John Innes Park and Recreation Ground
Management Plan
2005 - 2010

This document was produced with assistance from
The Friends of John Innes Park.

Note: although this Plan covers the combined John Innes Park and Recreation Ground, only the John Innes Park is being submitted for a Green Flag Award in 2008.
Foreword

This application for John Innes Park is the third submission from the London Borough of Merton for the Green Flag Award.

Central Government, the Greater London Authority and partner agencies are placing an increasing emphasis on the role of open spaces in creating safe, healthy and sustainable communities in the 21st century. The London Borough of Merton has been committed to investing in our open spaces and related facilities through the implementation of our Merton Open Space Strategy. We are striving to ensure we are responsive to our communities and provide the highest quality of service. The Green Flag Award is recognised as the quality benchmark for our open spaces.

The Members of Merton Council and the Friends of John Innes Park are pleased to submit this application, and believe that the Green Flag Award criteria offer an excellent model for providing and measuring good parks management consistently across the United Kingdom. This application is submitted with the full support of the Council.

Should you require any further information with regards to this application please contact Ruth Hutton our Green Spaces Development Manager on 020 8545 3658 or ruth.hutton@merton.gov.uk.

Councillor Tariq Ahmad

Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Environment and Traffic Management
Vision

To encourage enjoyment of the beauty, diverse features and rich heritage of John Innes Park and Recreation Ground by all members of the community through the provision of a high quality space with facilities that are safe, clean, sustainable and accessible to all.
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1 Introduction

John Innes Park and Recreation Ground is a 3.54-hectare, dual-use park situated between Mostyn Road, Cannon Hill Lane and Watery Lane in Merton Park, about 2km north west of Morden town centre, London Borough of Merton.

The Arts and Crafts influenced formal gardens, with original buildings and features designed by the architects Quartermain and Brocklesby, were originally opened in John Innes’ former estate in 1909 following his death in 1904.

The Park and Recreation Ground were transferred to the Urban District Council of Merton and Morden (now LB Merton) in 1949 from the Trustees of John Innes Charity. In 2004 the Friends of John Innes and Merton Council worked together to refurbish the park and restore original features to their original condition for the centenary of John Innes’ death. In 2005 we were awarded a prize for “best environmental improvement” in the London in Bloom awards.

The park provides for a variety of active and passive leisure activities and organised sports. The space is popular and highly valued by local residents.

This document, developed by Merton Council and the Friends of John Innes Park summarises the present condition of John Innes Park and Recreation Ground and its importance to the local community. The aims and objectives for the sustainable management and future development of John Innes Park are structured around the eight key criteria set by the Civic Trust and Cabe Space for the Green Flag Award:

1. Creating a Welcoming Space
2. Providing a Park that is Healthy, Safe and Secure
3. A Park that is Clean and Well Maintained
4. Sustainable Management of Resources
5. Appropriate Management of Conservation and Heritage Features
6. Encouraging Community Involvement
7. Marketing the Facility Effectively
8. Implementation of Effective Management Strategies
## Action Plan Progress Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Date Completed</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>New wall adjacent Croquet Lawn.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>£10K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Reshaping of Yew Hedges (1/2 done).</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>March 2007</td>
<td>Revenue</td>
<td>£1K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mostyn Road Railings Painted.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>April 2007</td>
<td>Revenue</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Friends of Parks notice board installed at Mostyn Road Entrance.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>May 2007</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>£1.5K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Tarmac Footpath Repairs.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>May 2007</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>£12K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>New seating around John Innes Park.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>May 2007</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>£2K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Recreation Ground: Replace Chainlink fence with weld mesh fencing. Replace safety netting.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>May 2007</td>
<td>Revenue</td>
<td>£3K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>3 sets of finger posts installed in the park.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>June 2007</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>£6K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>New railings behind property not yard area</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>June 2007</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>£3K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Directional signage in surrounding neighbourhood.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>June 2007</td>
<td>Revenue</td>
<td>£0.8K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>New Zaun Fencing along Cannon Hill Lane boundary of Recreation Ground.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>June 2007</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>£12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Tarmac footpath along Aylward road boundary</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>October 2007</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>£5K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Plant horn beam hedge along Aylward road boundary</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>March 2008</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>£3K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Remove concrete bases in Recreation Ground</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>June 2008</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>2k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Install new seating in Recreation Ground</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>March 2008</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>£21/2K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Replacement fencing around tennis courts and tarmac improvements to pathways.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>May 2008</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>20K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Improvements to cricket pavilion (parking &amp; roof repairs)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>June 2008</td>
<td>Revenue</td>
<td>5K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Paint entrance gates and railings into Recreation Ground</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>April 2008</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>1K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Install new irrigation system on bowling green</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>April 2008</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>1K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Retop tree near John Innes Society statue</td>
<td></td>
<td>April 2008</td>
<td>Revenue</td>
<td>0.2K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Interpretive signs (Friends to arrange text)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>3K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Risk assessment for trees</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Plant rockery</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>March 2008</td>
<td>Friends Group</td>
<td>0.2K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Prune roses in rose arbour for DDA purposes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>March 2008</td>
<td>Revenue</td>
<td>0.1K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Paint railings around large pond</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>May 2008</td>
<td>Friends Group</td>
<td>0.2K</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2 Strategic Context

