



Medway Greenspace Volunteers & Friends of Park Groups

Guide and Toolkit



(Friends of Rochester Churchfields and Esplanade Litter Pick)

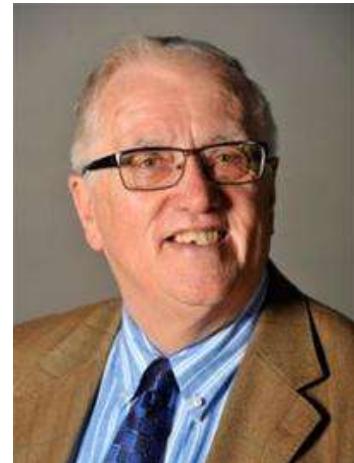
Greenspace Development (Regeneration)
Medway Council
Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham ME4 4TR

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Introduction

We welcome everyone who wants to get involved and make a difference in our parks and open spaces across Medway. Volunteers and Friends groups are crucial to the upkeep and development of our beautiful greenspaces. Local volunteers can give a fresh perspective and local people are often the best source of local knowledge. The benefits of volunteering are immense and help to create beautiful greenspaces that can be enjoyed by our residents and protect our nature and wildlife. Here in Medway, we are proud to have eight Green Flag awarded parks, this could not have been achieved without the hard work from our wonderful volunteers. Thank you to everyone involved!



Councillor Doe

This information pack is designed to guide members of the local community on how to set up and run a greenspace volunteer or 'Friends of' greenspace group in Medway.

Greenspaces within urban areas such as Medway are vital for both our physical and mental health and wellbeing as well as providing numerous other benefits from supporting wildlife to cooling the local microclimate. Medway is lucky to have a large network of greenspaces, covering 1,900 hectares, which includes parks, amenity open spaces, woodlands, country parks, recreation grounds, allotments and play areas. Whilst the council manages and maintains these greenspaces, our volunteer groups provide a level of responsibility for each site and a personal touch that is only possible from the local community.

Greenspace volunteer groups form when local people who are passionate about their local park or greenspace come together. Working in partnership with the council, groups work to protect, enhance, and improve their local park or greenspace.

If you have any questions or are interested in setting up a group, please do not hesitate to contact the Greenspace Partnership Officer.

Karen Francis, Greenspace Partnership Officer, Greenspace Development Team,

Medway Council, Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham, ME4 4TR

Tel: 01634 331255

Email: yournew@medway.gov.uk

Web: www.medway.gov.uk/volunteer

1. Medway's Greenspace Groups

There are two types of volunteer groups supporting in Medway's greenspaces:

1. **Task Based Volunteer groups** – groups based around completing practical tasks to improve the maintenance of a site.
2. **Constituted 'Friends of' greenspace groups** – constituted community groups who are consulted on with council decisions, organise community events, carry out task days, fundraise and promote their greenspace.

All greenspace groups can attend the **Medway Urban Greenspace Forum** which meets regularly to share experience and ideas and to discuss matters affecting parks at a more strategic level.

What are the benefits of joining or forming a greenspace group?

Medway Norse manage and maintains greenspaces, but community groups can provide support and local knowledge that benefits the greenspace. This can include, for example, reduced anti-social behaviour as the park is cared for locally and issues tend to be reported faster.

It can also benefit each member by providing opportunities to share ideas for improvements or activities, all whilst meeting new people with similar interests and benefitting health.



2. Supporting Greenspace Volunteers

Joining or setting up a new group may seem rather daunting, however, there is a great deal of advice, help and support available in Medway.

All volunteer groups work in partnership with Medway Council and the Council's Greenspace Development Team who support the work of each greenspace group.

Our Partnership Officer works with our volunteer groups to provide:

- **Advice** to groups on their activities and issues in the park.
- **Task day approvals**, agreeing works that can be undertaken and checking **risk assessments**.

- **Resources** including funding for activities and events and where possible, staff and equipment to assist with tasks and events.
- **Training** where funding allows including emergency first aid training for at least one member of each group.
- **Insurance** for groups via the Medway Urban Greenspace Forum (MUGs).
- **A link** to other council officers where appropriate for example the Animal Warden and Waste Teams.
- **A contact** to follow up issues raised by volunteer groups in relation to their greenspace.
- **Promotion** of the group and their activities through Medway Council Communications.

Insurance – Volunteers working on Medway Council owned land are insured under Medway Council's insurance policy, whilst working directly for Medway Council in connection with Medway Council Business. The insurance is provided via the Medway Urban Greenspace Forum and your group must be a member of the Forum to be covered. Groups must also follow the guidance set out in 'running a volunteer group' to ensure the activity itself and how it is run is covered by the insurance. If your group also works on private or trust land, you will need to discuss the issue of insurance with the appropriate landowner.

Templates – Template forms and examples are provided as part of this pack for Friends of group constitutions, meeting agendas, minutes, and task days forms. The Partnership Officer will support each group in the set-up process.

Medway Urban Greenspace Forum (MUGs)

The Medway Urban Greenspace Forum welcomes all green space groups working in Medway. The constituted Forum's mission is:



The Link with greenspaces Friends Groups, the Council and wider community.

The Place where knowledge and experience on greenspace-related issues can be shared.

The Support for the community to engage in greenspace protection and improvement.

The Forum supports our greenspace volunteer groups in various ways including assisting with networking and promotion, providing information and ideas exchange, seeking training opportunities and encouraging new groups.

The Forum provides a start-up grant of £100 for new Friends of groups to contribute towards initial activities and promotion. The MUGs committee also provide advice.

The Forum is managed by a committee of volunteers and two representatives from each constituted Friends of group may become members and stand for these positions. The Forum holds quarterly open meetings which provide feedback opportunities for groups and an opportunity to hear about the projects that Medway Council has been working on. Meetings regularly have guest speakers on topics relevant to our greenspaces.

For more information, please visit the Forum's website: <https://mugsforum.org/>

You can also follow the MUGs Forum on social media – Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Please refer to the website for links.

3. Establishing a Volunteer or 'Friends of' Group

To find out about existing greenspace volunteer and Friends of groups, please visit the Medway Council or MUGs Forum websites:

www.medway.gov.uk/volunteer

<https://mugsforum.org/volunteer-in-a-green-space/>

Groups meet regularly and are always keen for new members to attend, so if there is an existing group in your area, please do get in touch with them and join their next meeting to find out more.

