



Green Flag Award 2013/2014

Name of Site – Staunton Country Park

Managing Organisation – Hampshire County Council

Bandscores

Desk Assessment	0-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-30			
Field Assessment	20-29	30-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-70
Overall score	30-44	45-54	55-59	60-65	66-69	70-74	75-79	80+

Status – Pass

Overall band score –70-74

Desk Assessment Feedback

Band score – 15-19

Criteria	Strengths	Recommendations
Presentation	The Management Plan (MP) for Staunton Country Park (SCP) is laid out and presented fairly well. It has a good contents page that is linked to page numbers which aids navigation through the document. .	The MP needs a good plan of the site that is located near the beginning of the document to orientate the reader on the location of various areas and features of the park. There is no point in listing the appendices in the index if they are not included with the document. If an appendix is an integral part of the MP it should be included with the document.
Health, Safety & Security	SCP offers a diverse range of activities for both users who seek healthy exercise and those looking for more passive pastimes.	Progress needs to be made in formalizing the entrances and boundaries of the park near

	Disabled access throughout the park appears to be very good. The fact there are members of staff living on site together with a visible staff presence enhances park and visitor security. The H&S policies and procedures are good.	the housing estate. The MP does not mention if any police or PCSO's regularly patrol in the park or if there is any CCTV coverage of the site.
Maintenance of equipment, buildings & landscape	The MP notes that buildings, ground and landscape maintenance is carried out. The ranger team carry out daily inspection.	More detail is needed in this section on what maintenance is done and by whom.
Litter, cleanliness, vandalism	The MP notes vandalism is repaired and the park's dog policy is good.	The MP is very vague on litter picking and cleaning together with the park's policies on graffiti and ASB.
Environmental Sustainability	The park is serviced by public transport. There are recycling facilities for use by visitors. The Water Trail leaflet produced in conjunction with Portsmouth Water is very good.	There needs to more detail in this section on the use of pesticides and peat, energy and natural resource conservation together with waste management.
Conservation of heritage & nature	The MP suggests that the management team have an in depth knowledge of species in the various habitats of the park. The veteran tree MP and survey is comprehensive. Dead wood is left standing wherever it is safe to do so. The MP contains a very good and succinct history of the park.	The MP fails to give any detail on the management of the built heritage of the park. Wildlife conservation groups should be encouraged to take an active interest in the park. This will increase species diversity within the park and bring in willing volunteers and possible new sources of funding.
Community Involvement	SCP provides a diverse range of activities and events for a wide cross section of the community. The park's Volunteer Group play an active role in park maintenance. Adults with learning difficulties and disabilities do voluntary work in the park. SCP has an education officer and the park provides a range of subjects that are linked to the national curriculum. The park also provides two week placements for 14-19 year old students.	Consideration should be given to forming a properly constituted friends group for the park.
Marketing Strategy	The park has its own marketing officer with a budget of £24,000 pa. SCP's Campaign Theme is an excellent marketing tool. The range of leaflets and publications for the park is very good. The park has a website and social media is used as a marketing tool.	There is some room for improvement on the website.

Overall management	The management of SCP appears to be generally good. The management aims and objectives are very good.	The aims and objectives are good but it is not clear in the MP how they will achieve them.
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Additional comments

The new MP, judging by last year's judge's comments, is a great improvement on the previous one although there remains room for improvement.

Field Assessment Feedback

Band score –55-59

Criteria	Strengths	Recommendations
A Welcoming Place	Signage to and around the park is very good. The entrance signs welcome visitors into the park and contain details such as emergency contact information. Pedestrian access into the park is good and access around the main routes of the park is generally good for all including wheelchair users and those with pushchairs.	It is unfortunate that a busy main road dissects the park and in the interests of visitor safety HCC should consider installing a pedestrian crossing between the two halves of SCC. Consideration should be given to relocation of the plants by the Hothouse entrance. These plants are impeding visitor access and are being damaged by visitors accessing the Hothouse. One of the first things seen by visitors using the car park is a rubbish skip, Consideration should be given to either relocating it or masking it in some way.
Healthy, Safe and Secure	Personal security within SCP is enhanced by the presence of uniformed staff, clear lines of site around the main pathways, partial CCTV coverage and a high volume of visitors. All facilities and equipment was in good order and safe to use. There was very little evidence of dog fouling seen on the day of judging. Some of the picnic benches were accessible for wheelchair users and there were special fishing pegs for disabled anglers. The new wall railing on the Terrace not only improved visitor safety but is in keeping with the period of the wall.	Consideration should be given for all new picnic tables to be DDA compliant. The pathways were becoming overhung by shrubbery and brambles in places. Consideration could also be given to installing trim trail equipment around the park.

