



ST HELENS
BOROUGH COUNCIL

OPEN SPACES STRATEGY

2025-2035



FOREWORD

As a councillor, I am proud to introduce our Open Spaces Strategy, a vital document that sets out our shared vision for the future of our parks, green spaces, and natural environments. These spaces are more than just patches of green; they are the heart of our communities, places where people come together to relax, play, exercise, and connect with nature.

We know how important open spaces are to our residents' health and wellbeing, to biodiversity, and to the character of our borough. This strategy reflects our commitment to protecting and enhancing these spaces for everyone - now and for generations to come.

Through consultation and collaboration, we've developed a strategy that responds to local needs, celebrates our unique landscapes, and supports our wider goals around climate resilience, equality, and sustainable growth. Whether it's improving access, increasing tree cover, or creating spaces that support wildlife, this strategy provides a clear roadmap for action.

I want to thank the local groups and volunteers that support us as a council in helping shape and maintain our parks and green spaces so they continue to be inclusive, welcoming and inspiring places for all.

Together, we can make sure our open spaces thrive and remain a source of pride for our communities.



Councillor Tracy Dickinson
Cabinet Member - Neighbourhoods
and Environmental Services





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1. INTRODUCTION

St Helens Borough is a lovely place to live. It has lots of open spaces like parks, countryside, and green areas. More than half of St Helens Borough is open spaces! These places are safe and great for relaxing, playing, and enjoying nature. Many families are moving to St Helens and joining the 181,000 people who already call it home.

St Helens Borough Council know that having parks, playgrounds, and open areas is very important. These places help people feel good, keep the environment and people healthy and bring the community together. Green spaces are also important as they are great ways to travel. They can connect with other paths and routes to help people get to where they want to go easier, quicker and healthier.

When we talk about 'open spaces', we are talking about:

- Parks & public gardens
- Cemeteries
- Playgrounds and playing fields
- Woods and nature areas
- Community gardens (like allotments)
- Walking paths/trails

It does not include farmland or private gardens. These areas are examples of open spaces that are not owned by the council. Lots of the new areas of houses and the land around them (like play areas) are managed by other groups (companies like Torus), who are guided and supported by the council.

The council manages 1320 hectares of land - this is the same as 1,591 Rugby League pitches. This includes 22 urban parks, 10 country parks, 67 children's play areas, 658 allotment plots, 37 general amenity green spaces, and much more. This land is looked after by the council, where we work with local community groups and investors to make these spaces the best they can be.

More information on the council's open spaces, parks and playgrounds can be found here:

<https://sthelens.gov.uk/article/5218/introduction>



OUR VISION

“TOGETHER, WE WILL MAKE OUR
OPEN SPACES SAFER, MORE
ACCESSIBLE, AND MORE ENJOYABLE
FOR THE PEOPLE OF ST HELENS”

Over half of St Helens Borough is open spaces.

The council wants to make sure these spaces and places are safe, accessible and fun for everyone to enjoy. By making these spaces better, people can live healthier and happier lives. These places can be used for sports, games, events and spending time outside.

Our 10-year strategy includes:

- What the council wants to do with parks and open areas. It will explain our goals and the most important things we want to focus on.
- How this fits into other plans for St Helens.
- What there currently is in St Helens.
- How council land (spaces the council owns) will be improved by this strategy and who will be keeping an eye on the progress.
- How the council will work with the owners of private land (land not owned by the council) to make sure these areas are doing the right things too.



OBJECTIVES



MAKING SAFE AND HIGH-QUALITY PLACES

The council want our open spaces to be fun, nice to look at, and easy for everyone to use. They should have good lighting, safe equipment and be looked after properly.



OFFERING FUN AND ACTIVE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

Parks should have play areas, events and chances to stay active and have fun. This is really important in improving health and wellbeing across the borough.



HELPING NATURE GROW AND STAY HEALTHY

The council will make sure parks and green spaces have lots of trees, plants, and wildlife so people can enjoy nature while living, working, and playing nearby.



LOOKING AFTER NATURE FOR THE FUTURE

Looking after nature: Our green spaces can help fight climate change by keeping the air clean and cutting down on pollution. This supports our climate goals and helps to protect the environment and reduce the effects of climate change.



WORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY AND PARTNERS TO LOOK AFTER THESE SPACES

Working community: Different groups of people, like the council, local teams and even you, help to look after our parks. This means these places stay high-quality, safe and fun.



DEVELOPING COMMERCIAL & FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Services such as cafés and ice cream vans help make parks more lively and welcoming. They encourage people to visit more often, stay longer, and enjoy the space. They also support small businesses and help bring the community together in a fun and friendly way.

ALIGNMENT WITH BOROUGH STRATEGY 2021-2030

The St Helens Borough Strategy is a detailed plan which shows how the council wants to develop and work with its residents.

All of these plans work together and support the St Helens Local Plan, which helps decide how the town will grow and improve.



ST HELENS BOROUGH STRATEGY



OPEN SPACES STRATEGY



INTEGRATED WITH OTHER PLANS AND STRATEGIES

The Open Space Strategy is strongly linked to two important documents that help inform the council about sports pitches and green spaces in St Helens:

- The Playing Pitch Report (2022) looks at places where people play sports like football, rugby, cricket, hockey and tennis. It provides information on how many there are, how often they are used and if we need more in the future.
- The Open Space Report (2023) looks at parks and green spaces around the borough, showing where they are, how good they are, and how close they are to where people live.

Both reports use expert advice and special maps to help the council plan what to do next so everyone can enjoy better parks and places to play.

This strategy is also closely linked to St Helens Local Plan 2020-2035, particularly in creating beautiful open green spaces. This guides how we protect, manage, improve and expand these spaces, as set out in Priority 4 of this plan. This is supported by a range of special documents called Supplementary Planning Documents, which help shape our open spaces into great places for everything we want them to be.

This Open Spaces Strategy is linked to lots of other important plans the council uses to help improve the borough. This strategy and its plans support and guide how all open spaces are managed - whether they're owned by the council or by other groups.



2. SETTING THE SCENE

St Helens Borough is a large area that covers 136 square kilometres and over half of the borough is green, open space. There are over 181,000 residents and 4,800 businesses across the borough.

St Helens has a proud history, for example in making glass and medicine, coal mining and England's first canal. The town continues to be an important centre for industry today.

Due to the location of St Helens, in the North West, it is easy to travel to and from. This means St Helens is well connected and ready for the future.