2.1 Introduction
This Management Plan articulates the vision for the improvement and management of John Innes Park and Recreation Ground and provides detailed objectives and action plans to direct Merton Property and Leisure to achieve this vision over the next 5 years. The objectives of the management plan are aligned to the criteria for the Green Flag Award administered by the Civic Trust.

Significantly, the objectives for all of the Management Plans for LB Merton’s open spaces have been developed with the wider strategic objectives across the borough in mind. These objectives are defined in the Merton Community and Business Plans.

2.2 Merton’s Community and Business Plans

Merton’s Community Plan 2006 - 2015, has been developed and implemented by the Merton Partnership, which sets out what will happen over the next 9 years to improve the quality of life for everyone in Merton. It covers a range of issues about living and working in Merton, such as housing, the environment, the economy, transport, safety, health, culture and the needs of particular groups like carers, disabled people, older people, children and young people. The key themes of the community plan are:

- Sustainable Communities;
- Safer and Stronger Merton;
- Healthier Communities;
- Older People;
- Children and Young People.

For further information go to: http://www.merton.gov.uk/community/communityplan

The Merton Business Plan 2006 - 2009, developed following consultation with residents, aims to make “Merton – a great place to live, work and learn” by directing the overall improvement of local services. The council’s ambition is: “To be excellent in the delivery of the services that matter most to our residents, and to provide leadership to the community through effective citizen engagement and partnership working”. The 5 key priorities for the business plan reflect the themes of the Community Plan. The day-to-day work of the council and the key targets for services are addressed in the separate service plans of all council departments.

For further information go to http://www.merton.gov.uk/community/businessplan

2.3 Cultural Strategy
Our parks and open spaces are central to the variety of cultural activities offered by the Council. Merton’s Cultural Strategy 2007 – 2010, will support and direct the Merton Partnership on the value of culture in achieving the objectives of the Community Plan as well as being a key driver in ensuring a range of local cultural aims and ambitions are delivered.

For further information go to http://www.merton.gov.uk/leisure/culturalstrategy.htm

2.4 Merton Open Space Strategy (MOSS)
Below the Community and Business Plans and the Cultural Strategy, under the "sustainable communities" theme, sits the Merton Open Space Strategy (MOSS). The range of sub-strategies can be viewed in Figure 2.1 below. The MOSS was developed from detailed studies of the borough’s open spaces and consultation of residents. Released in 2004, the MOSS identifies the key open space issues and defines a vision for the future. The vision is translated into objectives and principles
with a detailed action plan that describes the key projects and improvements required to achieve the vision by 2010. For further information go to http://www.merton.gov.uk/living/environment/openspaces/moss.htm

2.5 Marketing and Environmental Policies

Merton Council is committed to the principles of ‘Sustainable Development’ and ‘Local Agenda 21’. The Merton Environmental Action Plan stems from these commitments.