The Council is also committed to supporting and helping to develop new 'Friends of' Park groups and if you would like to get involved with your local greenspace but there is not an existing group, we will support you in setting up a new group.

In the first instance, please contact the Partnership Officer by calling 01634 331255 or emailing yournew@medway.gov.uk

4. Setting Up a Task-based Volunteer Group

Our non-constituted volunteer groups are almost entirely based around undertaking practical task days to supporting a site's maintenance.

Task Days

Task days can be a range of activities depending on the greenspace's needs and the group's interests; examples include litter picking, tree planting, wildlife surveying and vegetation management tasks.

The frequency of task days will be decided by your group - e.g. weekly, monthly, or occasional task days as the group requires. Seasons and wildlife legislation may also need to be considered when planning.

All task days must be discussed and agreed with the Council in advance. Task day method statements and risk assessments must be submitted for approval a minimum of **one week** before any proposed activity to ensure that the Partnership Officer has time to review them, consult any other parties and request any edits before the day.

The group will need to appoint volunteer leaders to run task days and complete health and safety information. You may also wish to appoint other roles within the group such as who is going to bring equipment and hand tools, provide refreshments etc.

All task days require one volunteer to be a first aider. Please refer to section 5.



Friends of Rainham Rec 2021 - Bulb Planting Day

5. Setting Up a 'Friends of' Group

Why form a constituted 'Friends of' group?

Forming a constituted 'Friends of' park group allows a volunteer group to get significantly more involved in the management of their greenspace, with the following additional benefits to task day volunteer groups:

- An opportunity to 'have your say' - being a formally recognised group you can feedback views on the park and will be consulted on any proposed changes.
- Ability to raise funds for park improvements as the group can hold a bank account.
- Ability to organise park activities and events such as fun days and guided walks and to apply to the council for funding to support these.
- Formally becoming a member of the Medway Urban Greenspaces Forum. Refer to Section 2. Constituted groups can operate at many different levels in terms of activities undertaken. Individual participation can also be to a level to suit your circumstances, this may be just a paying member to support the group, offering to assist on task days and events, to becoming a committee member and guiding the activities of the group.

Stages to setting up a greenspace Friends of group:

There are four main stages in setting up a Friends of Park group:

1. Identify interested parties and like-minded people
2. Hold an initial meeting to share ideas
3. Formalise the group: Agree the groups aims and constitution
4. Hold inaugural AGM and elect a committee

1. Identify interested parties

The aim of this stage is to gather interest in your potential new group from your local community. There are various ways to do this:

- Speak to the Partnership Officer, they may have contacts for members of the local community that have already shown interest in your greenspace and can also help link to existing local groups using the park such as walking groups and sports clubs.
- The MUGs Forum can help promote the idea for the new group via their website and social media.
- Use social media, either setting up a page for the potential group or sharing the idea on local community groups.
- Display posters in the park and at local venues such as supermarkets and libraries. The Council can support with printing and laminating.
- Contact other local community groups that may have an interest in the park e.g., mother and baby groups and local history groups.
- Put a post in local newsletters.

2. Initial Meeting

Once you have established interest in the group, an initial open public meeting will need to be arranged. The Partnership Officer can support this stage by:

- helping source a venue for a meeting or supporting an online meeting

- providing a sample agenda (see appendix A)
- attending the meeting to outline the role of Friends groups to those attending
- providing some background on the park and any current projects

This first meeting will provide an opportunity to discuss issues and explore ideas on what people would like to achieve by setting up a Friends group. This may include things you would like to do, issues you would like addressed and projects you might like to develop. We recommend that a working group is set up to draft the groups aims and objectives and review and complete the template constitution.

3. Formalising the Friends Group: Aims and Constitution

A constitution is a formal agreement to explain how the group will be managed and will also allow the group to hold funds. This will ensure that while individuals may change over time, the group can remain, following the principles set out in the agreement.

Medway Council provides a template constitution (Appendix B) which can be adapted to the greenspace and the group's individual requirements.

If you would like to see some sample constitutions from existing Friends Of groups, please contact the Partnership officer or the Medway Urban Greenspace Forum who can provide these.

Items that will need to be discussed:

- Aims and objectives (the template constitution includes a recommended aim and sample objectives)
- Membership categories and if there will be a charge (see below)
- Size of management committee and any additional roles

4. Electing a Committee

The constitution will outline the requirements for your committee which will need to be appointed at your first AGM inaugural meeting. Friends should have a minimum of three members on the management committee, a chairperson, a treasurer, and a secretary. There are also other roles that can be flexible between groups.

The role of the committee is to manage the group's activities, ensuring it abides by the constitution and are answerable to the wider membership. However, work should be shared out across members of the group.

5. Summary of Committee Roles:

Chairperson The chairperson chairs the group's meetings and represents the group to the outside world. This includes agreeing meeting agendas and chairing meetings; liaising with Medway Council, other organisations, and groups; and ensuring the group fulfil their responsibilities according to their constitution and the laws of the land.

Treasurer	The treasurer oversees the financial management of the group. Basic bookkeeping, paying any bills, invoicing where appropriate, managing the group's bank account, preparing, and managing the group's budgets and possibly overseeing or coordinating fund raising.
Secretary	The secretary is the administrator for the group. The role includes organising the group's meetings (organising the venue and provisions, setting the agenda with the chairperson, invitations and circulating the agenda, minute taking, typing minutes and circulation), checking the outcome of the actions agreed at meetings are progressed as required and managing the group's correspondence (writing letters, organising mailings etc.).

6. Other possible roles:

Vice-chairperson - A Vice-chairperson is sometimes appointed to assist the chair in their roles and responsibilities. They can step in for the chairperson if they are unable to attend for any reason.

Vice or Membership Secretary - It is often advisable to have an assistant secretary, as the role can be wide ranging.

Marketing/Comms/Social Media Officer – Someone to lead on communications for the group. They may run the website, social media sites, prepare posters or leaflets etc.

Fundraising officer – To lead on any fundraising and ensuring the funds are used for the reasons proposed. This may be something required in the future if the group is keen to seek funding for works in the park.

Activities Officer – To lead on organising Friends activities or events in the park.

