investigating the need to apply this legislation in the next three years.

### **11.9. Litter and Graffiti**

Litter picking is undertaken throughout the day by the Parks Facilities Officers, this ensures that the park is maintained litter free. The Officers also speak with users who drop litter on the park to pick it up.

Litter is segregated on site through the Councils blue and brown bin system.

Streetscene and the park rangers are responsible for the removal of graffiti on site. A zero tolerance policy is enforced and all graffiti is removed within 24hrs.

### **11.10. Dangerous Materials**

Dangerous items such as hypodermic syringes, broken glass, litter and dumped waste is assessed and dealt with immediately by the parks site staff. They have received assessment training and they decide if they need external assistance from SBC operational teams to clear up waste.

All finds are logged and monitored ensuring that when there is an increase this is identified at the earliest opportunity in order for solutions to be found.

### **11.11. Fear of Crime**

Full time park based staff provide a regular presence in the park. This ensures that incidents of Anti-social behaviour are few and far between. Should an incident occur which needs police assistance then the park ranger phones for assistance.

### 11.12. Emergency Contact

The park pavilion is the base for the onsite Parks Facilities Officer and a telephone for emergency use is available here.

All Parks Facilities Officers have mobile phones and are able to contact the Head Parks Facilities Officer at any point during the day and evening.

The Friends of Stonefield Park are currently investigating whether they can get a defibrillator donated to the park.

### 12. SWOT Analysis and Assessment

A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) assessment was undertaken in 2015 and showed the following:

Strengths	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heritage preserved – original layout</li> <li>• Walking distance from town centre</li> <li>• Close to bus routes</li> <li>• Active Friends Group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build and strengthen partnerships with community groups</li> <li>• Expand community engagement and involvement</li> <li>• Increase awareness of facilities available</li> <li>• Increase biodiversity of the park</li> </ul>
Weaknesses	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constricted site</li> <li>• No car park</li> <li>• Limited events held due to lack of parking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budget cuts</li> <li>• Competition for capital funding</li> </ul>

### 13. Community Consultation and Inclusion

Consultation with the public is undertaken on any matter that will affect the park. In 2009 the Borough Council undertook a consultation on the future development of the tennis courts. Users were consulted on whether to convert the area to a Multi-Use Games Area or to retain the courts purely for tennis. The results of this consultation were inconclusive and the tennis court refurbishment was undertaken to a design which would allow alternative use in the future if this was deemed appropriate.

In April 2012 the Council undertook a consultation on the future of the parks aviary. The consultation focused upon retaining the aviary and rebuilding the facility or the removal of the aviary. The aviary was replaced in 2013.

At the end of the summer season the bowls clubs and any tennis clubs are issued with a user satisfaction survey which focuses on the quality and up keep of the facility and the

booking process. In 2014 73.91% of respondents said they never had to remove dog fouling and 52.17% responded they didn't have to remove litter from the green. 59% of respondents also rated the booking process as 'good'.

Future targeted consultations will take place as and when developments require. However there is an ongoing user satisfaction survey which is available on site or via the Councils website.

## **14. Marketing and Events Programme**

The marketing and promotion of Stonefield Park is predominately done via the Councils website: <http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/parks>

Stonefield Park has its own webpage: <http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/stonefield-park> which provides information on:

- Facilities available;
- Park opening hours;
- Park location; and
- Park Byelaws.

### **14.1. Signage**

Signage to Stonefield Park does not currently exist. Discussion with Staffordshire County Council is currently occurring to determine whether or not it will be possible to have pedestrian signs installed from the town centre.

Vehicle signage will not be installed due to the lack of parking available for the park. It is considered that if vehicle signage were to be installed parking problems would be exacerbated within the area.

Entrance signs provide a brief history of the park, contact details, information on byelaws and a space for park notices.

### **14.2. Events**

Due to the size of Stonefield Park and the lack of parking only small scale, community led events are allowed. A formal booking form is used for outside groups to hire the park. A fee is also charged, for community events this is a nominal fee to ensure that an event does not place additional strain on the already limited park resources budget.



A Burma Star remembrance service is an annual event in the park, held each August. In 2014, a special open-air service of remembrance was held in the park to mark the centenary of the start of the First World War. Around 150 people gathered to pay their respects.