Achieving sustainable development requires making decisions that take into account relevant environmental, social and economic factors, all at the same time. Merton is committed to integrating these three areas across Council policy in all departments.

Merton Council recognises the need for urgent action to address environmental problems. The Merton Environmental Action Plan complements and links with other Merton strategies and plans which address sustainable development issues, such as the Economic Development Strategy, the Community Plan and the Crime and Disorder Strategy.

The aim of Merton’s Environmental Action Plan is to:

*Encourage and facilitate the involvement of residents, businesses and other organization in helping to create an environmentally sustainable Merton, in accordance with the wider principles of sustainable development.*

To achieve this aim the plan needs to:

- Encourage, inspire and support willingness, across the different communities in Merton, to take action to help the environment;
- Highlight opportunities for actions that can be taken by different sectors of the community to enhance the environment;
- Provide information and celebrate achievement in supporting the environment.

For further information about the practical steps Merton Council is making to improve our environment go to:

http://www.merton.gov.uk/la21

2.6 John Innes Park and Recreation Ground and Merton’s Strategic Objectives

John Innes Park and Recreation Ground is an important feature of the overall Merton Open Space network and has an essential and individual role in meeting the Council’s wider strategic objectives. Merton’s Community and Business Plans articulate the key social, environmental and economic themes around which Merton Council is trying to improve the quality of life for our residents.
The table below illustrates how John Innes Park and Recreation Ground relate to Merton’s wider strategic objectives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sustainable Communities</th>
<th>Safer, Stronger Merton</th>
<th>Healthier Communities</th>
<th>Older People</th>
<th>Children &amp; Young People</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ivy an important habitat for local invertebrates.</td>
<td>Accessible facilities for people living with disabilities.</td>
<td>Sports facilities including: tennis, croquet, bowls and cricket facilities.</td>
<td>Plan to upgrade all paths for safe access</td>
<td>School Work Days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protecting, enhancing and promoting local biodiversity (including Friends Wild Area).</td>
<td>Inspected and well-maintained facilities.</td>
<td>Good quality toilets</td>
<td>Good quality site furniture</td>
<td>Organised education activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protecting local urban amenity.</td>
<td>Good policies and facilities for safe dog walking.</td>
<td>Good pedestrian access to all parts of the site.</td>
<td>High Quality, Accessible Bowls facilities.</td>
<td>Easter Egg Hunt organized by the community each spring.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good green links to adjacent Glebe Field.</td>
<td>Staff members on site.</td>
<td>Merton Healthy Walks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active, enthusiastic Friends Group and other Stakeholders.</td>
<td>Engagement with the local community.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reuse of Water from bowling green roof.</td>
<td>Music concert organized by the community in the bandstand each summer.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No chemical treatments on bowling green (symbio)</td>
<td>Planning for centenary of the Park in 2009 is underway.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## John Innes Park and Recreation Ground

### 3.1 Site Details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Name</strong></th>
<th>John Innes Park and Recreation Ground</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Address** | Park: Mostyn Road SW19  
Recreation Ground: Watery Lane SW19 |
| **Contacts** | General enquiries:  
020 8545 3677 or leisure@merton.gov.uk  
Friends Group: John Priestland  
07803 260418 or mail@priestland.com |
| **Web** | www.merton.gov.uk/leisure/parks  
www.johninnessociety.org.uk |
| **Grid Reference** | Main entrance: OS grid 524750,169250 |
| **Designation** | Listed Public Park and Open Space |
| **Ownership** | Leisure Services, London Borough of Merton |
| **Size** | 3.54 hectares |
| **Type** | Flagship Park  
Local Multiuse Open Space |
| **Legal Interest** | Transferred by way of Conveyance 1st October 1949 from John Innes Charity subject to conditions. |
| **Byelaws** | See Appendix 6 |
| **Access** | The Park is accessible to pedestrians off Mostyn Road and the Recreation Ground via two entrances on Watery Lane.  
Opening hours:  
Monday – Friday 8am – dusk;  
Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holidays 9am - dusk |
| **Local Facilities** | Public Toilets  
Nelson Hospital  
Rutlish School |
| **Transport** | Train: Wimbledon Chase, South Merton  
Tram: Merton Park  
Buses: 163, 164, 152 and K5 |
| **Parking** | Parking for 25 vehicles off Mostyn Road  
(2 dedicated disabled spaces). |
4 Description