The work involved with being a committee member can vary depending on what the group is hoping to achieve. It does not need to be time consuming; committees tend to meet four times a year.



Friends of Horsted Valley- Initial Meeting, January 2020

7. Inaugural Annual General Meeting

Once the working group has drafted aims, objectives, and a constitution, these need to be taken to an inaugural meeting of the Friends, their first Annual General Meeting (AGM).

Please refer to the templates for a sample agenda for this meeting.

Remember, someone will need to agree to take the minutes of the meeting which will be kept as a formal record.

After the first AGM, there will be some key actions for the new committee:

- Hold first committee meeting.
- Agree a way to maintain the membership list bearing in mind GDPR laws (advice can be provided on this).
- Insurance – formally join the Medway Urban Greenspace Forum.
- Organise a bank account – confirm two or three signatories (usually chair and treasurer). Advice can be sought from MUGs on bank accounts used by other groups.
- Update the wider membership with an email to explain the next steps of the group.

6. Running a Volunteer or Friends of Group

Once a Friends group is up and running, there will be several aspects to consider helping support the running of a successful group. These are summarised below.

Planning for the year ahead

At the start of each year, it is recommended that the group agrees its plans for the year ahead and that these are discussed at the AGM. The plans could take the form of an activity programme of which a sample of can be found in the appendix G. The programme should be a working document and can be amended with agreement by the committee.

Planning in this way can ensure activities are in line with the groups aims and objectives and within their capacity. Activities may be one off or may be repeated throughout the year or annually.

Activities you may want to include in your plan include:

- Meetings
- Task Days
- Events
- Promotional activities

Meetings

Meetings can be held in person or online using Microsoft Teams or Zoom. The MUGs Forum holds a Zoom account that groups are invited to use.

There will be two main types of meeting, open Friends meetings and committee meetings.

Various locations can be used for meetings in person and venues are often provided free of charge to local volunteer community groups. Examples of venues used by groups include Scouts halls, meeting rooms in community centres, rooms in pubs or the council offices. There is no obligation to use only these examples, any venue can be explored if the committee deems appropriate.

Health and safety

Health and safety is an important consideration whenever the group meet in person. For meetings, this will just be the case of ensuring the meeting is held in an accessible location with no hazards such as trip hazards and that attendees are made aware at the start of the meeting of the nearest emergency exit. This information is provided by the venue owner.

Health and Safety is a key consideration on all task days. To address this there is a requirement for method statements and risk assessments to be put in place and signed off by the council before the task day. Each group will have a task day leader responsible for completing this documentation.

Method Statements – the purpose of this document is to outline what the task is, where in the park it will be taking place, any equipment needed and considerations such as if arrangements need to be put in place for bags of litter to be collected.

Risk Assessments – These are designed to ensure all the potential risks in relation to a task have been thought through. It will list the controls in place and any residual risks. If the residual risk is too great, the task may need to be amended or adapted to avoid this risk. Any tolerable residual risks are taken forward to a summary document to be held by the task leader on the day. Each residual risk will have a person allocated to monitor it. Please send these to The Partnership Officer for review.

Medway Council requires that each task day is attended by someone with an Emergency First Aid at Work qualification and that a first aid box is present. The task day templates also include an accident or near miss reporting form. Any accident or near miss must be reported back to the Partnership Officer by the Task leader. These are kept as a formal record and allow for the safety of tasks to be reviewed.

Please refer to Appendix E for template documents. If you would like to see examples of method statements or risk assessments, please contact the Partnership Officer.

Training

First Aid – Free Emergency First Aid at Work (1 day training) is provided by MUGS to a minimum of two members of each group. Training for further members can be requested and this will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. The training provides a three-year qualification following which it must be renewed.

Task based training – If a group would like guidance on a particular task such as planting, please approach the Partnership Officer for guidance.

Knowledge based training – As and when free training opportunities arise, these are promoted via the Partnership Officer's mailing list and the MUGS Forum. Examples include Bumblebee identification and i-tree survey. Volunteers may even have knowledge skills they would like to share.

Community events

Friends groups may arrange small community events in their greenspaces. These can include community fun days, picnics, guided walks, and community clean up days.

Please refer to Section 8 - Events below for further details.

Volunteer data

Medway Council collects data on the number of volunteers involved in volunteering in greenspaces and the hours spent volunteering each month. Once a group is set up, a request for this data will be sent at the beginning of each month for the previous month. One member of the committee can collate this. Volunteers are counted for each task they get involved with, from task days to Friends group administration.

Comms/Promotion of group

It is important to consider how the group will be advertised and promoted within the local community. This will help the group to gain new members and can also lead to other support such as the involvement of local businesses.

There are various aspects that can be considered:

- Logo
- Website
- Social Media
- Mailing list- newsletters
- Medway Council Comms
- MUGs Comms
- Press releases
- Local publications e.g. the Net
- On site noticeboards
- Medway Voluntary Action – <https://www.mva.org.uk>

The MUGS Forum provides guidance on setting up and using websites and social media accounts. Please refer to their website - <https://mugsforum.org/friends-toolbox/>



7. Events

Friends of groups can organise and run community events in their greenspaces.

If you would like to hold an event, the first thing you should do is contact the Partnership Officer to discuss your idea. Advice will be given on if the event can take place and the aspects to consider.

Key steps in organising an event:

1. Discuss with the Partnership Officer and request funding if needed.
2. Appoint the main event organiser for the group and select a date.
3. Complete a park booking/hire form – Medway Norse booking form.
4. Prepare an Event Plan and gain approvals – see Appendix F for template.
5. Produce a Risk Assessment and gain approvals – see Appendix E for template.
6. Arrange first aid and decide on stewards.
7. Make any bookings for equipment, entertainment, refreshments etc.
8. Advertise.

Funding

A small budget is held by the Partnership Officer for Friends of groups events, typically £250-£500 per group but this can vary depending on the number of groups wishing to hold events that year. The funding becomes available at the start of the financial year and groups are given until the end of April to submit a request for funding. You may also find that local businesses may be keen to provide sponsorship of your event or support such as provide free materials or fund a particular item.



Friends of Broomhill- Make a Bird Box event.