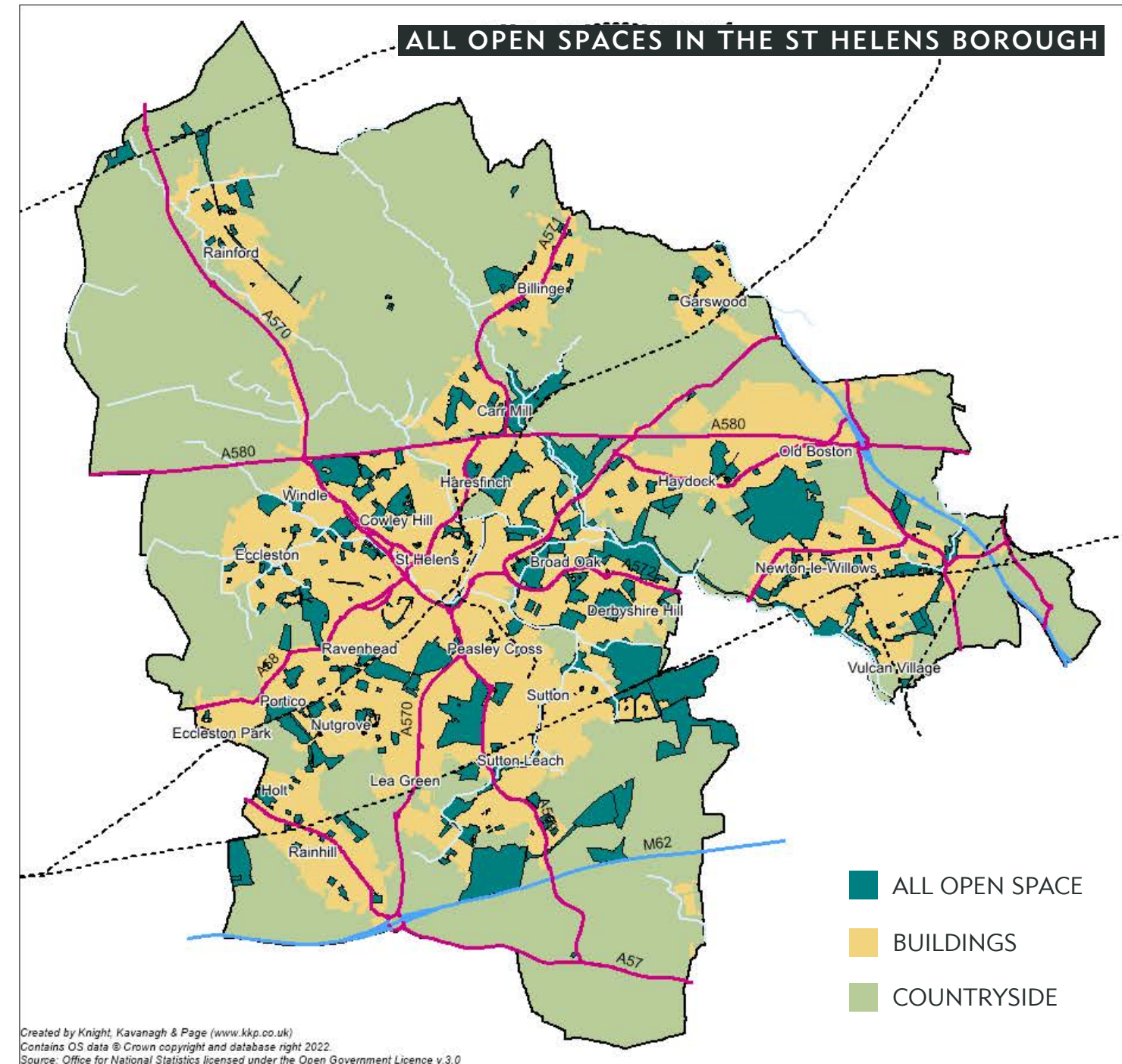
OVER HALF OF THE BOROUGH IS GREEN OPEN SPACE, WITH PARKS, WOODLANDS, AND WATERWAYS TO ENJOY.

The borough has many large parks like Taylor, Mesnes, Victoria and Sherdley Park where people can play sports or relax. There are also country parks like Clock Face and Sankey Valley, which are great places to visit and explore nature. These parks have special features like ponds, canals, old woodlands, meadows and walking trails that show the town's history.

Some open spaces in the borough are not owned by the council, but the council often works with other groups to help make these areas are well looked after. For example, Torus owns play areas and green corridors in their new housing areas and at Sutton Manor Colliery, the Forestry Commission have ownership. Even though the council do not own the land, it is important to work with these landowners to still achieve our goals.

Sankey Valley Country Park is an important green space in St Helens, following the 15-mile Sankey Canal trail. This trail follows the first true canal in England, the Sankey Canal, which has helped to shape the area over hundreds of years.

Figure 2.1: Map of the St Helens Borough with all open spaces overlaid





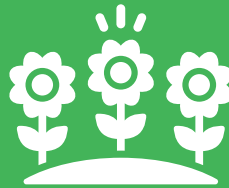
6 NATURAL GREEN
SPACES AND
NATURE RESERVES
(96 HECTARES)



67 CHILDREN'S
PLAY AREAS
(6 HECTARES)



10 COUNTRY
PARKS
(242 HECTARES)



AN ABUNDANCE
OF WILDFLOWER
MEADOWS



8 WALKING ROUTES
AND GUIDES TO
DOWNLOAD



9 OUTDOOR
GYMS & 19 BALL
COURTS



OVER 60,000 PEOPLE
ATTEND EVENTS IN OUR
OPEN SPACES EACH YEAR



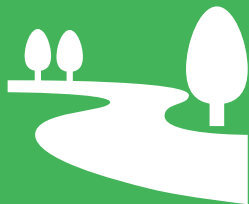
35 OUTDOOR
SPORTS SITES
(274 HECTARES)



6 SKATE
PARKS



14 TENNIS COURTS
ACROSS 6 SITES



12KM
OF
CANALS



6 GREEN FLAG
STATUS
PARKS



15 ALLOTMENT
SITES / 658 PLOTS
(20 HECTARES)



468
DOG WASTE
& LITTER BINS



1.9 HECTARES
OF WOODLAND
CREATION



TYPES OF OPEN SPACE

Figure 2.2 shows the different kinds of open spaces in the area and explains what each one is mainly used for - like playing, relaxing, or helping nature.

Type	Purpose
Parks and gardens	Places that are easy for everyone to visit, with safe and welcoming spaces for sports, activities, fun, and local events.
Natural and semi-natural green spaces, including urban woodland	Places that protect and support animals and plants, help nature grow, and teach people about the environment.
Green corridors	Paths and tracks where people can walk, ride bikes, or even ride horses – for fun or to get around. These spaces also help animals move safely from place to place.
Outdoor sports facilities	Places where people can enjoy sports outside, like football, tennis, running, bowls, or activities in the countryside or on water.
Amenity green space	Green areas near homes or workplaces where people can relax, play or enjoy being outside. These spaces can also help the neighbourhood look better (such as grassy patches).
Provision for children and young people	Places made for play and spending time with friends, like play areas with equipment, ball courts, skateboard zones, and shelters for teens.
Allotments, community gardens and urban farms	Places where people can grow their own fruit and vegetables. This helps support nature, keeps people healthy, and brings communities together.
Cemeteries, disused churchyards and other burial grounds	Places where people are remembered and buried. These areas also help protect plants and animals and support local wildlife.



ST HELENS BOROUGH LOCALITIES

The borough is split into 7 areas, called localities. Each of these localities contains key areas of the borough, as shown on the map.

The next part of the strategy looks at how much open space there is in each locality and what can be done to make them better. There is a map and table for each locality, giving information about different types of open spaces, ideas for improvements and real-life case studies.