4.1 Location

John Innes Park and Recreation Ground is located in Merton Park 2km north west of Morden town centre in the London Borough of Merton. There is an entrance to the park on Mostyn Road and to the recreation ground on Cannon Hill Road.

4.2 Soils

John Innes Park and Recreation Ground is located on a fluvial gravel terrace upon London Clay. The quality of the soils for horticulture of the Merton Park area have long been established with the John Innes Horticultural Institute originally located on the park site and Carters Tested Seeds trial beds located along the south side of the railway nearby at Raynes Park.

4.3 Hydrology

John Innes Park and Recreation Ground are not located in an identified flood plain.

4.4 Flora

John Innes Park and Recreation Ground consists of formal landscape gardens, trees, shrubs and closely mown amenity grassland and the cricket ground. The bedding, trees and shrubs include several exotic varieties complemented with native species.

The main entrance was originally well planted herbaceous borders in character with the period. Today many of these borders have given way to beds of municipal bedding plants. The herbaceous border along Mostyn Road was replanted in 2001.
4.5 Fauna

The Merton Park area has the highest concentration of holly blue butterflies in the country. They are abundant in the John Innes Park and are dependent on the combination of both holly and ivy for the completion of their life cycle.

There is currently no detailed information on bird populations in John Innes Park and Recreation Ground. It is planned that the Friends Group will investigate producing a survey of birds seen within the Park.

4.6 Trees

The Borough’s arboriculturalists undertake regular surveys of the trees within John Innes Park. The most recent surveys were in June 2004 and from June to January. They observed thirty different varieties of holly, many mature yew and several large cedars. Fuller information is available from the arboricultural section on 0208545 3659.

Other larger trees of note include:

- Phillyrea latifolia;
- Mulberry Morus nigra;
- Red Oak Quercus rubra;
- Box Elder Acer negundo;
- Beech Fagus sylvatica; and
- Tree of Heaven Ailanthus altissima.

There is also a range of ornamental shrubs including:

- Cherry Prunus;
- Apple Malus;
- Thorn Crataegus;
- Lobell’s Maple Acer lobelli; and a
- Cow’s Tail Pine Cephalotaxus fortunei.

In 2004 with funding from the Council, the Serpentine walk was replanted with shrubs and the overhead canopies of mainly overgrown yew and hollies where lifted and pruned heavily to allow the under storey planting to flourish.

4.7 Facilities and Features

Created by John Innes in the latter part of the 19th Century, the Arts and Crafts garden is the focal point of an ornamental landscape open space that provides opportunities for the community to engage in a variety of activities while appreciating the rich heritage of their surrounding landscape.

Much of the original Manor House garden survives intact, with a series of winding paths connecting intimate spaces enclosed by yew hedges and dense evergreen planting. There is a strong “Arts and Crafts” influence and the overall atmosphere is redolent of a Victorian private garden. This character is enhanced by the many attractive historical buildings situated in the park including:

- The Entrance Lodge and gates (by Quartermain)
- Ornamental brick walls separate the park from the Manor House and from the playing fields to the south
- Cottage and adjoining archway (by Quartermain);
- Public Conveniences (by Brocklesby)
- Bandstand (by Brocklesby)
Rockery Area

The Friends of John Innes Park and Merton Council with the help of a Living Spaces Grant restored the Rockery Area in 2004. The original winding path and lush fernery had been previously removed and the area became overgrown with vegetation and self-seeded yew trees.