Booking/Hire Form

When organising an event in our greenspaces, the event needs to be booked in to ensure that it does not clash with any other planned event or activity and to check that it is appropriate for the park in terms of aspects such as noise and light generated. Medway Norse manage the park booking system and the booking form can be obtained by emailing Medway Norse on Medway-Countryside-Service@ncsgrp.co.uk or following https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200332/organising_an_event/233/organise_an_event

Event Plan

The event plan is designed to outline the aim and location of the event, who the key contacts will be and their roles and responsibilities, communication on the day, access requirements, welfare arrangements, medical arrangements, list deliveries and contractors due on site and outline the running order for the day. It should also include contingency planning.

A template for the Event Plan can be found in Appendix F and support can be given in completing the document.

Risk Assessment

As with task days, the risk assessment is designed to ensure that all the potential risks in relation to the event have been thought through. It will list the controls in place and any residual risks. See Section 7, Health and Safety and Appendix E.

First Aid

Depending on the size of the event, we recommend that external first aiders are booked to attend as they have the capacity to deal with the larger numbers of people at events. St Johns Ambulance or other local first aid providers. These should be booked at the earliest opportunity to ensure they are available on the day.

Event Stewards

Event stewards will be needed on the day to guide and support the event set up and set down and to monitor issues during the event itself and be a point of contact for the public. Depending on the size of the event, these roles can be filled by members of the Friends group, or a request can be made to book recommended Event Stewards (charges will apply).

Welfare/Toilets

Depending on the size of your event you may need to consider toilets and baby changing facilities. The council holds contacts for suppliers of porta-loos and can support with obtaining quotes if needed. Baby changing can be provided in a porta-loo or set up in a gazebo. NCT Medway may be able to support a larger event by providing a baby changing facility manned by volunteers.

Other items

Things to consider:

- Booking gazebos or marquees – The MUGs forum hold 6 small gazebos that can be borrowed for free for Friends events. The council also holds contacts for suppliers of small marquees and can support with obtaining quotes if needed.

- Tables and chairs – members of the group may hold folding tables and chairs that can be used at the event. The council also holds contacts for suppliers and can support with obtaining quotes if needed.
- Entertainment – Face painters, Children's entertainers, music, stalls. All entertainers will need to hold public liability insurance. We would also ask that any entertainer for children has a current DBS certificate. This will depend on the focus of the event.
- Refreshments – There will not be an electricity or water supply in the parks, and we do not allow petrol generators. You may want to consider mobile refreshment vans that hold appropriate insurance and certificates.



Friends of Hillyfields- Storyteller at the 10 Year of the Play Area Celebration, 2018

Useful contacts

- Events forms- medway-countryside-service@ncsgrp.co.uk
- Requests for litter/fly tip pick up-norse.helpdesk@norsegrou.co.uk
- Simon Curry- Chair of MUGs Forum- mugsforum@yahoo.com
- General greenspaces advice outside the volunteer/friends group- yournew@medway.gov.uk
- All general volunteer group advice- yournew@medway.gov.uk

8. Funding

Aside from MUGs Forum start-up funds and membership fees, funding or donations may also be available for some activities such as the event fund from the Partnership Officer.

A group may choose to fundraise for particular projects or activities that it wants to deliver, for example tree planting or new interpretation. Any proposed activities in the greenspace will need to be initially agreed and discussed with the Council before fundraising can be progressed.

There are several ways that groups can raise funds:

- Fundraising events
- Donations
- Sponsorship from local businesses
- Applying for funding from external funders

Some examples of organisations who provide funding:

- Medway Lottery
- Woodland Trust
- Local shops/supermarket Community Funds e.g. Co-op, Tesco, Wilkos
- National Lottery Community Fund
- Kent Community Foundation

If you are interested in applying for external funding, please contact the Partnership Officer who will be able to provide advice.



Volunteer Group - Hedge Whip Planting at Cliffe Road, Strood, October 2019

9. Friends of Group Briefing Note

The purpose of this document is to outline the roles and responsibilities of Medway Council, and its partner, Medway Norse, who undertake the grounds maintenance in parks and open spaces and the Friends of Group(s) who are established as independent voluntary local user groups with the purpose of being the principal forum for discussing views about an area such as community woodlands, parks, playgrounds etc.

Greenspace Development officers will:

1. Carry out regular meetings with Medway Norse to discuss park development issues and any contract performance concerns or additional works.
2. Have regular meetings with Friends of groups.
3. Report issues such as graffiti on Medway Council website.
4. Support existing Friends Groups.
5. Support new Friends Groups setting up.

Friends of Groups

Primary aims are to voluntarily work to maintain, improve and often promote a park, green open space or community building. Making a positive contribution to a place and typically carrying out the following tasks:

- To carry out practical work to improve a site with other members of the community, including weeding, pruning, litter picking, and anything else required to keep the site clean and safe
- To organise or fundraise for improvements to a site
- To engage with the community within the area and promote the use of the site

The Council's and Norse commitment to the Friends' groups includes:

- attending a minimum of two meetings per year, and an extra two site walkabouts
- consulting the group on all matters that affect them
- technical advice or 'in-kind' resources, where feasible, to support activities beneficial to the area organised/supported by the park friends' group.

The Norse contractors responsibility is:

- Grass – cutting usually starts February or March, weather dependant, the scope is to cut the grass to a good standard and ensure it does not get too long. It is not done on a specific date.
- Shrubs / Bedding areas – Seasonal Bedding is weeded monthly, and the areas replenished in May * October, usually the 2nd or 3rd week of the month and is dependent on supply and plant growth.
- Shrub areas – are likely to be attended to on alternate months, the scope is to ensure the areas are weeded and maintained regularly.
- Litter bins – these are emptied regularly; some parks have alternate days some are daily, and this is based on the usage of the bin. There is scope to change this, but it this would need a

justification for change such as park increase use and bins are regularly full (or empty and reduce frequency.)