It is hoped that with the establishment of the Friends of Stonefield Park group that more community led events will occur.

## **15.Future Development**

The improvement and future development of Stonefield Park can only be achieved by working in partnership with internal departments and services.

Improvements will require additional finances and this may be through internal budgets or by seeking external funding through appropriate grant bodies.

### **15.1. Management and Maintenance**

The management and maintenance of Stonefield Park will continue to be undertaken by the multi-disciplinary team. Any changes to the structure of this work will be taken to ensure its benefit to the Parks and Open Spaces service the Council provides.

Continuous updating of skills for the Parks Facilities Officers and Streetscene Officers is essential in appropriate skills such as horticulture, customer services and health and safety.

Appendix 4 details the Grounds Maintenance to be undertaken and the Section to undertake it.

### **15.2. Finances and Resources**

Public spending has been and will continue to be constrained by the reductions imposed by central Government. Year on year the budget for open spaces has been significantly reduced and this has led to service reductions.

Improvements to Stonefield Park will require financial resources. Due to budget cuts improvements to the park will be spread over a five year period. Additionally external funding opportunities will be investigated.

Whilst cuts to the budget do have a negative consequence the Leisure Service is committed to ensure that Stonefield Park is maintained to a high quality.

## **16.Aims and Objectives**

This management plan will provide a tool to manage the park more effectively, by determining the actions required for improvement and a mechanism for reviewing success. It contributes to the key aims of the council by interpreting them for the site and ensuring that improvements are made within the context of these aims.

- To offer a safe, welcoming park that encourages both passive and active recreation to every age group of the community with consideration to the abilities of all users.
- To achieve Green Flag award recognition for management and development of the park.

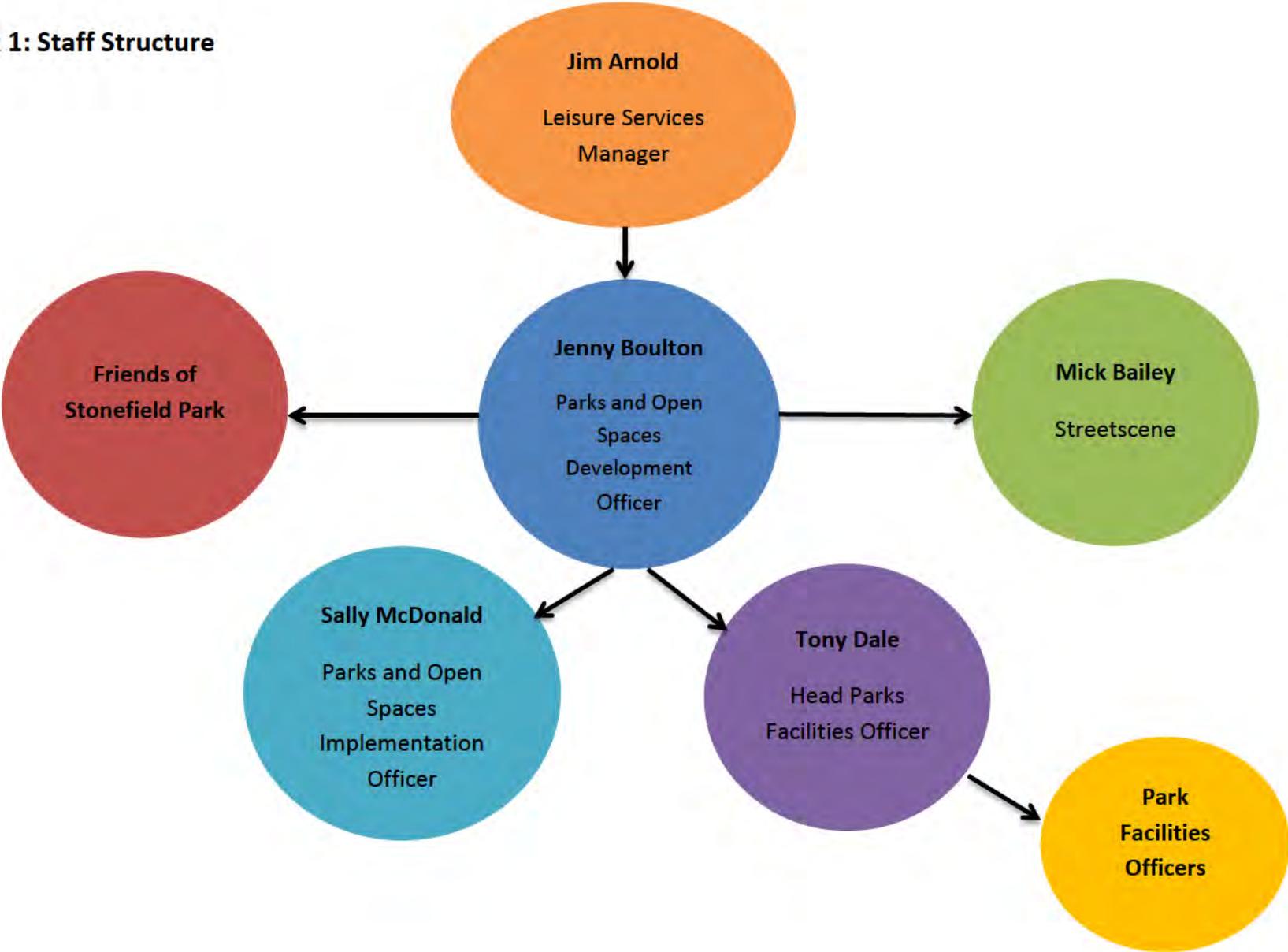
- To promote good health and wellbeing, both through passive and active use of the park, by positively promoting opportunities for walking for health.
- To address the main issues, aspirations, strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the park as a whole.
- To encourage use of the park for low scale events to diversify the use and build cross generation interaction and respect.
- To raise the profile of children using the park through engaging them in meaningful activities