The Rockery Area was completely re-landscaped and a new path established in the original location. Major tree surgery, a new lawn and a small pond created a bright, pleasant and relaxing space.

Car Park

A car park has been provided off Mostyn Road on the depot site and will take 25 vehicles. There are two dedicated disabled parking bays marked out. It was re-surfaced in 2004.

4.8 Youth Facilities

Rutlish School use John Innes Park as an outdoor classroom to promote learning from nature. A mathematics and art trail is run in conjunction with their six “partner primaries” Year 5 students (including girls) explore the park with teachers from Rutlish’s Arts and Mathematics departments and observe patterns and design that occurs in nature. Lessons from the field are then used in the classroom through a variety of projects. The London Borough of Merton awarded Rutlish School a Commendation for Educational Innovation for this initiative.

The tennis courts are well used by local young people, as are the recreation ground where two thriving clubs (Merton CC and North Croydon) both play and have youth sections.

4.9 Children’s Facilities

There is no playground but children are often present in the park enjoying activities supervised by their parents or carers.

4.10 Sports Facilities

John Innes Park complements its focus as a place for relaxation, quiet appreciation and unstructured play with provision for a variety of formal sporting activities. Tennis courts, a bowling green and croquet lawn are provided along with a cricket square and playing field.

The public health benefits of participating in sport and physical activity are well known and form an important of the Merton Community Plan 2006 - 2015. Sports facilities at John Innes are of excellent quality and are promoted to the wider community through Merton’s Sport and Leisure Development Team. The variety of organised and casual activities available to local residents and visitors encourages people to participate in healthy active lifestyles and to enjoy interacting with other members of the community.

Tennis Courts

Four hard surfaced tennis courts with permanent fencing are located on the site of the kitchen gardens of the Manor House. The courts were re-surfaced in 2004. These courts replaced those situated in John Innes’ orchard and kitchen garden. The original courts were grass surfaced with loose protective netting at the yew-hedging boundary. The public and pupils from Rutlish School use the tennis courts. Replacement of some of the Chain link fencing commenced in 2007. Further improvements will take place in spring 2008.
Bowling Green and Croquet Lawn

John Innes Park contains two bowling greens, one of which doubles as a disabled bowling green and a croquet lawn. The greens moved to their present location in 1963 when the Club moved to two new full-sized greens in the gardens of Merton Cottage, then a separate council owned property adjoining the northern boundary of the Park. The bowling greens are now incorporated into the Park.

The bowling green, built in the gardens of Merton Cottage is accessed through gates in the original boundary wall. A small painted timber pavilion with kitchen facilities adjoins the green. The site of the old bowling green is now used for croquet. The greens (both bowling and croquet) are well maintained to a high standard and managed under the Symbio biological approach to sports turf management.

The Recreation Ground: Playing Field and Pavilion

John Innes Park is a popular venue for cricket during the summer months by Merton Cricket Club and North Croydon CC. The square and exterior of the pavilion are managed and maintained by the Council. 5 metre high loose netting, high fences and hedges protect and screen adjacent housing from stray cricket balls and noise from the recreation ground.

The two-storey Pavilion Building consists of a main ground floor reception space with changing rooms on the first floor within the loft space. Natural light is provided via dorma windows. The structure and external facing walls are timber under a pitched roof with simulated steel tiles. The windows and doors are all timber. The building is heated with a gas fired boiler and electrical heaters.

The Merton Cricket Club uses the pavilion in the summer months for matches, after-match refreshments and social functions. They are responsible for the maintenance of the building interior.

4.11 History of John Innes Park and Recreation Ground

John Innes Park and Recreation Ground are named after the wealthy property developer and philanthropist John Innes who is often credited with the original development of Merton Park as an attractive Victorian suburb in the 19th Century.