Locality
Boundaries

sth wards

North St Helens

Haydock and Blackbrook

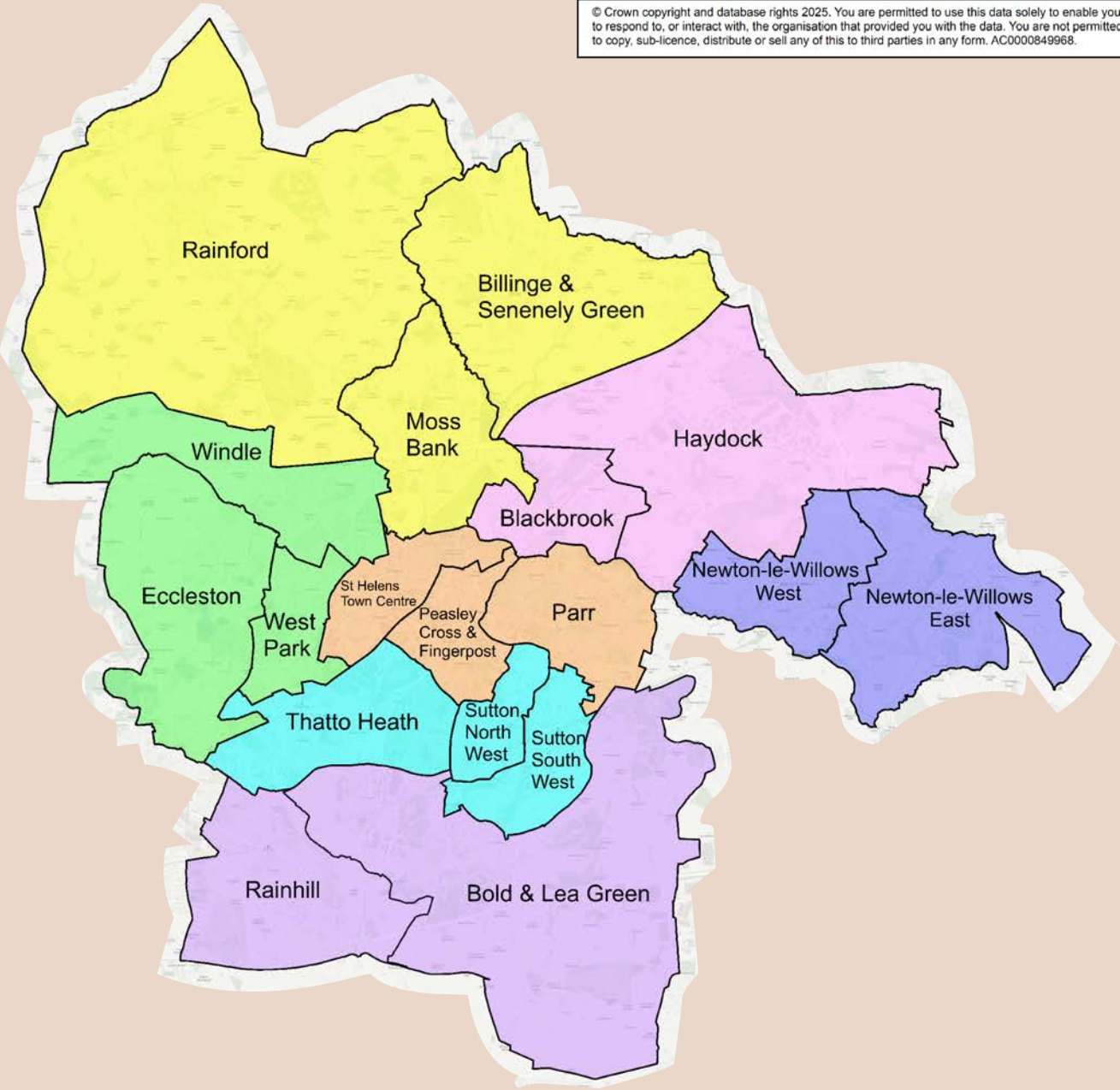
Central St Helens

Newton Le Willows

West St Helens

South St Helens

Rainhill and Bold



HAYDOCK AND BLACKBROOK LOCALITY

Stanley Bank Meadow SSSI

Stanley Bank is a special part of the Sankey Valley, known for its history and nature. This key natural site is home to an old Iron Slitting Mill, part of England's first canal, and includes ancient woodlands, Black Brook watercourse, and a Site of Special Scientific Interest. The area is now used for walking, learning, and enjoying wildlife. Nearby, Stanley Bank Meadow is a rare grassland full of wildflowers, birds, insects, and mammals, making it a great place for nature to thrive.



Sankey Valley

Sankey Valley Park follows the old path of the Sankey Canal. It is an important green corridor, helping people and wildlife move around the borough. It is also a key semi-natural space in the Haydock and Blackbrook area, giving people a place to enjoy nature and explore local history.



KGV Haydock

King George V Playing Fields is an important park in the heart of Haydock. It is a great place for the local community to enjoy, with lots of chances to play, exercise, and have fun. The park has ball courts, play areas, and plenty of space for sports and outdoor activities. The park also gives direct access to Princes Pit, a large area of natural greenspace, making it a great spot for both recreation and nature walks.

HAYDOCK AND BLACKBROOK LOCALITY

Type of Open Space	What Is In This Area	What Is Needed
Amenity Greenspace 5-minute walk	About half of the people here live just a 5-minute walk from our green spaces, for example Bosworth field. Residents living to the north of the Outwood Academy and New Boston area are outside of a 5-minute walk from these spaces.	Work should be on making the green spaces better, instead of adding new ones. Each green space might need different fixes. For instance, some need better paths or drainage to stop flooding. In Bosworth Field, there needs to be work on improving the play area and planting more trees to create spaces for wildlife around the edge of the space.
Parks and Gardens 10-minute walk	Many people do live within a 10-minute walk of our parks - such as King George V Haydock and O’Sullivan Crescent.	The parks and gardens in this area need to become more useful. The main goal is again to make the existing green spaces better, which may be achieved in many ways. For example, both King George V Haydock and O’Sullivan Crescent would be better with more management of their play areas, including replacing broken or old equipment.
Natural and Semi-Natural sites 15-minute walk	There is an excellent coverage of council sites in this area; there are lots of natural places nearby, such as Sankey Valley Country Park. Most people live within a 15-minute walk from our nature spaces. Lyme and Wood Pits are also in this area, but these public sites are not managed by the council.	Instead of building new places, we should focus on making the ones we already have better. Different areas need different things. For example, some areas might need clearer paths, more benches and bins, better signs, or more trees and flowers. In Sankey Valley Country Park, looking after wildlife spaces would help. Involving groups like SCARS and Groundwork could also bring communities together to help. It is also important to let people know about active travel routes nearby and to encourage more walking and cycling.

