News Release

City of London Corporation

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Park chiefs ask Londoners: social distance to stop COVID spread

Visitors to London's open spaces are being urged to follow social distancing rules this weekend to prevent a spike in COVID-19 infections.

The capital's park providers the City of London Corporation, Lee Valley Regional Park, London's boroughs, Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, and The Royal Parks made the call ahead of an easing of some lockdown measures.

Under the Government's Roadmap, from Monday 29 March, people will be able to meet outside in groups up to six, or with one other household – but those from different households will still need to socially distance from each other.

Park bosses want Londoners to continue to play their part in keeping the COVID infection rate down as cases fall across the capital.

The group is also encouraging visitors to act responsibly when visiting parks by respecting the Countryside Code, not leaving litter behind and using the bins provided or taking their rubbish home.

Director of Open Spaces for the City of London Corporation, Colin Buttery, said:

"Parks have played a crucial role in the physical and mental health of Londoners during the pandemic. But although some restrictions will soon be eased, we are still in a national lockdown - and it's crucial that we all follow the rules to prevent a new spike. Londoners have already made huge sacrifices to cut infection rates, and there

is light at the end of the tunnel. But we can't afford to be complacent now and allow this virus to spread."

Shaun Dawson, Lee Valley Regional Park Authority Chief Executive, said:

"Our open spaces have never seen so many visitors and have never been more needed. We want people to carry on enjoying these vital green places, but we need everyone to respect the parks, our staff and other visitors, plus take home their rubbish and, if somewhere looks busy, move to another spot."

Tom Jarvis, Director of Parks at The Royal Parks, said:

"We've welcomed an unprecedented number of visitors throughout the pandemic, to boost visitors' mental and physical wellbeing, but increased footfall is putting pressure on the natural environment. Simple actions, like sticking to pathways and keeping dogs on a short lead around wildlife and near skylark nesting areas, putting litter in bins – or taking it home, and keeping at least 50m away from deer, can help to protect the parks so they remain beautiful spaces for the year ahead."

ENDS

Notes to editors

ABOUT THE CITY OF LONDON CORPORATION

The City of London Corporation is the governing body of the Square Mile dedicated to a vibrant and thriving City, supporting a diverse and sustainable London within a globally-successful UK. www.cityoflondon.gov.uk. It protects 11,000 acres of green space in London and south east England – including Hampstead Heath and Epping Forest - and over 200 smaller ones in the Square Mile, investing more than £40m a year.

These sites, most of which are charitable trusts, are run at little or no cost to the communities that they serve. They include important wildlife habitats, Sites of

Special Scientific Interest, and National Nature Reserves. They are protected from being built on by special legislation.

ABOUT LEE VALLEY REGIONAL PARK

Lee Valley Regional Park stretches 26 miles along the River Lee from Ware in Hertfordshire to East India Dock Basin on the Thames and offers a range of activities from cycling, white water sports and angling to horse riding, ice skating and camping. The park's 10,000 acres comprise a diverse mix of heritage sites, nature reserves and open green spaces alongside world class sports venues, attracting over nine million visits a year. Lee Valley Regional Park Authority owns and manages three London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games venues: Lee Valley White Water Centre in Waltham Cross, Hertfordshire which hosted the Canoe Slalom event; Lee Valley VeloPark and Lee Valley Hockey and Tennis Centre in Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, Stratford, east London.

ABOUT LONDON'S BOROUGHS

London's 32 boroughs are responsible for 3,500 well-loved parks and green spaces across the city, from Victoria Park in Hackney to Holland Park in Kensington and Chelsea

ABOUT QUEEN ELIZABETH OLYMPIC PARK

Spread across 560 acres of stunning parklands, Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park is home to beautifully landscaped gardens, historic waterways, famous sporting venues, a vibrant arts and events programme and the ArcelorMittal Orbit visitor attraction.

Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park opened in April 2014 following the 18 month transformation programme of the London 2012 Olympic Park. It is now home to six former Olympic and Paralympic venues, the Copper Box Arena, Lee Valley Hockey and Tennis Centre, Lee Valley VeloPark, London Aquatics Centre and London Stadium where visitors can take part in sport, enjoy watching world class athletes compete or experience concerts or arts and culture events. Visitors can also enjoy a birds-eye view of the Park from the two viewing platforms of the ArcelorMittal Orbit,

the UK's tallest sculpture, before experiencing an exhilarating ride on The Slide, the world's tallest and longest tunnel slide.

As the new heart of east London, the Park is still transforming and will soon provide future homes, jobs and an unrivalled education and cultural district housing Sadler's Wells, BBC, V&A East, UAL's London College of Fashion and UCL East.

The London Legacy Development Corporation promotes and delivers physical, social, economic and environmental regeneration in Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park and the surrounding area by maximising the legacy of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. For more information visit our website (QueenElizabethOlympicPark.co.uk), sign up to our e-newsletter (QueenElizabethOlympicPark.co.uk/subscribe), follow us on Twitter (@noordinarypark) and like us on Facebook (facebook.com/QueenElizabethOlympicPark)

ABOUT THE ROYAL PARKS

The Royal Parks is the charity that exists to make sure London's eight historic royal parks will always be there to enrich the lives of local residents and visitors to London. The charity looks after eight of London's largest open spaces: Hyde Park, Kensington Gardens, St James's Park, The Green Park, The Regent's Park and Primrose Hill, Greenwich Park, Richmond Park and Bushy Park. It also manages other important open spaces in the capital, including Brompton Cemetery and Victoria Tower Gardens.