Upon his death in 1904, John Innes bequeathed his private estate and most of his money to the local community and toward horticultural research. The world-famous John Innes Horticultural Institution was established in Merton Park in 1910. The Institute was the first research center for plant breeding and genetics in the United Kingdom. The Institute moved its premises to the 372 acre Bayfordbury estate in Hertfordshire after the Second World War. It was during this period that the scientific method was first brought to the optimal composition of composts – giving rise to the John Innes formulae well known today. This is how most people associate the name of John Innes.

Declining land requirements prompted another move, this time to Norwich in 1966. In 1994 the John Innes Centre, an independent charitable company, was established following a merger with the Nitrogen Fixation Laboratory and the Cambridge Laboratory. The Centre is affiliated to the University of East Anglia and is located in the Norwich Research Park.

The Centre currently houses the John Innes Archives, an important resource for scholars in the history of genetics. It also includes archival material relating to the Innes family, the foundation of the Institute, scientific notebooks, the works of John Bateman and the fruit breeding work of M.B Crane. There is also a renowned collection of rare books embracing four centuries of botanical research and literature.

Following the relocation of John Innes Institute in the 1940s the land was occupied by Rutlish School and its playing fields.
The Park and Recreation Ground

The layout of the park was adapted from the original manor house gardens, heavily planted with over 30 species of holly (symbolizing the Innes coat of arms) evergreen hedges and trees, by the architect Brocklesby and was formally opened to the public in 1909.

The Recreation Ground, which is connected by public footpath to the park, was established at the same time. The Park and Recreation Ground were transferred by way of deed of gift to the Urban District Council in 1949. They are currently managed and maintained by the London Borough of Merton.

In 2004, to mark the centenary of the death of John Innes, the ‘Friends of John Innes Park’ (a sub-committee of the John Innes Society) together with the London Borough of Merton raised money via the Living Spaces Grant to restore and refurbish the park’s features to their former glory. The rockery and rose arbor were restored and a new fountain for the fishpond was created in conjunction with the Wimbledon School of Art. A statue of the holly emblem of the John Innes Society was also installed. New shrubs along the Serpentine Walk and a display bed of plant and shrubs of the “Merton Variety” (developed by the John Innes Institute) were planted throughout. The Mayor of Merton, Margaret Brierly, formally opened the new development in August 2004.

Further information on the Historical Development on John Innes Park can be requested from Leisure Services at LB Merton including:

- *Historical Management Plan for John Innes Park* developed by Cobham Resource Consultants (May 1995);

Archaeology

No archaeological finds have been recorded at John Innes Park in the Greater London Sites and Monuments Records. However, approximately half of the park area lies within an Archaeological Priority Zone designated by the London Borough of Merton in the Unitary Development Plan (1992). This is due to its proximity to the historic village of Merton and St Mary’s Church.

4.12 Present Use

John Innes Park and Recreation Ground is popular with all members of the community. The variety of spaces and landscapes attract a variety of visitors who come to appreciate the beauty of the parks planting and landscaping and others who come to participate in recreation of a more active type.

A key platform of the Merton Community Plan 2006 – 15 is encouraging healthier lifestyles amongst our communities. Our parks and open spaces, including John Innes Park and Recreation Ground, are essential facilities for sport and physical activity.

Merton Leisure Development has developed a programme of healthy walks to encourage residents to take the recommended 3 x 30 minute sessions of exercise a week in an informal, group setting. Walks currently run fortnightly from parks around the Borough including: Morden Hall Park; Cannon Hill Common; Ravensbury Park; Wimbledon Common; and Mitcham Common. More walks from more parks have been planned for 2007.

Recreational uses in the park include:

- Tennis;
- Cricket;
- Bowls;
• Croquet;
• Music at the Bandstand;
• Walking and jogging.

Many people just visit the site to enjoy the peace and quiet and appreciate the landscaping. Parents with young children are often seen during the day. At lunch time people can be found enjoying their lunch break away from the office.

4.13 Management and Security

The day-to-day management of John Innes Park is very straightforward and is generally carried out by the same dedicated work group, who provide the security, litter picking, patrol element to the gardens and the horticultural maintenance of this park and others as necessary (see Section 6.8.1 for a description of management responsibilities). This ability to provide a variable workforce allows for the peaks and troughs of the annual workload to be appropriately addressed. There is one permanent member of staff onsite and one mobile.