- Litter in general – shrub bed areas are only litter picked when the team attend to undertake horticultural or grass works.
- Litter in wooded areas – this are not cleansed regularly due to lack of capacity, however each winter the grounds team will attend to wooded areas noting to have issues.
- **Play areas**
 - equipment inspections and maintenance – this is inspected regularly, and repairs noted and carried out as needed. Please do call Medway council 333333 or use the web site to report any defects
 - hard surfaces / moss – these are generally treated each winter
 - equipment repainting – this is not included in the contract and is done on a site-by-site basis and agreed with the council development team.
- Trees – all Medway Council trees are inspected every 3 years, and the council policy is to retain healthy trees and only undertake works to the trees if there are arboriculture reasons to do so. On the occasion where the tree has significant defects and require felling, then the team will plot the site for replanting. It may not be replanted in the same year of the fell.

10. What to do if there are problems in your park/greenspace

- From time to time, you may experience problems in your park/greenspace, therefore we have formed this guide of what to do.
- Firstly, it is essential you make an assessment of the seriousness of the problem/issue. If you conclude that it is causing **immediate danger** to yourself, or any other member of the public then please **call 999**.

Contact Details

Post	Contact - Name	Contact Number / Email
Partnership Officer (Greenspace Development), Medway Council	Karen Francis	karen.francis@medway.gov.uk
Fires (e.g. fires that are started intentionally, as a 'campfire' or a disposable barbecue discarded, which may quickly cause damage and spread if not extinguished properly)	Kent Police	Call firestoppers 08001695558 Or Call 101 or 999
Abandoned vehicle	Medway Council	Call 01634 333333 or online: https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200176/report_a_problem
Graffiti: State whether offensive or non-offensive	Medway Council	Report via the council web site https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200176/report_a_problem/395/report_graffiti
Fly Tipping	Medway Council	Report via the council web site https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200176/report_a_problem/394/report_fly-tipping
Reporting a general problem in a park or greenspace	Medway Council	Report via the council web site https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200176/report_a_problem
Misuse of fireworks, nuisance noise, inappropriate or rowdy behaviour	Kent Police	Call: 101 or report online https://www.kent.police.uk/ro/report/ocr/af/how-to-report-a-crime

Damaged or dangerous tree(s) inc. causing an obstruction	Medway Council	<p>If you are reporting a hazardous or dangerous tree, please call 01634-333333</p> <p>Report other tree issues online</p> <p>https://eforms.medway.gov.uk/ufs_live/LE_TREEHAND.eb?ebd=0&ebz=7_1620739162783</p>
Litter in the greenspace / park	Medway Council	<p>Report via the council web site</p> <p>https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200176/report_a_problem/397/report_litter</p>
Rough sleepers using the greenspace / park	Medway Council	<p>Report via the council web site</p> <p>https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200151/housing_advice/82/at_risk_of_homelessness/5</p>
Unauthorised camping in the greenspace / park	Kent Police	<p>Call: 101 or report online</p> <p>https://www.kent.police.uk/ro/report/ocr/af/how-to-report-a-crime</p> <p>For an abandoned camp, report to Medway council online:</p> <p>https://eforms.medway.gov.uk/ufs_live/LE_GREENHAND.eb?ebd=0&ebz=8_1620739801852</p>
Stray dogs & dog fouling in the greenspace / park	Medway Council	<p>Stray dogs Report via the council web site</p> <p>https://eforms.medway.gov.uk/ufs_live/LE_DOGS.eb?ebd=0&ebz=1_1619424757120</p> <p>Dog fouling Report via the council web site</p> <p>https://eforms.medway.gov.uk/ufs_live/LE_DOGS.eb?ebd=0&ebz=1_1619424757120</p>

To report issues for repair / service in a greenspace/park	Medway Norse	Via the council report it on the web site https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200225/report_a_road_problem/556/grass_cuttings_hedge_trimming_and_shrubs#:~:text=Go%20to%20the%20online%20form,verge%20condition%20or%20vegetation%20condition
Drug dealing in the greenspace / park	Kent Police	Call: 101 or report online https://www.kent.police.uk/ro/report/ocr/af/how-to-report-a-crime
Nuisance drinking in the greenspace / park	Kent Police	Call: 101

Let Medway Council know what's happening:

The main contact at Medway Council for Greenspaces Volunteers is the Partnership Officer, **Karen Francis**. Please email Karen if you experience any problems within your greenspace/park, but only after you have reported as shown above, just to keep her informed.

How to find your Kent Police Community Safety Unit:

The Community Safety Unit is a group of local police officers, PCSO's with a Sergeant and Inspector dedicated to serving your community. The team is made up of officers based in your area, supported by additional officers from the wider area.

- Online – go to Kent Police website link: <https://www.kent.police.uk/a/your-area/>
- Enter the postcode of your greenspace/park.
- Scroll down the page until you see 'Introducing your Community safety Unit' and select 'Your team'.



- You can then select the 'Contact us' tab:



- Scroll down and select the '**I'd like to contact an officer directly**' tab.
- Click 'Start' and enter the details required.

Local Councillors:

If you have concerns about your greenspace/park then your local councillors may be able to help. To find your local councillors, please visit Medway Council wards list:

<https://democracy.medway.gov.uk/mgMemberIndex.aspx?FN=WARD&VW=LIST&PIC=0>

Once you have located your councillors you can find their contact details here:

<https://democracy.medway.gov.uk/mgCommitteeMailingList.aspx?ID=0>

11. Case Studies

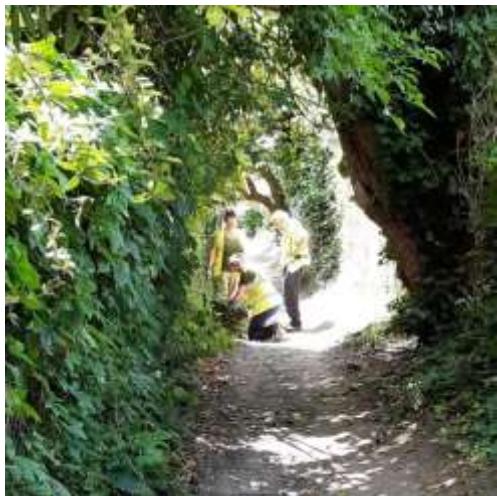
Friends of Broomhill



Inaugurated in May 2007, Friends of Broomhill is a charity dedicated to the improvement and enrichment of Broomhill Park. They own the Old Orchard, a nine-acre site, adjacent to the park. They hold regular task days through the year where volunteers meet and get involved in clearing and cutting back along pathways, planting new bulbs, shrubs, and wildflowers. They work in partnership with Medway Council to enable the park to be 'Strood's Hidden Gem'. Broomhill Park received a prestigious Green Flag award for the 10th consecutive year during 2021, a fantastic accolade! Friends of Broomhill are delighted to have received 2 awards for 2021 from South & South East in Bloom – An 'Outstanding' in The Community Gardening Category and 'Silver' in the Conservation Area Category. We are extremely thankful to the volunteers who work throughout the year to maintain and improve Broomhill

Park and the Old Orchard, their hard work and dedication has been rewarded.