**17.Action Plan**

This action plan is an integral part of the Management Plan

<b>Task</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Officer</b>	<b>Target Completion Date</b>	<b>Finance</b>
Establish Friends of Stonefield Park Group	Advertise the desire to setup the group	Parks and Open Space Development Officer	2015	
Tennis courts refurbishment	Cleaning and repainting of the tennis courts		2017/2018	SBC
Bowl Pavilion refurbishment	Large scale repairs and painting		2019/2020	SBC

**Appendix 1: Staff Structure**



## **Appendix 2: Park Facilities Officer Duties**

The Park Facilities Officers are responsible for opening and closing the Park at the designated times throughout the year. All staff are logged onto a lone working computer system, which monitors their safety during these and all other times.

### **Patrolling the Park**

The daily supervision of the Park and the deterring of anti-social behaviour remains the primary task for the Park Facilities Officers. Rangers regularly patrol each area of the Park throughout their shift. The number of patrols is not pre-determined and is very much dependant on varying factors such as weather, ongoing events etc.

All Rangers have access to Store watch Radios that give them direct links to CCTV and Police assistance. Incidences of anti-social behaviour have been greatly reduced in the last twelve months and recent shrub reduction works, the introduction by Staffordshire Police of Community Support officers and the aforementioned Store watch Radios have all had an impact. Whilst patrolling the Park all Rangers perform visual inspections of the Park and its facilities and any defects or works required are reported to the Senior Ranger who forwards them to Property Services for completion.

### **Litter picking**

Litter picking is performed continually throughout the Park Facilities Officers shift. This is done either ad-hoc whilst patrolling or during one of a number of main picks throughout their shift. We operate a zero tolerance policy on litter. The number of main picks is again dependant on Park usage. All litterbins are also emptied by the Park Facilities Officers and these are again checked throughout their shift.

### **Clearing Pathways**

The Rangers must ensure that all pathways are clean and clear of hazards at all times. This may involve sweeping debris, applying salt in the winter or closing pathways during flooding of the River Sow. Checking of all pathways is undertaken daily whilst patrolling.

### **Bench Management**

The benches and their condition is a responsibility of the Park Facilities Officers. They are inspected daily and any minor damage is repaired immediately by the Ranger.

Other more serious damage is reported to the Senior Ranger and forwarded to Property Services for completion.

The Park Facilities Officers have a winter refurbishment program and all damaged or weathered benches are repaired or replaced.

### **Collection of income**

The Park Facilities Officer collects monies generated by the hiring of the bowling green. This may also include the loaning out of bowls equipment and offering advice to first time users. The Park Facilities Officer also balances all income and forwards this on a weekly basis to the Head Park Facilities Officer.

