Press Release

Embargoed: 1.15pm Thursday 18 November 2021

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Charity, Parks for London, launch its 5th annual Good Parks for London report, sponsored by GL Hearn, and supported by the Mayor of London

Launched earlier this afternoon, the 5th annual Good Parks for London report focuses on how London's park services are performing, how land managers are meeting the on-going challenges of climate change, and the impact it has on how residents, wider communities and visitors use their local parks and green spaces.

Supported by the Mayor of London, the report looks at how London boroughs are performing against ten Good Parks criteria, including sustainability, supporting nature, community involvement, strategic planning and more. It also gives case studies from other landowners/managers who provide much needed green space.

Deputy Mayor for Environment and Energy, Shirley Rodrigues said: "The Mayor has made huge strides in increasing and protecting the capital's green spaces. This includes investing over £20 million to help improve parks, including Beckenham Place Park in Lewisham and the Ripple Greenway in Barking & Dagenham."

"The Good Parks for London Report's focus on climate change couldn't be more timely. This summer's flash floods were a stark reminder that the dangers of climate change are moving closer to home and something London is likely to experience more frequently. London's parks will have a key role to play in helping

us mitigate and adapt to our changing climate. The Mayor is delighted to support Parks for London's development into a Centre for Excellence, following a recommendation from his London Green Spaces Commission, helping those who design, manage and maintain parks and green spaces to respond to city-wide challenges."

High achieving boroughs in 2021

This year we congratulate the London Borough of Lewisham whose parks service has been outstanding. Other boroughs that have performed exceptionally well are Barking & Dagenham, Hounslow, Lambeth, and Southwark.

Damien Egan, Mayor of Lewisham said: "It is a huge achievement for Lewisham to be independently assessed as having the best parks in London in this year's Good Parks for London report. As an inner-city London borough, we are very proud that our brilliant parks and green spaces here in Lewisham have been rated as Outstanding based on a rigorous set of criteria. I want to thank our fantastic and dedicated Parks and Green Spaces staff team together with our partners at Glendale. None of this is possible without our amazing community volunteers and Parks' Friends user groups. We truly appreciate everything they do to make Lewisham's parks and green spaces so special."

Well done to Barking & Dagenham, Hackney, Hammersmith & Fulham, Hounslow, and Redbridge who were this year's biggest improvers.

Councillor Samia Chaudhary, Cabinet Member for Leisure for Hounslow, said: "It is a huge honour to know Hounslow boasts one of the most improved and third-best performing parks service in London for 2020. It has been a tough year responding to the pandemic and yet we have been working hard and will continue to improve in the months to come. We know how extremely valuable Hounslow's parks are to our communities and we only achieved what we achieved because, Council and Lampton Greenspace360 staff, residents, and volunteers, dedicated themselves to work together as a real team. A big thank you to Parks for London – this is a brilliant recognition of everyone who made it happen."

Overall, over 80% of boroughs have shown improved parks services, we congratulate all London boroughs, their staff, and volunteers for the work they are doing and thank them for participating in this report.

Tony Leach, Chief Executive of Parks for London said in the report: "Poor air quality and the extremes of flooding and drought are now seen and felt in our neighbourhoods, yet our parks and other green infrastructure can help provide solutions to these big challenges. So, it comes as no surprise that we have

dedicated this year's edition of Good Parks for London to parks and climate change."

We would also like to highlight the amazing work London boroughs are doing to lead the way in key areas:

- Richmond improving accessibility to its parks through close consultations with people who suffer from visual impairment.
- Southwark rejuvenating Dickens Square into a more welcoming, attractive, and accessible park.
- Barking & Dagenham and Hammersmith & Fulham creating dense urban forests to support wildlife, act as carbon sinks and improve the local environment.

Other noteworthy projects by landowners and organisations include conservation efforts by Capel Manor College to conserve the critically endangered Scottish wildcat species, and a new Wildlife Discovery Centre in River Lee Country Park managed by the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority.

Judy Ling Wong CBE, Honorary President of the Black Environment Network, author of the report's Foreword said: "Strategically addressing the impact of climate change inevitably means resourcing our parks, green and blue spaces in their critical role to protect people and nature."

Joanne Dennis-Jones, National Head of Planning at GL Hearn, commented: "Many of us were so reliant on our local park during COVID-19, it is phenomenal the positive affect that outdoor space has on our physical and mental wellbeing. This year's theme of climate change could not be more relevant. The call to action for us all is to take personal responsibility for the day to day changes we can make to help protect our environments locally."

The results of this year's report were announced at Cross River Partnership's online Lunchtime Launch event this afternoon, a recording of which can be found on the Cross River Partnership's YouTube channel.

Encouraging climate action

This year, the report also includes invaluable case studies of landowners and managers making London's parks more climate resilient and better positioned to mitigate climate change. A series of pond restoration projects by The Royal Parks and the creation of a major wetland at Headstone Manor Park by Harrow Council aims to reduce flood risk and improve wildlife habitats. Contractors such as

Glendale are also working with London Boroughs to achieve climate resilience in their neighbourhoods.

These case studies and more will be available on the Parks for London's online Resource Hub to provide a growing resource for learning and replication.

Publication of the report:

Thursday 18 November, 1:15 pm.

https://parksforlondon.org.uk/resource/good-parks-for-london/

Notes to Editors

GL Hearn

GL Hearn is a market-leading UK real estate consultancy, providing successful planning, development, and advisory outcomes for both public and private sector clients. GL Hearn provide commercially driven advice through all stages of the asset life cycle, specialising across a variety of sectors including retail, residential, commercial office, healthcare, defence, education, and infrastructure.

Working with public and private sector organisations, GL Hearn enhance land and property holdings for clients, working on some of the most complex real estate projects in the UK, making complex developments happen and reducing occupation costs through a specialist and tailored approach.

GL Hearn's primary focus is on the residential, retail, and corporate advisory markets, offering a wide range of specialist professional services from environmental, infrastructure, and town and country planning, business rates advice, valuation, and lease advisory, through to development including compulsory purchase and land assembly, private sector development management, agency and consultancy expertise.

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Parks for London

The charity, Parks for London, has grown to be the leading strategic voice and champion for London's green space sector, advocating to ensure that the true value of its green estate is recognised. Parks for London is the only pan-London body

working with and supporting all London boroughs and other landowners and managers, to share and develop good practice, improve standards, and maximise resources. In 2020 we were recognised by the London Green Spaces Commission's report to develop as a Centre for Excellence (CfE) supporting those that own and manage London's green spaces. The CfE is being supported by the Mayor of London.

https://parksforlondon.org.uk/

Cross River Partnership

Cross River Partnership (CRP) is a sub-regional, public-private partnership that is engaging with People, delivering innovative Projects, and shaping great Places: Delivering London's Future Together. CRP was originally formed to implement cross river infrastructure projects such as the Millennium Bridge and has since diversified to deliver a wide range of environmental, economic and community regeneration projects. CRP's programmes transect themes such as Place Making; Health and Wellbeing; Air Quality; Diversity and Inclusion; Freight, Transport and Active Travel; Energy; Environment; Culture; and Lighting. Visit their projects' page for more information on initiatives being delivered with their partners and collaborators.

https://crossriverpartnership.org/

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Images

Images attached with this press release, and captioned below:

Image one:



Image caption:

Top performing borough: Southwark’s wildflowers around the new Anne Keane playground

Image two:



Image caption: London Borough of Hounslow - top performing and most improved borough: Councillor Samia Chaudhary, Cabinet Member for Leisure for Hounslow

Image three:



Image caption: Shirley Rodrigues, Deputy Mayor for Environment and Energy