Security for John Innes Park and Recreation Ground is enhanced by the presence of staff on site and the active participation of our partners and stakeholders. Parks Staff are on site everyday 10am till 4pm.

4.14 Stakeholders

The John Innes Society is a conservation and amenity charity that promotes good design and community involvement in the area of the former John Innes Estate in Merton Park. It was established in the mid 1970s and has a membership of nearly 700 households in the area.

The Society has been a supporter of the John Innes Park since it was founded. However, in 2003 it created a specific sub-committee, the Friends of John Innes Park, made up of volunteers who particularly wanted to get involved with the Park. The Friends of John Innes Park worked closely with the Council to raise money for the major upgrades to the Park in 2004, which was timed to mark the centenary of the death of John Innes. The Friends of Group have designed features in the Park (the rose arbour in particular, designed by Felicity Cole), installed features (e.g. the circular benches) under appropriate supervision by the Council and have regular working parties and litter picking sessions. The Council are invited to and attend meetings of the Friends of Group, and the Group is consulted on priorities and key management documents, including this Plan and the Marketing Plan for the Park.

Rutlish School regularly work with the Friends of John Innes Park and provide boys to weed, plant, paint, etc. This benefits both parties as the park gets some extra attention and the boys are able to put their work towards the citizenship part of their PSHE GCSE.

The Merton Cricket Club owns the bar and fixtures in the Pavilion. A club member holds the alcohol license.

4.15 Activities and Events

At lunch times many people can be found enjoying their lunch break away from the office.

Every year in mid-summer, the John Innes Society organizes an entertainment of light and classical music in and around the bandstand. There is also an Easter Egg Hunt in the Park for younger children organized by the Society.

The Society has created a sub-group to plan to commemorate the centenary of the Park’s opening in summer 2009.
4.16 Leases and Covenants

John Innes Park and Recreation Ground is owned and managed by the Leisure Services Division at Merton Council.

The property was transferred by way of a Conveyance dated 1st October 1949 between the Official Trustee of Charity Land and the Trustees of the John Innes Charity and the Urban District Council of Merton and Morden. The land was sold subject to the following conditions:

- Only to be used as a public park;
- The land is maintained for the use of the public;
- It must be known as John Innes Park and John Innes Recreation Ground;
- All of the land must be maintained in the same as the Trustees of the John Innes Charity maintained it and the same must be used for the same purposes as they were used by the Trustee.

The property is not registered and is not affected by a caution against first registration of any priority notice.

There are no entries in the Register of Common Land.

There are no entries in the Register of Town and Village Greens.
5 Vision for John Innes Park and Recreation Ground

The Vision for John Innes Park and Recreation Ground is:

“To encourage enjoyment of the beauty, diverse features and rich heritage of John Innes Park and Recreation Ground by all members of the community through the provision of a high quality space with facilities that are safe, clean, sustainable and accessible to all”.

John Innes Park and Recreation Ground is a unique community asset providing an attractive and peaceful sanctuary from the surrounding urban environment. The vision for the park is focused on promoting the space as a community facility where people can connect with Merton’s heritage through appreciation of the variety of formally landscaped gardens, fine tree and shrub specimens and quality examples of historic architecture.

The park also contributes to encouraging healthy lifestyles through the provision of quality sporting facilities that meet the diverse needs of surrounding community. John Innes Park and Recreation ground is an excellent example of a high quality space that balances relaxation and recreation through innovative design.

John Innes is an excellent example of a community park. The existing responsive management arrangements encourage an active interest and involvement from the local community. Working relationships with our stakeholders including the Merton Cricket Club, Rutlish School, and especially the John Innes Society and Friends Group ensure enthusiastic participation in fundraising, management, and restoration of park features. Our community partners have been involved in horticulture, species protection and heritage restoration projects and are a huge asset promoting this unique place to other members of the community.