### **Annual Environmental Inspections**

In addition to the ongoing monitoring of maintenance issues an annual Environmental Inspection is carried out by the Senior Ranger. All outstanding or new maintenance work is forwarded to Property Services and the report is forwarded to Management. All maintenance issues are added to the maintenance program and are dated for completion and then monitored.

### **Risk Assessment**

The Head Park Facilities Officer has undertaken a risk assessment on all tasks carried out by the Park Facilities Officers. A copy of this assessment is located in the onsite Parks Facilities Officer Information folder.

### **Reporting Systems**

The Park Facilities Officers service has made great strides forward in the last couple of years with the introduction of a new management structure. A complete review of all the existing working practices was undertaken and this culminated in comprehensive reporting systems being implemented throughout the Rangers Service.

An information folder is located in the Park Facilities Officers office on site and includes the following documentation:

1. Risk Assessments
2. Breakdown of daily tasks
3. Lone Working Procedure
4. Maintenance Reporting Process
5. Accidents and Incidents Procedure
6. Guidance on Handling Sharps
7. Emergency Procedure for Fire
8. Customer Comment, Complaint and Compliments Process

### **Park Inventory**

Whilst the information on all the process and procedures is contained in the information folders a working folder exists to record the daily occurrences in the park. The folder contains:

1. Daily Tasks Sheet – signed and dated as duties completed
2. Accident Forms (blue for public and yellow for staff)
3. Incident Forms
4. Customer Comment, Complaint and Compliments Form
5. Income Sheet
6. Contractors Log
7. Asbestos Register

8. Weekly communication sheet – a means of passing relevant information between rangers working on opposite shifts.

Daily inspection by gardeners to ensure all facilities are fit for purpose including recording of all incidents by notifying the ranger service or Property Services of issues.

Recovery of 'sharps' (i.e. needles, etc) is recorded via maintenance staff and the Ranger Service. Monthly reports are submitted for monitoring purposes.

## Appendix 3: Biodiversity Considerations

Habitat	Description	How the location is used and what people think	User perceptions improved by.	How to enhance biodiversity.
Hedges	Shrubs and trees provide a division and delineate boundaries. Important for increasing bio-diversity.	Require constant maintenance within the park, and can appear untidy between cutting. Important landscape features.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ensure hedges are maintained along paths.</li> <li>- formal locations to be cut as a priority,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- reduce frequency of cutting of hedges away from formal areas to twice a year.</li> <li>- replant gaps with native species not found in the hedge.</li> </ul>
Shrub planting	Dense planting, mainly of ornamental species with mown edges,	Traditional aspect of the park and visually important. Can be seen as untidy when seen between cuts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ensure shrubs are cut back away from paths.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- reduce intensive trimming</li> <li>- replace cultivated, mulched soils with wildflowers</li> <li>- Coppice/prune severely to regenerate over mature shrubs.</li> <li>- use flowering and fruiting shrubs to provide food for animals.</li> </ul>

Short grass	Regularly mown ornamental grass.	Traditional feature of the park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ensure grass is maintained</li> <li>- ensure cutting is regular and of a good quality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- no opportunity to improve biodiversity due to the formal setting.</li> <li>- consider the feasibility of creating rough meadow style edges.</li> </ul>
Flower beds	Highly maintained with winter and summer bedding.	Seen as a traditional formal area of the park, with high visual importance	- increase the range of colours used and the combination	- avoid using double-flowered varieties
Herbaceous beds	Planting of perennial herbaceous species	Highly attractive all year round feature, with good structure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- maximise the flowering season with dead heading</li> <li>- use long and late flowering species.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- increase the diversity of plants used and the structural diversity</li> <li>- increase winter food value by cutting back in early spring</li> <li>- avoid species prone to slug attack</li> </ul>