Friends of Watts Meadow



Watts Meadow is a beautiful haven close to the heart of Rochester, between Ethelbert Road and Priestfields. It has had a varied history: there was at one time a farm on the land, with cattle being grazed there. The land was transferred to the council to ensure that it remained an open space for the people of Rochester. During WW2 there was a 'dig for victory' drive and some of the land was allocated for allotments.

Friends of Watts Meadow aims are to sustain Watt's Meadow for the benefit of the people of Rochester; conserve its natural environment – including maintaining the balance between woodland and open space as far as practicable and protecting its flora and fauna – especially

the native species; oppose any loss of amenity by further development; and encourage the goodwill and involvement of the local community.

The committee meets monthly to share ideas and plan activities. These cover a mix of tasks, including keeping paths clear, litter picking, and they have recently started more formal nature recording.

12. Appendices – Templates

Please contact the Partnership officer for separate documents.

A. Sample Agenda for Initial Meeting

SAMPLE AGENDA

Initial Meeting to Establish the Friends of xxx Park

Date, time
Location

Refreshments available on arrival

1. Welcome and apologies
2. Introduction by chair – how this meeting came about
3. What are ‘Friends of Park’ groups
4. Initial hopes and ideas for the group
5. Formalising the group
6. Promotion of the new group
7. Any Other Business
8. Date, time, and venue of next meeting - this would most likely be the inaugural AGM

B. Template Constitution

Template Constitution

Medway Council provides a template constitution which can be adapted to the greenspace and the group's individual requirements. Within the constitution there are some standardised elements that must be included for the group to be recognised by Medway Council. However, there is still a lot of flexibility for groups to adapt the document to their specific requirements.

This model constitution reflects recommended good practice and is also based on information from long running Friends of groups.

If you would like to see some sample constitutions from existing Friends Of groups, please contact the Partnership officer or the Medway Urban Greenspace Forum who can provide these.

CONSTITUTION

The Friends of [insert park name]

1. Name:

The name of the group shall be 'The Friends of [insert park name]' hereinafter referred to as 'the Friends'

2. Scope

The area of [insert park name] park/greenspace as defined by map [insert map reference].

3. Aim:

To protect, enhance and promote [insert park name] as a greenspace for the use, enjoyment and wellbeing of all members of the community and visitors

4. Objectives:

Specific objects shall be to:

- a. Promote and encourage the healthy and safe use and enjoyment of [insert park name], while protecting and enhancing its historical and ecological interest.
- b. Encourage and support wider community participation in the park and to foster community spirit and pride.
- c. Work in partnership with Medway Council to assist with current and developing projects that will improve the park
- d. Act as a voice for local residents and visitors to the park by working with Medway Council and other agencies to enhance the range of facilities provided by [insert park name] for the enjoyment of all members of the public.
- e. Work in partnership with Medway Council and other similar groups to exchange information and advice, and to seek external funding for projects to improve the park and the facilities and features within it.

5. Membership:

- a. Membership of the Friends shall be open to all who are interested in helping the group to achieve its aim and objectives and are willing to abide by the group's constitution.
- b. There shall be three categories of membership:

- Individual (annual) or Life – those aged eighteen years and over.
- Affiliate – Clubs, groups and societies which use the park/greenspace and local businesses that are interested in supporting the aims of The Friends. Each club, group or business shall appoint one individual person for nomination as a member to represent it and vote on its behalf at meetings.
- Junior – Any person under the age of eighteen years of age. Junior members have no voting rights.

c. Every member shall have one vote at general meetings with the exception of Junior members. Councillors and Council Officers are not permitted to vote or stand for committee positions of the group unless in a personal capacity as a local resident.

d. Persons interested in becoming a member of the Friends shall apply to the Secretary with their name and email. In exceptional circumstances, the Committee shall have the power to refuse membership to an applicant where it is considered such membership would be detrimental to the aims, purposes, OR activities of the group. Membership shall run from **1st April to 31st March** for all members.

e. The rates of subscription (if any) shall be determined by the committee and approved by the majority of members present at an Annual or Extraordinary General Meeting.

f. No member may use the name or any meeting of the Friends for political or commercial purposes.

g. Termination of membership: Any member may resign their membership. The committee may unanimously terminate or suspend the membership of any members if, in its opinion, his/her conduct is prejudicial to the interests and objects of the group. The individual member or representative of the member organisation (as the case may be) shall have the right to be heard by the Committee before the final decision is made. There shall be a right of appeal to an independent arbitrator appointed by mutual agreement.

6. Management:

- a. The Friends shall be administered by a Management Committee of not less than three members and not more than **ten** members. The committee shall be elected at the group's Annual General Meeting.
- b. The Committee shall be made up of members entitled to voting rights.
- c. The Committee shall consist of a Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and such other officers or general members as the group deem necessary. The committee is empowered to co-opt additional non-voting members at any time if a specific need arises, who may stand as a voting member at the next AGM.
- d. Committee members will serve until the next Annual General Meeting. The term of office for chairperson shall not exceed 3 years from the AGM at which they were first appointed, and an individual may not serve more than 6 consecutive years as an Officer in any combination of roles, but these can be extended with the agreement of the AGM in exceptional circumstances. A gap of at least 1 year is required to show a break of consecutive years.
- e. The Committee may set up sub-groups and work parties as deemed necessary who shall be accountable to the committee.
- f. A member of the management committee shall cease to hold office if he or she:

- (a) ceases to be a member of Friend of [insert park name];
- (b) becomes incapable by reason of mental disorder, illness or injury of managing and administering his or her own affairs.
- (c) resigns from the management committee by notice to the Friend of [insert park name];
- (d) is absent without permission of the management committee from all their meetings held within a period of six consecutive months and the management committee resolve that his or her office be vacated.