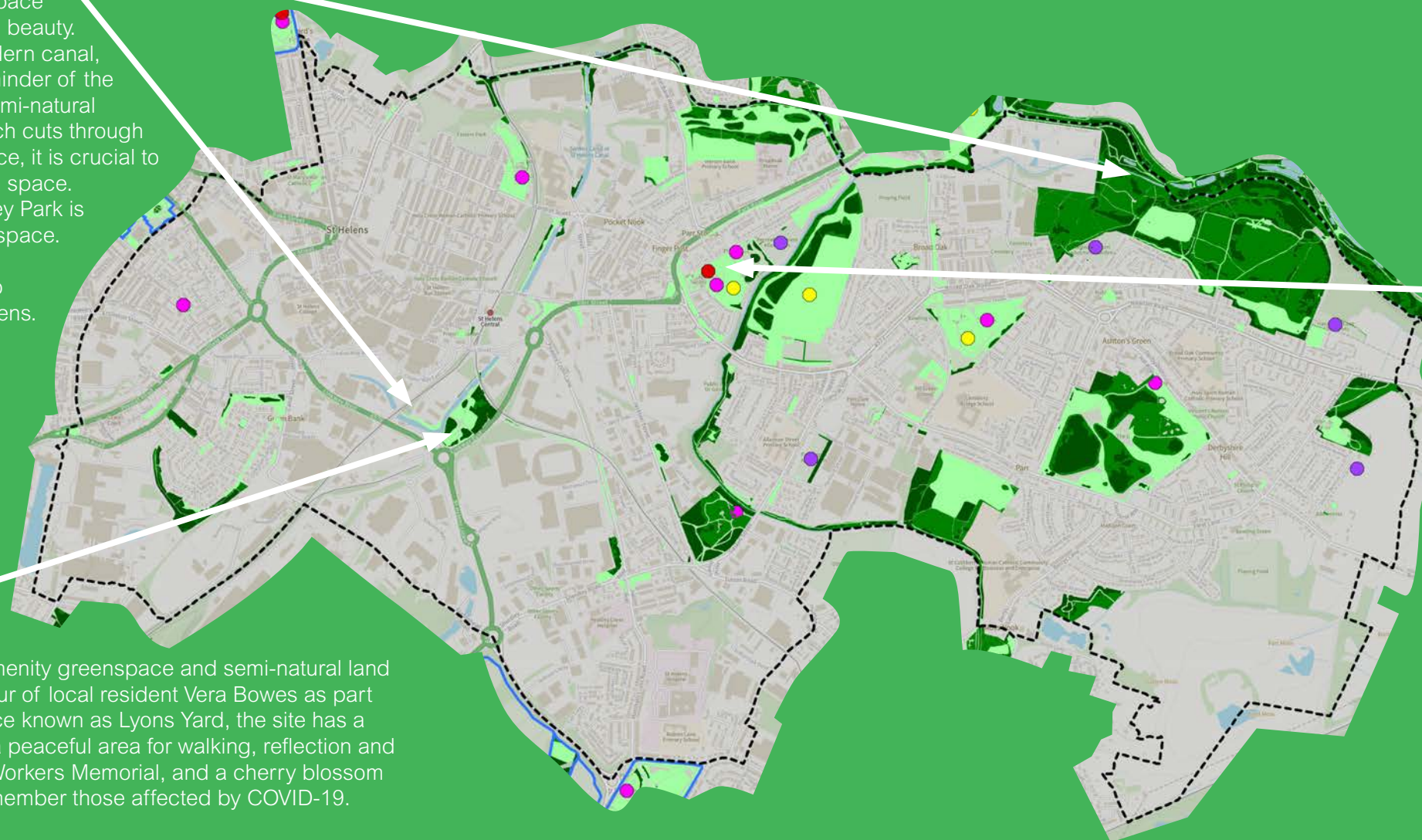
Type of Open Space	What Is In This Area	What Is Needed
Children and Young People Site (playgrounds, MUGAs, Skate Parks) 10-minute walk	Most people live within a 10-minute walk to playgrounds, MUGAs or skate parks. An example of this is King George V Haydock. This site has 5 different types of activity.	Work should be on making these sites better, instead of adding new ones. This could include adding more fun activities to these places. King George V Haydock would benefit from better management of their play areas, including replacing broken or old equipment. Most people living north of the Outwood Academy could use more play areas nearby. This is a gap that new developments will fill.
Allotments Sites 15-minute walk	This area does not have any allotments. Some people are a 15-minute walk to allotments in other localities.	Work should be focused on building more allotments. People should be asked what they want/need and what green spaces they use. A careful check should be done to find the best places or other options that could work well.

Sankey Valley Park & Canal

Cutting through multiple areas of the borough, Sankey Valley Park is a treasured open space with deep historical roots and rich natural beauty. Following the route of England's first modern canal, the Sankey Canal, the park is a living reminder of the area's industrial heritage. It provides a semi-natural landscape with amenity greenspace which cuts through the most urban part of the borough. Hence, it is crucial to those who live here as an important open space. In the northeast of this area, Sankey Valley Park is clearly the most prominent council open space. This area of largely natural/semi-natural greenspace provides a perfect escape to nature for residents and visitors of St Helens.



CENTRAL ST HELENS LOCALITY



Vera Page Park

Vera Page Park is an important area of amenity greenspace and semi-natural land in the centre of St Helens, named in honour of local resident Vera Bowes as part of the "Your Name Here" arts project. Once known as Lyons Yard, the site has a rich industrial history and now serves as a peaceful area for walking, reflection and community events. It is also home to the Workers Memorial, and a cherry blossom tree was planted at this site in 2025 to remember those affected by COVID-19.

Nanny Goat Park and The Licker

Nanny Goat Park is an area of well-used amenity greenspace in this area, offering a mix of play and recreation for the local community. It includes a large play area, multi-use games court, skate park, and outdoor gym equipment, making it a popular spot for children and young people. Nearby, The Licker, a nickname for a stretch of semi-natural land/amenity greenspace along Sankey Brook, has long been part of local history and childhood memories, known for informal play and community gatherings. Together, these spaces provide valuable opportunities for exercise, socialising, and connecting with nature in the heart of the town.

CENTRAL ST HELENS LOCALITY

Type of Open Space	What Is In This Area	What Is Needed
Amenity Greenspace 5-minute walk	There is plenty of green space here, many people live within a 5-minute walk from our sites. Specifically, there are several green spaces in and around Sutton Park Greenway that people can enjoy. Another key area of amenity greenspace here is Vera Page Park. These are all council sites.	Work should be focused on existing green spaces, rather than adding new ones. Many of these areas would benefit from tree planting. Working with the Mersey Forest will provide the money to do this, like in Vera Page Park.
Parks and Gardens 10-minute walk	Most residents live within a 10-minute walk from council parks and gardens. There are 3 great parks here: Nanny Goat, Fosters and Gaskell Park.	Work should be focused on existing green spaces, rather than adding new ones. The work carried out depends on the site, examples include better paths, benches, signs and bins. This area would also benefit from more planting and biodiversity, which could be done with Mersey Forest.
Natural and Semi-Natural sites 15-minute walk	This area has great access to the council's natural spaces and most people live within a 15-minute walk from one. There are two key sites here: Sankey Valley Country Park and The Duckerries.	We should focus on improving these places instead of building new ones. Most sites could use better paths, more bins, and other small changes. These areas also help nature grow and stay healthy. In the Duckerries and Sankey Valley Country Park, looking after wildlife spaces would make a big difference, helped by funding. Both parks could also be part of plans to boost nature by considering them for Biodiversity Net Gain units.

Type of Open Space	What Is In This Area	What Is Needed
Children and Young People Site (playgrounds, MUGAs, Skate Parks) 10-minute walk	There is a good coverage of the council's children and young people's sites in this area, with the majority of people living within a 10-minute walk. Fosters, Gaskell and Nanny Goat parks are great for this, each with at least 2 fun activities.	Work should be focused on existing green spaces better, rather than adding new ones. This might mean adding more fun activities to these sites. An important improvement is to replace old play equipment as part of a plan to keep things well looked after over time.
Allotments Sites 15-minute walk	There are 4 council-owned allotment sites in this area, and much of the residents here live within a 15-minute walk from one. This includes Recreation Street, Parr Depot, Ashton Green and Havannah Lane Allotments.	Whilst there is a reasonable coverage of allotments across the area, there are waiting lists on all allotment sites within the borough. Work should also be done to provide more sites, this could be added in other green spaces like parks and open spaces.

