

## PRESS RELEASE

### Parks for London and Tisdall Associates launch the Health Parks Toolkit on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2019

Parks and green spaces can be seen as a cost or valued for their contribution to the health and wellbeing of society. Did you know that it has been estimated that in the UK – parks, open spaces and the natural environment save the Exchequer around £111 million per year, just on reduced GP visits? Aggregated across the UK an estimated £34.2 billion worth of wellbeing benefits per year are delivered by frequent use of parks and green spaces. (*Fields in Trust: Revaluing Parks and Green Spaces 2018*).

The free Health Parks Survey, which is being **launched today during Mental Health Awareness Week**, provides a lens through which to view parks as health assets. It also highlights the extent to which parks can be improved for health - be it for community engagement, accessibility, mental wellbeing, to increase physical activity or for the environment. We are hoping it will become a central component of our approach to parks here in London, in our aim to use them more and more within Primary Prevention, and to reduce avoidable ill-health in our communities.

The development of the Parks for Health Assessment Toolkit, by Tisdall Associates and supported by Parks for London, has been driven by their desire to create landscapes which are truly sustainable, good for people, promote biodiversity, and protect and encourage wildlife. The model brings together health and wellbeing, the environment and biodiversity within a single assessment model; it allows each to be measured, and improvements demonstrated through objective assessment. Based upon such assessments and related usage, the real economic value of parks and green spaces can be determined. This allows decisions and investments in local parks and green spaces to be based upon objective assessment, rather than subjective opinion.

Scientific evidence supports the use of appropriately designed and well managed parks and green spaces to provide several important health benefits:

- Reduced all cause morbidity
- Reduced prevalence of Obesity.
- Reduced prevalence in avoidable conditions and co-morbidities related to CHD, Type 2 Diabetes, Strokes, some Cancers and Hypertension.
- Improving Mental Wellbeing, e.g. Dementia, and alleviating Stress, Anxiety and Depression.
- Mitigating Environmental Risk Factors for health and enhancing Biodiversity.

In addition, Parks have an invaluable part to play as a context for Community Initiatives, strengthening social capital and cohesion, as well as for Social Prescribing and Workplace Wellbeing.

Together the Parks for Health initiative allows the development of objective, evidence-based Parks and Green Spaces Health Strategies, and opens the way for parks to be used more effectively within Primary Prevention, to help create vibrant healthy communities.

You can find out much more about Health Parks through the [Tisdall Associates website](#). You may also want to **TAKE ACTION** now by using their Free Survey to explore how your park can be improved to promote the health of your community.

*“Health Parks” is a registered Tisdall Associates Trademark providing brand recognition for the Parks for Health Initiative.*

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