7. Meetings

- a. The Management Committee shall meet at least four times a year, one of which shall be the Annual General Meeting (AGM). The AGM and at least one other meeting each year will be open to all members however all meetings may be open to all members if deemed appropriate.
- b. At least three Committee Members must be present for the Committee meeting to take place.
- c. Notice of meetings shall be advertised in writing to members at least 21 days prior to an Annual General Meeting or open meeting and at least 7 days prior to any other meeting. Notice shall include date, time and location of the meeting together with an agenda, minutes of previous meetings and any reports or papers. Members must be given the opportunity to request agenda items.
- d. Voting at meetings shall be by show of hands on a majority basis. If there is a tied vote then the chairperson shall have a second vote.
- e. All meetings must keep proper minutes and be made available to any interested party. The committee shall be always accountable to the members.

Annual General Meeting (AGM)

- f. There shall be an inaugural meeting followed by an AGM every year thereafter, at which the Committee will report on its work and present the last financial year's accounts.
- g. The AGM shall elect a new Committee for the next year, with all nominations proposed and seconded before being put forward for election.
- h. The quorum for Annual General Meeting shall be a minimum of eight persons, of which no more than four shall be committee members, or for groups with no more than 15 members, at least one third of the membership.
- i. In the event of the AGM having to be postponed or cancelled for reasons beyond the control of the Committee, Committee members will remain in post until a new Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) can be held.
- j. An EGM, open to all members, may be called at any time by the Chair or Secretary or at the written request of not less than seven members. The secretary shall arrange for such a meeting to take place within 21 days.

8. Finance:

- a. The Friends shall operate a bank account with a named bank or building society. Signatories to the bank account shall be the Treasurer and two other Committee members. Any two of these signatories shall be required to sign each cheque or authorise other business from this bank account.

- b. In furtherance of the objectives of the group, the management committee shall have power to obtain, collect and receive money or funds by way of contributions, donations, grants and any other lawful method.
- c. Any money obtained by the group shall be used only to further the aims of the group and the Management Committee will ensure that the group stays within the budget.
- d. No payment shall be made to any member except the repayment of reasonable expenses properly incurred by him or her when acting on behalf of the Friends.
- e. The Annual Accounts shall be presented to the Annual General Meeting and shall record all income and all expenditure for the annual accounting period. This period shall start from 1 April and run for 12 calendar months.

9. Amendments to the Constitution

- a. Any changes to this constitution may only be made at either the Annual General Meeting or an Extraordinary General Meeting.
- b. Proposals for amendments to this constitution, or dissolution must be delivered to the secretary in writing. The secretary in conjunction with all other officers shall then decide on the date of an EGM meeting to discuss such proposals, giving at least four weeks clear notice.
- c. Any changes to this constitution must be agreed by at least two thirds of those members present and voting at any general meeting.

10. Dissolution:

- a. The group may be wound up at any time if agreed by two thirds of those members present and voting. A Special Public Meeting shall be set up to discuss the matter and make decisions.
- b. Any assets shall be returned to their providers, if they require it, or shall be passed to another group with similar aims.
- c. Minutes of the final meeting must be sent to all members.

Adoption of the constitution

This constitution was adopted as the Constitution of 'The Friends of [insert park name]' by the members present at the General Meeting held on _____

SIGNED by the following two committee members who were present at the said meeting

Signed: _____

Signed: _____

(Chair)

Name: _____

Name: _____

(Printed)

Date: _____

C. **Sample Agenda for AGM**

Friends of xxx Meeting

Sample Inaugural AGM AGENDA

Date, time
Location

Refreshments available on arrival

1. Welcome and apologies
2. Introduction by chair
3. News and updates following the inception meeting e.g. set up of Facebook page etc.
4. Agreeing aims and objectives and how the group will be managed – Presentation and proposal to adopt the constitution
5. Election of Officers – the committee
6. Plans, ideas and aspirations for the group
7. Any Other Business
8. Date, time and venue of next meeting

D. Sample Minutes

Friends of xxx Meeting

Sample Minutes of Meeting

Date, time
Location

1. Attendees
2. Minutes
3. Actions to take forward
4. AOB

E. Task Day Templates (Method Statement and Risk Assessment)

TASK/ACTIVITY METHOD STATEMENT

Friends of Xx Park

Task coordinator/leader:

Task/Activity Date:

Task/Activity Time:

Task Aim and Location: (attach marked up map if necessary)

Who will be attending:
e.g. committee members, Friends members, general public

Tools, Materials or Equipment needed:

Task Methodology:
Consider meeting point, if working in pairs/groups, re-grouping at end, dealing with arisings etc.

TASK/ACTIVITY RISK ASSESSMENT

Friends of Xx Park

Location and address:

Task/Activity:

Activity Date:

Assessor:
during task/activity:

Co-ordinator

First Aid Provisions:

Date of assessment:

Risk Estimator:

The following table shows a method for estimating risk levels and for deciding whether risks are tolerable. Tolerable means that a risk has been reduced to the lowest level that is reasonably practicable.

	Slightly harmful	Harmful	Extremely Harmful
Highly Unlikely	Trivial risk	Tolerable risk	Moderate risk
Unlikely	Tolerable risk	Moderate risk	Substantial risk
Likely	Moderate Risk	Substantial risk	Intolerable risk

- Trivial Risk: No action required.
- Tolerable Risk: No additional controls required. Monitor to ensure controls maintained.
- Moderate Risk: Avoid risk if possible. Otherwise, efforts should be made to reduce risk further as far as reasonably practicable. Where a moderate risk is associated with extremely harmful consequences, further assessment is necessary to establish more precisely the likelihood of harm.
- Substantial Risk: Work should not be undertaken. Do not proceed unless risk can be reduced.
- Intolerable Risk: Work should not be undertaken.