Queens Park Wildflower Meadow

A new wildflower meadow has been planted at Queens Park, making the area look better and helping nature to thrive. This work has helped to make this key area of amenity greenspace and semi-natural land greener, healthier, and more welcoming for both people and wildlife.



Community Groups - Friends of Taylor Park

Taylor Park has a dedicated 'friends' group that plays an important role in improving and caring for the park. They have helped to make the space more welcoming by organising events, adding new features and raising money for improvements. Their work encourages people to feel more connected to the park and helps keep it a valuable place for the whole community to enjoy.



WEST ST HELENS LOCALITY



Taylor Park Green Flag

Taylor Park is the largest park in St Helens. The park gives people of all ages and backgrounds a great place to relax, play and enjoy nature. Taylor Park Visitor Centre and the Boathouse are a centre for community groups, bringing the community together in these spaces.



The Taylor Park Visitor Centre is an important place for our community in this park.

WEST ST HELENS LOCALITY

Type of Open Space	What Is In This Area	What Is Needed
Amenity Greenspace 5-minute walk	There is a large amount of green space here, with the majority of residents living within a 5-minute walk from these spaces.	Work should be focused on existing parks and green spaces, rather than adding new ones.
Parks and Gardens 10-minute walk	Eastern and Southern parts of this area have excellent access to parks and gardens, including two Green Flag sites: St Helens Cemetery and Taylor Park. Additional parks in this area include Victoria and Queens Parks.	Though there are less parks in the west, improving existing parks is better than adding new ones. The lake at Taylor Park could be used more often, this could be done by attracting long-term funding to upgrade park buildings and activities. Queens Park could have more trees and wildlife on the old bowling green, plus better play areas. All three parks could host food stalls or small shops to raise money for future improvements.
Natural and Semi-Natural sites 15-minute walk	There is an excellent amount of natural spaces here, with the majority of residents living within a 15-minute walk. There is lots of woodland and bodies of water in this area. This area also has large semi-natural areas such as Taylor Park.	Work should be focused on existing parks and green spaces, rather than adding new ones. Taylor Park would benefit from more money in the future and increased use of the lake, alongside keeping the Green Flag Award. Consideration of the risk of flooding needs to be taken into account.

Type of Open Space	What Is In This Area	What Is Needed
Children and Young People Site (playgrounds, MUGAs, Skate Parks) 10-minute walk	There is an excellent amount of these sites here, with the majority of residents living within a 10-minute walk from at least one of the sites. There are three great parks with lots to do: Queens Park, Victoria Park and Taylor Park. Each of these parks have at least two different activity types.	Work should be focused on existing play areas, rather than adding new ones. Most playgrounds have good equipment, but some could be improved. For example, Victoria Park would benefit from better management of their play areas, including replacing broken or old equipment. In Queens Park, upgrading the tarmac will allow the council to include new basketball courts and paddle tennis areas.
Allotments Sites 15-minute walk	Most people in this area live within a 15-minute walk to an allotment site. There are two allotments in this area: Cabbage Hall and Eccleston Allotments.	Whilst there is a reasonable coverage of allotments across the borough, there are waiting lists for all allotment sites. Work should also be done to provide more sites, this could be in other green spaces like parks and open spaces.

Community Involvement

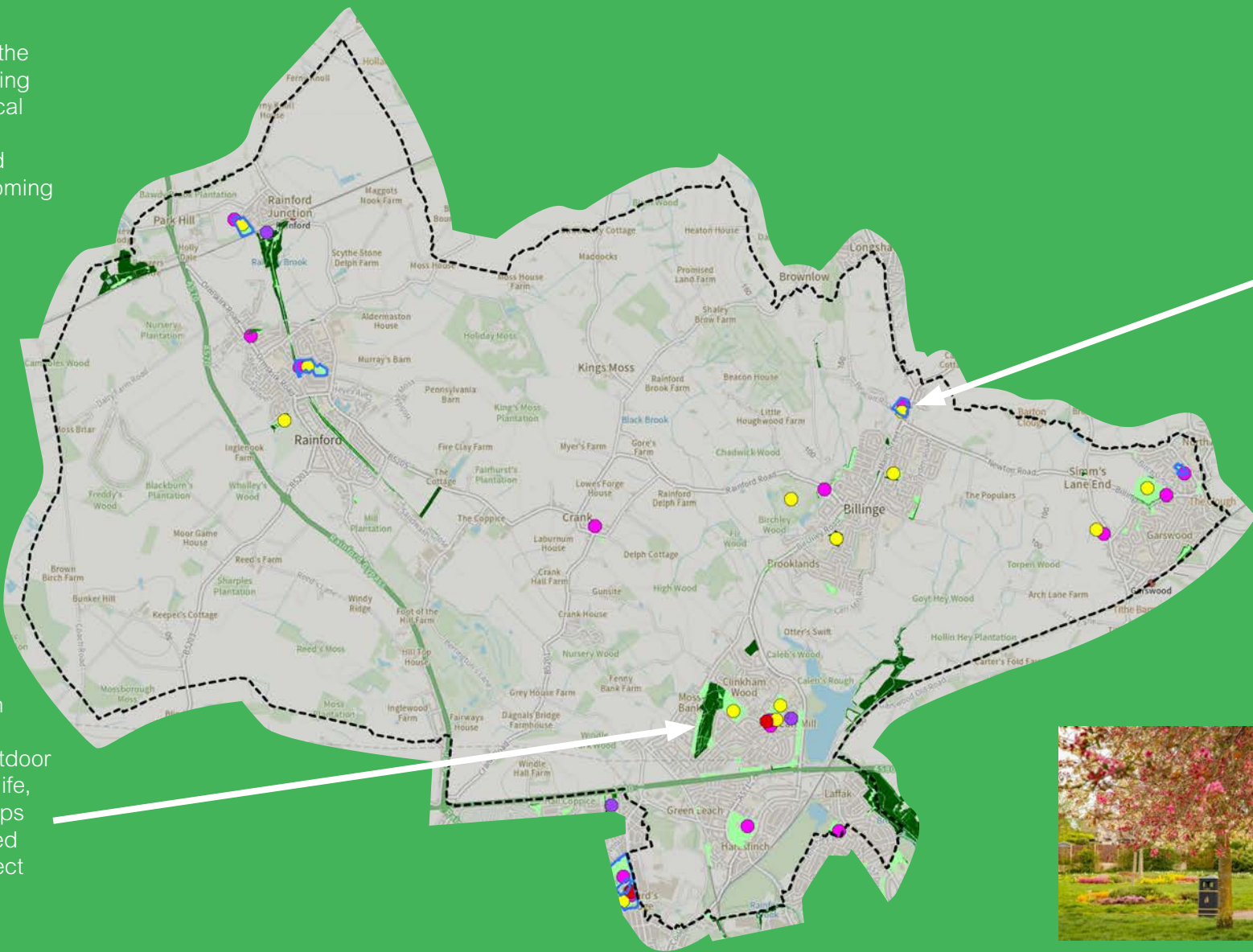
Parks across this area benefit from strong local partnerships that help care for and improve green spaces. Rainford in Bloom works with residents and the Parish Council to improve public areas through planting and community events. In Garswood and Billinge, local volunteers and neighbourhood groups support litter picking, small-scale improvements and nature-based activities. These efforts help keep parks clean, welcoming and well-used in the local area.