<p>Clean and Well Maintained</p>	<p>The park was clean and virtually free of litter on the day of judging. Grounds, building and infrastructure maintenance was on the whole good. The horticulture was very good and the resident horticulturalist was very knowledgeable. The Angling Club takes a proactive role in the maintenance and development of the lake.</p>	<p>The footpath around the lake needs attention to make access around the lake better. The flora growing on the top of the wall on the Gothic Library needs removing to prevent root damage to the masonry. The rhododendrons and other tree growth around the Shell House needs cutting back. The access path to the Mirror feature on the Story Trail needs the overhanging brambles cutting back.</p>
<p>Sustainability</p>	<p>There are very good public transport links to the park. The park uses a peat free compost for all applications and pesticide use is minimal. Green waste is composted on site and wood waste is chipped and used as mulch. Arboricultural management, particularly for veteran trees, is very good and the new tree planting regime is excellent. Some of the picnic tables are made of recycled plastics. There is excellent use of cattle and pigs for grass and woodland management.</p>	<p>Although there are limited recycling facilities for visitor use, the judge considered this needed expanding to cover cans, glass and plastic bottles. Progress needs to be made with the proposed refurbishment of the underground water tank under the potting sheds that will enable rainwater to be used for irrigation. Consideration should be given to the installation of solar panels.</p>
<p>Conservation and Heritage</p>	<p>Heritage conservation and interpretation is very good within SCP. The restoration work on the Barn, Coach House and Gothic Library is excellent. The history of the Staunton family is interpreted excellently through panels, literature and guided walks led by Murray, one of the volunteers who has an excellent knowledge of the Staunton family history. Natural features together with flora and fauna conservation is very good. Dead wood is left standing wherever it is safe to do so. The wildlife classroom/workshop together with the wildlife area for use by school groups is excellent. The chainsaw carving of the dragon on the standing timber is first class.</p>	<p>The reconstruction of the shape of the Staunton Mansion in the grass is good but it would have been better to recreate the outline including ground floor rooms. This could also include interpretation panels that show old photographs of the house and its history. Progress should be made with the proposed links Staunton had with the tea trade. The judge's suggestion made in the desk assessment regarding wildlife conservation groups should be considered.</p>

Community Involvement	Community involvement at SCP is excellent. There is an enthusiastic and dedicated volunteer group that play a key role in park maintenance, fund raising and other activities such as the Staunton Festival. Adults with learning and other disabilities work on a daily basis in the Walled Garden and with the aid of the Beacon Community Partnership (BCP) and produce fruit and vegetables that are sold in the park shop. Caterpillar Crafts work with children of all abilities doing craft workshops and they also organise other group activities and parties. The management team also encourage ethnic minority groups to be involved in the park. The local Chinese community helped with some of the stained glass window designs in the Gothic Library. School involvement at SCP is exceptionally good with over 11,000 school visits per year. School children help design some of the stained glass windows in the Gothic Library. Mountain bikes are available for use by schools.	The volunteer group should consider forming a more formal Friends Group, although they obviously manage very well as they are.
Marketing	Marketing and promotion is exceptional at SCP. Educational information is found around the park on interpretation panels and in the information centre and wildlife workshop. The park also produce a leaflet and a booklet on SCP. Social media is very well used by both the management team and the volunteers.	
Management	The management team work very well with the volunteers and have developed some excellent partnerships with the angling club, BCP and Caterpillar Crafts.	The MP needs to relate better to the excellent work that is actually carried out within the park.

Additional Comments

The management team and staff together with the volunteers and the partners have worked exceptionally well to turn the park around from the previous years of failing to achieve the GF standard to what is now a valuable asset for both the community and HCC.