HAZARDS IDENTIFIED	PERSONS AT RISK (tick all that apply)				EXISTING CONTROLS	SEVERITY OF HARM		LIKELIHOOD/PROBABILITY		RISK LEVEL & ACTION TO CONTROL RISK
	Volunteers	Young	General	Others?		Slightly	Harmful	Extremely	Likely	
EXAMPLE										
<i>Litter</i>										
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Cuts from sharp objects such as cans and glass</i> - <i>Sharp/rusty edges</i> 										
<i>Needles</i>										
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Risk of needle stick injury from hypodermic needles leading to hepatitis</i> 										
<i>Animal faeces</i>										
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Tetanus</i> - <i>Toxoplasmosis</i> 										
<i>Plants</i>										
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Ingestion</i> - <i>allergic reactions</i> - <i>poisonous</i> - <i>flicking or falling branches</i> - <i>thorns and stings.</i> 										
<i>Insect</i>										
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Stings</i> 										
<i>Dogs</i>										
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Bites</i> - <i>Scaring people</i> 										

<i>Abusive behaviour</i>												
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Verbal abuse</i> - <i>Physical abuse</i> 												
<i>Weather</i>												
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Heavy rain</i> - <i>Slipping on wet surfaces</i> - <i>Cold</i> - <i>Onset of extreme weather while on site e.g. heavy rain, sleet</i> 												

SUMMARY ACTION SHEET

COMMENTS / ACTION REQUIRED	TIMESCALE	PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR ACTION
<i>Advance Weather check</i>		
<i>Pre-task talk to highlight H&S risks or potential hazards associated with task</i>		
<i>Toolbox talk- demonstration of safe use of any tools or equipment</i>		
<i>Monitor controls are maintained.</i>		
<i>Leader to stay aware of dogs and people approaching the group.</i>		
<i>Leader and tutor to monitor weather and stop activity if necessary.</i>		
SIGNED:		DATE:

F. Event Plan Temple

Name of group

Name of event

EVENT PLAN

Date & time: xxxxxx

Address: xxxxxxxxxxx

Summary of Event:

The event is being arranged by xxxxxxxx. The aim is to encourage families and groups of people to come to xxxxxxxxxxxx.

Activities proposed (bullet points)

- Xxxxxx
-

Access: Vehicle Access via xxxxxxxx

Pedestrian access via xxxxxxxxxxx

Key Contacts:

Event Coordinator 1 (Friends of xxxx): Name, Mobile no: xxxxxx

Event Coordinator 2 (Friends of xxxx): Name, Mobile no: xxxxxx

Sports Event Coordinator: Name, Mobile no: xxxxxx

Stewards/Helpers: Names of all

Scout Hut: Name, Mobile no: xxxxxx

Roles/responsibilities

- Arrival of **food/drink vans** to be managed by xxxxxxxx
- Toilets to be managed by xxxxx
- Site set up: Friends of xxxxxxxx
- Any other activities managed by xxxxx
- Ensuring site is left clean at the end of the day managed by Friends of xxxx.

Communication:

- Communication between coordinators and stewards/helpers will be via **mobile ???**
- Communication between coordinators and public will be xxxx (megaphone & PA system?).

Welfare Arrangements

- The public toilet in the xxxxxxxx accessible to the public. Cleaning and ensure it functions will be done before event by xxxxxxxx
- Stewards as point of contact for public: *Friends gazebo as base point?*
- Hand sanitizer will be available at xxxx for the public to use.

Medical Arrangements

- To be provided by xxxxxxxx and will be located xxxxxxxx.

Traffic Management

Any vehicles going into the site? How will they be managed?

Where do the public park?

Crowd Management

How will stewards manage public? Queues?

Catering

What, where?

Deliveries and Contractors due on site

1. Friends of xxxxx (xxx table + Gazebo)
2. Medical Provider (Gazebo)
3. xxxx
4. xxxxx
5. xxxxx

Running order:

Before day: Weather forecast to be checked on date by xxxx
Cleaning any buildings/toilets etc (more details).
Grounds Maintenance undertaken prior to event

On day:

xxam Volunteers on site - Briefing xxxxx and the Stewards.
Gazebos/stalls are erected.

xxxxxam Vehicle gate to park is opened and xxxx vans are allowed to park on the grass and escorted by stewards. No other vehicles will be allowed onto the park after then.

Xxxxxx Details of any special set up/stalls etc

xxxxam Stewards and helpers to do a litter pick around the park.
Stewards check all gazebos are secured
Any other checks required?

Xxxam/pm

Event starts

Xxxam/pm Stewards and Helpers greet arriving public

Time *List any activities which are taking place at set times etc*

xxxxpm **Event ends**

xxxxxxpm Volunteers do a litter pick and dismantle site
 Toilets are locked and vehicles are let off site and vehicle gate is locked.

Contingency Planning

- The current COVID-19 guidance xxxxxxxx (*how will this be monitored, what happens etc*).
- Weather forecast checked before event and cancelled if conditions are not suitable.
- Dogs xxxx.
- If toilets fail xxxxxx.
- *Anything else?*
-

G. Activity Plan

ACTIVITY PROGRAMME 2022 (insert year)

FRIENDS OF: (Insert name)

DATE	TIME	ACTIVITY. E.g., Meetings, Task Days, Events, Promotional activities	Attendees

-

H. Accident/Incident/Near Miss Report

1. About the person who had the accident:		
Full Name of Injured Person:		
Address:		
Telephone No:		Occupation:
Volunteer <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please state) <input type="checkbox"/>		
2. About you, the person filling in this form:		
Signature:		Date:
<i>If you did not have the accident please give your full name, address, telephone number and occupation</i>		
Full Name:		
Address:		
Telephone No:		Occupation
3. About the accident/incident:		
Date:		Time:
Where did the accident/incident happen?		
Full Address if known:		
4. Type of accident/incident:		
Accidental Injury <input type="checkbox"/>		Ill Health <input type="checkbox"/>
Near Miss <input type="checkbox"/>		
Threatning Behaviour <input type="checkbox"/>		Physical Violence <input type="checkbox"/>
		Verbal Abuse <input type="checkbox"/>

Other
(please specify)

5. What happened: (continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

Briefly explain what happened and give the cause if you can:

Was any Machinery/Equipment Involved? (if yes give details)

Was the accident due to any defects in Equipment? (if yes give details)

State precise details of injury sustained:

State details of treatment given and by whom:

State what happened to the injured person immediately after treatment:

Went back to work Went home Went to hospital Taken to hospital

6. Witness details:

Full Name of any Witness:

Address:

Telephone No: Occupation:

Volunteer Other (please state)

This document has been designed to support and guide friends groups by Medway Council and Norse and will be reviewed annually.