Clinkham Wood

Clinkham Wood is a key natural site in the North St Helens area. It offers a mix of woodland and open areas for the local community to enjoy, providing a peaceful setting for walking, wildlife spotting, and outdoor play. The site supports a variety of plant and animal life, helping to protect local biodiversity. Community groups such as Park Farm Community Centre have supported activities in the area, encouraging residents to connect with nature and take part in local projects. Clinkham Wood plays an important role in keeping Moss Bank green, healthy, and welcoming for all ages.

NORTH ST HELENS LOCALITY



Play area

Game & Activity area

Skate Park

Children and young people sites

Allotment

Amenity Greenspace

Natural/Semi-natural site

Formal Park

Banks Park Green Flag

Banks Park is a key green space in Billinge, offering a large play area and a well-kept sports pitch. It is a popular spot for families, children and local sports groups. Banks Park has achieved Green Flag status in 2024 and 2025, an international award which shows it is a high-quality space.

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NORTH ST HELENS LOCALITY

Type of Open Space	What Is This Area	What Is Needed
Amenity Greenspace 5-minute walk	There is a very good amount of green space here. Most residents live within a 5-minute walk of our green spaces. Birch Grove Playing Fields is an important area in Garswood. There are also sites not owned by the council, such as the land around Billinge Hill.	Work should be focused on making the green spaces better, instead of adding new ones. This will vary depending on the site, however there is a need for improved drainage and access. In Birch Grove Playing fields, planting more trees around the edge of the site will help provide more shade and shelter for wildlife.
Parks and Gardens 10-minute walk	Many residents live close to amenity greenspace (within a 10-minute walk). There are lots of sites here, like Old Hall Scarisbrick Park, Seneley Green Recreation Ground and Bankes Park.	Work should be focused on making the existing parks and green spaces better, rather than adding new ones. Keeping Green Flag status for Bankes Park is important. Work can be done to improve playgrounds across the locality. Increased planting and improvement in biodiversity would benefit this locality, for example in Bankes Park.
Natural and Semi-Natural sites 15-minute walk	There is an excellent amount of natural and semi-natural sites in this locality. The majority of residents live within a 15-minute walk of sites like Rainford Linear Park, Siding lane and Clinkham Wood. Sites like Carr Mill Dam and the Billinge Hill area are key sites which are not owned by the council.	The main aim is to make existing places better. The council should work closely with local groups and other organisations. For example, Rainford in Bloom help in Rainford Linear Park, and groups like Mersey Forest and Groundwork support work at Sidings Lane.

Type of Open Space	What Is In This Area	What Is Needed
Children and Young People Site (playgrounds, MUGAs, Skate Parks) 10-minute walk	There is excellent coverage of children and young people sites within this locality. The majority of people live within a 10-minute walk of one. Key sites include Kentmere Park, Bankes Park and Downall Green Croft. These sites all have play areas, and in 2025, Bankes Park achieved Green Flag status.	Some parks have better play areas than others. The council will use the best ones as examples and work to improve equipment and access in the others.
Allotments Sites 15-minute walk	Kentmere Avenue is the only allotment site in this area. Residents in South Rainford and Garswood live further than a 15-minute walk.	There are waiting lists on all allotment sites across the borough. Work should also be done to provide more allotments, these could be within other green spaces like parks and open spaces (for example in Garswood or Billinge).

Reminisce

Reminisce is a two-day music festival held in Sherdley Park. In 2025, it brought together 25,000 people from all over the North-West. Income from the event is used to improve Sherdley Park and other open spaces. It also attracts visitors into St Helens which benefits local businesses.



The Northern Forest in Sherdley Park

Sherdley Park is the largest park in this area and the most visited across the borough, showing its importance within South St Helens and for the wider community. Sherdley Park has been a key location for tree planting, as a part of the Grow Back Greener fund from the Northern Forest. This initiative included planting 50 million trees in many areas across the North of England. This benefits biodiversity, the climate and local people.

SOUTH ST HELENS LOCALITY



Play area

Game & Activity area

Skate Park

Children and young people sites

Allotment

Amenity Greenspace

Natural/Semi-natural site

Formal Park

Sutton Park
Green Flag Site

Sutton Park offers a large green space with plenty of room for games, play areas, and outdoor fun. In 2025, it was awarded Green Flag Status, which means it is a high-quality park that's well looked after and great for visitors. The park is a popular spot for families, and it plays a large role in giving the community a safe and enjoyable place to spend time outdoors.

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SOUTH ST HELENS LOCALITY

Type of Open Space	What Is In This Area	What Is Needed
Amenity Greenspace 5-minute walk	There is a good amount of green space in this locality and most residents live within a 5-minute walk of one or more sites. Green spaces in this area include Clay Colliery (The Clegg) and parts of Sherdley Park.	Work should be on making the green spaces better, instead of adding new ones. A good avenue to improving these kinds of green spaces is through community ownership. For example, increasing community involvement in and ownership of The Clegg (Clay Colliery).
Parks and Gardens 10-minute walk	Most people live within a 10-minute walk from a council site, but people in the eastern and south west areas all live further than a 10-minute walk. There are several key sites in this area, like Sherdley and Sutton Parks.	Work should be on making the existing parks and green spaces better, instead of adding new ones. Keeping the Green Flag Award for Sutton Park will be important here, while helping other parks reach this level. Because of the size and importance of Sherdley park, it has often been used for big events, so it could be a great place to add more things like markets, shows or other fun activities people can enjoy. Sutton Park and Thatto Heath Park are also being improved to give local families and children more things to do.
Natural and Semi-Natural sites 15-minute walk	There is an excellent amount of natural spaces here, with the majority of residents living within a 15-minute walk of our sites. There are many woodlands and water features in this area, such as Roughdales Quarry, Alexandra Colliery or Meadowlands. There are also important sites, like Ravenhead Nature park and Brickfields, which are not in council ownership.	We should focus on making these places better, not building new ones. At Roughdales Quarry and Alexandra Colliery, more people should know about and use green travel options and footpaths. Wildlife areas need better care, which could be achieved with more help from the community and groups like Mersey Forest and Groundwork. The Meadowlands could be improved with better paths and by bringing back meadow habitats. These areas could also be part of Biodiversity Net Gain habitat unit plans, to help nature.

Type of Open Space	What Is In This Area	What Is Needed
Children and Young People Site (playgrounds, MUGAs, Skate Parks) 10-minute walk	There is an excellent coverage of our sites in this area, with the majority of people living within a 10-minute walk of one. There are 3 main sites in this area, each with at least two activities in each: Sherdley, Sutton and Thatto Heath Parks.	Work should be on making these sites better, instead of adding new ones. This could mean adding more activities to parks or improving what is already there. For example, replacing the equipment at both Sutton and Sherdley Parks should be looked at as part of a plan to keep things well looked after over time. The Green Flag status of Sutton Park is, again, a good benchmark to attempt to improve other areas to as well.
Allotments Sites 15-minute walk	There is a good amount of allotment sites in this area. The only council site is Nutgrove Allotments. There is also Harlow Allotments, which are privately owned. Only residents around the east of the area (around Sutton Leach/St Helens Junction) live further than a 15-minute walk from sites.	Whilst there is a reasonable coverage of allotments across the area, there are waiting lists on all allotment sites within the borough. Work should also be done to provide more sites or schemes, maybe within other green spaces like parks and open spaces. This could be supported by new developments.