**Appendix 4: Maintenance Operations**

Description	Operation	Frequency	Section
Trees	Removal or weeds part of shrub / planting bed maintenance	Monthly	Streetscene
	Water during periods of drought. Min 50 Litres each visit	As required between April to Oct.	Streetscene
	Inspection as part of tree survey programme	4 yearly	Streetscene
	Pruning works	As directed by POSDO Officer	Streetscene
	Re-adjustment of stakes and ties	As required.	Streetscene
	Removal of stakes and ties	As required	Streetscene
	Replacement of vandalised / failed trees.	As required	Parks
Shrubs	Application of mulch	November	Streetscene
	Hand weeding	Maintain weed free	Streetscene
	Application of fungicide and pesticide	As required	Streetscene
	Pruning of dead diseased plants	As required	Streetscene
	Pruning of shrubs.	April and October / November	Streetscene
	Replace failed shrubs	As required	Streetscene

	Edge up and hoe	April to November, (total of six times)	Streetscene
	Rake out all leaves	April to November, (total of six times)	Streetscene
	Rake out all detritus and fork over	November / December at end of leaf fall.	Streetscene
Bedding	Design	Winter and summer	Streetscene
	Hand weeding	Maintain weed free throughout the year.	Riverway Nursery
	Provision of plants	Winter and summer bedding	Streetscene
	Watering	As required in dry conditions and during establishment period.	Streetscene
	Re-firming plants	As required	Streetscene
	Repairing vandalism	As required	Streetscene
	Litter and leaf clearance	As required	Streetscene
	Dead heading	Fortnightly	Streetscene
	Staking and tying of feature and dot plants	As required	Streetscene
	Clearance of seasonal bedding	October, May / June	Streetscene
Grass Lawn	Cutting to maintain a length between 13mm and 20mm using approved cylinder mower.	April to October- November min 16 cuts.	Streetscene
	Turf replacement and watering	April to October ad required	Streetscene

	Litter Clearance.	To achieve Grade A standard under NI 195	Park Facilities Officers
	Clipping around obstacles	April to October – November, min 16 cuts. To be undertaken within 24 hours of grass cut. Min 16 times.	Streetscene
	Edging off around beds and boarders	April to Oct – Nov, within 24 hours of grass cut. Min 16 times	Streetscene
	Edging off adjacent to paths and hard standings	March	Streetscene
	Leaf clearance	At the end of the autumn leaf fall.	Streetscene
	Cutting to maintain a length between 13mm and 20mm using approved cylinder mower.	April to October- November min 16 cuts.	Streetscene
Hedges	Cut all hedges	June and November	Streetscene
	Clean out hedge bottom	June and November	Streetscene
Bowling Green	Scarify green	October	Streetscene
	Aerate by solid tining or hollow tine	October	Streetscene
	Top dress green with dry sand compost.	October	Streetscene
	Sweep leaves by hand	October November weekly	Streetscene
	Drag brush green	October – March three times a week	Streetscene

	Replace – top up sand in channels.	As required	Streetscene
	Brush turf and roll	March, Once only	Streetscene
	Apply selective weed killer	April, once only.	Streetscene
Leaf sweeping	Gather leaves from all paths	October to end of leaf fall	Streetscene
Toilets	Lock and unlock all toilets	Daily, except Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Years Day.	Streetscene, Park Facilities Officers
	Thoroughly clean all toilets	Daily and additional if required	Park Facilities Officers
	Replenish all consumables	Daily and additional if required	Park Facilities Officers
	Inspect interior and exterior of building for damage and report if required	Daily	Streetscene, Park Facilities Officers
All buildings	Inspect for signs of damage and report if required	Daily	Streetscene, Park Facilities Officers
Lighting	Check all street lighting is operational and report if required	Six monthly October and March	Park Facilities Officers
Graffiti	Remove offensive graffiti within 24 hours of reporting	Daily except Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Years Day and Easter Sunday	Streetscene
Litter	Remove all litter to grade A standard across the whole site	Daily	Streetscene, Park Facilities Officers

Aviary	Feed, water aviary	Daily	Streetscene
	Clean aviary	Weekly	Streetscene
	Replace bedding and wood chippings	Weekly	Streetscene
	Clean and disinfect all woodwork	Six monthly	Streetscene
Play facilities	Visual inspection of all play equipment	Daily except Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Years Day	Park Facilities Officer
	Weekly operation inspection of equipment	Weekly	Play Area Inspector
	Annual inspection	Yearly	External contractor



# Stonefield Park

**Stafford Borough Council**

Civic Centre

Riverside

Stafford

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**[www.staffordbc.gov.uk](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk)**