Northern Forest Tree Planting

Northern Forest tree planting has taken place in amenity green space, semi-natural sites and parks such as The Dingle and Tully Park.



NEWTON-LE-WILLOWS LOCALITY



Play area Game & Activity area Skate Park	Children and young people sites
Allotment Amenity Greenspace Natural/Semi-natural site Formal Park	
Skate Parks Allotments Sites	



Green Heritage - first passenger railway crosses England's first true canal

Sankey Valley Country Park follows the oldest true canal in England, the Sankey Canal. It is crossed by the Sankey Viaduct, the oldest major railway viaduct in the world, attracting visitors to the area. It is a great spot for walking and enjoying nature and it helps connect Newton-le-Willows to other parts of St Helens.



Red Brow Woodland Regeneration Project

Local groups, Wargrave Big Local and Groundwork, are working with volunteers to improve Red Brow Woodland. They have removed harmful plants, cleared litter, improved drainage and made footpaths safer to help people get from nearby homes to the Sankey Canal. These changes will make this key natural site easier to enjoy for everyone.

Mesnes Park Green Flag

Mesnes Park achieved an impressive Green Flag Award in 2025, which is something the whole community can be proud of. It is the largest park in Newton-le-Willows and gives people of all ages, from young children to older adults, a great place to enjoy. The park has multiple children and young people sites, making it a brilliant spot for playing, relaxing and spending time outdoors.

NEWTON-LE-WILLOWS LOCALITY

Type of Open Space	What Is In This Area	What Is Needed
Amenity Greenspace 5-minute walk	There is a good amount of green space here. The majority of residents live within a 5-minute walk of one or more council sites. Sites like Winston Avenue Playing Fields and Tully Park are valuable green spaces. Residents in the east are further from this kind of space, but they still have good access to other types of open spaces.	Work should be on making the green spaces better, instead of adding new ones. For many of these sites, like Winston Avenue or Tully Park, protecting woodlands, boosting tree planting and the establishment of wildlife space around the perimeters of the site is key.
Parks and Gardens 10-minute walk	Areas to the east and in the middle of this area have an excellent amount of parks and gardens, with the majority living within a 15-minute walk of one, including Mesnes Park, one of our green flag sites. Another key park here is Willow Park. People who live in the west of the area are further than a 10-minute walk.	Work should be on making the existing parks and green spaces better, instead of adding new ones. This may be through improvement of outdoor equipment (e.g. outdoor gym in Mesnes) and play areas. Willow Park could also have more involvement from the community. The design of Mesnes means it could be used for more events and activities, like fairs, shows, or pop-up shops. This would help make the park even more exciting and bring more people together to enjoy it.
Natural and Semi-Natural sites 15-minute walk	There is an excellent number and spread of these sites in this area, with the majority of residents living within a 15-minute walk of a council site, including green areas like The Dingle. There are many woodlands and waterways, like Sankey Valley Country Park and Newton Brook Greenway, which provide great natural areas for people in this area.	Work should be on making these areas better, instead of adding new ones. In Sankey Valley Country Park and Newton Brook Greenway, more people should know about and use green travel options and footpaths. Wildlife areas need better care, if there's enough money - something that may be achieved with more help from the community, local groups and societies. There are also projects to improve these natural areas here, such as in Red Brow Wood, which are important to continue.

Type of Open Space	What Is In This Area	What Is Needed
Children and Young People Site (playgrounds, MUGAs, Skate Parks) 10-minute walk	There is an excellent coverage of these sites within this locality, with the majority of people living within a 10-minute walk of one. Award-winning Mesnes Park is an important site where there is at least 4 different types of activities. Sturgess Street play area is also in important site. There is also Greenwood Drive, which is not owned by the council.	Work should be on making these sites better, instead of adding new ones. At both Mesnes Park, Sturgess Street and Willow Park, replacing the equipment should be looked at as part of a plan to keep things well looked after over time, while keeping Mesnes Green Flag status.
Allotments Sites 15-minute walk	There is a very good amount of allotment sites in this area, with 3 sites; Bertram Street Allotments, Mesnes Allotments and Rob Lane Allotments. Only residents on the edge of the area are more than a 15-minute walk from an allotment site. People who live on the southern edge of the area, around Vulcan Village, are more than a 15-minute walk.	Whilst there is a reasonable coverage of allotments across the area, there are waiting lists on all allotment sites within the borough. Work should also be done to provide more sites or schemes, maybe within other green spaces like parks and open spaces.

Holt Lane Sports Pitches

Holt Lane Playing Fields is a key sports and recreation site in Rainhill, offering grass pitches for adult and junior football, playing an important role in supporting youth sport. It is home to local teams like Rainhill Rockets and Rainhill United. The site continues to be a valued space for community activity, outdoor play and football development.



Home of the Dream

The Dream sculpture at Sutton Manor Colliery is a key landmark in the borough. Designed by world-renowned artist Jaume Plensa, it draws visitors from both inside and outside St Helens. The Dream and Sutton Manor are great areas of publicly accessible semi-natural greenspace, though they are not owned by the council. Dream also strengthens how St Helens is known, using green spaces to make places people connect with and remember.

RAINHILL AND BOLD LOCALITY



- Amenity Greenspace
- Formal Park
- Natural and Semi-Natural site
- Playgrounds
- MUGAs
- Skate Parks
- Allotments Sites

Bold Forest Garden Village

The Bold Forest Garden Village is an important new housing development in the area. It is designed to include lots of green spaces to create a garden-style village. This means there will be more green spaces for both new and current residents to enjoy.



Clockface Country Park

Clock Face Country Park is a 57-acre green space built on the site of a former colliery. It offers woodlands, meadows, walking paths, and a fishing pond. This area of natural/semi-natural greenspace is part of the wider Bold Forest Park and connects to nearby sites like Sutton Manor Woodland. These features support local wildlife and provide a peaceful place for walking, nature watching, and outdoor activities, helping turn a once-industrial site into a thriving natural space.

RAINHILL AND BOLD LOCALITY

Type of Open Space	What Is In This Area	What Is Needed
Amenity Greenspace 5-minute walk	There is a good amount of green space here. The majority of residents live within a 5-minute walk of one or more of our sites. One key site here is Old Lane Open Space. Residents in the east are further from green space, but they still have good access to other types of open spaces. In this area is also Covington Drive Open Space, which is not owned by the council.	Work should be on making the green spaces better, instead of adding new ones. This will mean different things for different places. In Old Lane Open Space, we should look at adding new features to the space and add things like seating so that people can enjoy these areas easier. New developments will add more of these sites.
Parks and Gardens 10-minute walk	There is a good amount of council parks in this area, though people to the east of the locality live more than a 10-minute walk from a park or garden. A key site here is Wharburton Hey.	Work should be on making the existing parks and green spaces better, instead of adding new ones. It would also be good if there was more planting and biodiversity (different plants & animals) in this area. Wharburton Hey would benefit from a replacement of the play equipment.

Type of Open Space	What Is In This Area	What Is Needed
Natural and Semi-Natural sites 15-minute walk	There is an excellent number and spread of these sites in this area, with the majority of residents living within a 15-minute walk of a council site. There are many woodland and water features in this area, such as Clock Face Country Park. There is also Griffin Wood, which is not owned by the council.	Work should be on making the existing areas better, instead of adding new ones. This will mean different things for different sites, but generally there is a need for better paths, benches, signs and bins. More people should know about and use green travel options and footpaths through sites like Clock Face Country Park. Wildlife areas need better care, something that may be achieved with more help from groups like the Mersey Forest and Groundwork, while working with the community. Clock Face Country Park could also be improved with better paths and by bringing back meadow habitats. These areas could also be part of Biodiversity Net Gain habitat unit plans, to help nature. New developments will boost sites here.
Children and Young People Site (playgrounds, MUGAs, Skate Parks) 10-minute walk	There is an excellent number and spread of these sites in this area, with the majority of residents living within a 15-minute walk of a council site. The key site here is King George V Sutton, which has two activity types.	Work should be on making these sites better, instead of adding new ones. At many of the play areas in this area, such as King George V Sutton, replacing the equipment should be looked at as part of a plan to keep things well looked after over time.
Allotments Sites 15-minute walk	There is a good amount of allotment sites in this area, with the majority of residents within a 15-minute walk of a site. This area has 2 sites, one council owned in Milton Street Allotments, and one privately owned in Walkers Lane Allotments.	Whilst there is a reasonable coverage of allotments across the area, there are waiting lists on all allotment sites within the borough. Work should also be done to provide more sites or schemes, maybe within other green spaces like parks and open spaces.

3. DELIVERING THE OBJECTIVES LOCALLY

ACTION PLAN

The council have made this strategy and action plan to make sure these parks, playgrounds and open spaces are properly looked after for the next 10 years. This section shows the main things the council wants to focus on to reach each of the objectives (its goals).

For each objective, there is a real-life example (called a case study) to show good work already happening in St Helens.

When talking about timeframes: Ongoing means work happening now, Short means within 1-2 years, Medium means 3–5 years, Long means more than 5 years

1. Making safe and high-quality places - The council want our open spaces to be fun, nice to look at, and easy for everyone to use. They should have good lighting, safe equipment, and be looked after properly.

What will we deliver	How will we deliver it	When will we deliver it	Who will deliver it
Making sure parks and green spaces support community needs, like places to enjoy, look after nature, and help towns grow in a good way.	- Keep parks, playgrounds and open spaces clean and tidy. - Check that parks are safe, especially near the two town centres, and ask young people what they think. - Look for ways to fix or improve parks using money from helpful organisations or builders. - Talk to local groups to make sure parks work well for everyone. - Work with community volunteers who help care and speak up for green spaces.	- Ongoing - Medium - Medium - Ongoing - Ongoing	- Open Spaces Team - Environment and Climate Team

What will we deliver	How will we deliver it	When will we deliver it	Who will deliver it
Looking at what parks and green spaces will need in the future - to make sure they are spread out fairly, easy and safe to get to, and good quality. This includes places where new homes and businesses will be built.	- Make sure new homes have good parks and green spaces nearby, especially around Bold, Cowley, St Helens and Earlestown town centres. - Work with builders so the right amount of money goes into making these green spaces. - Look at ways to improve opportunities at certain parks, like adding shops at Taylor Park or making Sherdley Park better for play and fun.	- Short/ Ongoing - Medium - Medium	- Planning Service - Open Spaces Team - Environment and Climate Team
	- Support greener ways to travel, like walking, cycling or using green paths. New areas should be safely linked together with good signs and bike storage. For example, new green space in Parkside Colliery will need to link to nearby sites too. - Make sure all new parks and play areas follow strong rules, are safe, and are built to a high standard.	- Medium - Short	- Highways Service - Transport Team
Creating a standard across St Helens for looking after important parks and green spaces. Use ideas from the national Green Flag award to help set the standard and make sure the standard fits the special features of each park and green space in St Helens	- Maintain the standard of our Green Flag parks like Taylor Park, Victoria Park, Mesnes Park and St Helens Cemetery. - Create a plan for how all parks in St Helens should be looked after, based on Green Flag needs. - Match the plan to different types of spaces - like how often grass should be cut to leave room for play.	- Short - Short - Short	- Open Spaces Team - Environment and Climate Team

CASE STUDY:

MAKING SAFE, HIGH-QUALITY PLACES

AWARD-WINNING PARKS AND IDEAS FOR MORE IN ST HELENS

The council wants everyone to have a good green space nearby, so we use the Green Flag Award to help set the standard. In 2016, the borough had one green flag site, at Victoria Park. Work was being done at this park and the many others across the borough to keep all parks up to this standard. In 2023, we made a conscious investment in our parks, to work towards greater recognition for their quality and the benefits they provide to the people in them. The hard work of community groups, volunteers and council staff alike has seen this effort pay off.

In 2024, Victoria Park maintained its Green Flag status, whilst Taylor Park and Mesnes Park had were added to the list. St Helens Cemetery gained a special Community Award. 2025 saw the addition of Sutton Park and Bankes Park to our celebrated list of Green Flag sites. The council plans to keep adding more in the future, working with communities and investors in an effort to mirror these high standards in parks across the borough.



2. Offering fun and active opportunities for our community - Parks should have play areas, events, and chances to stay active and have fun. This is really important in improving health and wellbeing across the Borough. Keeping these places safe helps make everything work well together..

What will we deliver	How will we deliver it	When will we deliver it	Who will deliver it
Encouraging people to live more active lives by using parks and green spaces for activities such as walking and cycling. This can be for fun and exercise, or to get to places like school, work, the shops, or other local places.	- Keep promoting Parkruns at Bold Forest Park and Victoria Park. Help the volunteers so the events stay fun and successful. - Find places which would be improved by adding outdoor gym equipment. We would work with our partners to do this. - Make sure important open spaces have good links for people to cycle, walk or run to and from, connected to other places in the borough and beyond.	- Ongoing - Medium - Medium	- Open Spaces Team - Environment and Climate Team - Culture and Wellbeing Service - Public Health Department - Children and Young Peoples Services Department - Adult Social Services Department

What will we deliver	How will we deliver it	When will we deliver it	Who will deliver it
Spend more money on parks and green spaces to help people get healthier. This supports the goals in the People’s Plan and helps people in areas where there are more health problems.	- Find ways to help people feel better mentally, such as using allotments, men’s sheds, referrals, and health walks run by the Wellbeing Service. - Look for money from outside sources to make play and sports areas better, helping build stronger communities. This could include things like a MUGA (Multi-Use Games Area) or a pump track in places where there are problems with anti-social behaviour. - Plant more trees to make the air cleaner. - Think about adding padel tennis courts in the right places (a sport that’s becoming more popular in the UK). - Build new skate parks in different parts of the borough. - Create safe and fun places for women and girls to enjoy parks and green spaces, helping them feel happy and healthy.	- Ongoing - Medium	- Open Spaces Team - Environment and Climate Team - Culture and Wellbeing Service - Public Health Department - Children and Young Peoples Services Department - Adult Social Services Department
Use parks and green spaces more to help people feel happier and healthier, both in body and mind.	- Keep helping people through social prescribing, working with the NHS Trust, St Helens Cares, and the Wellbeing Service. Use parks and green spaces across the borough to support this. - Team up with Vibe UK to create and grow activities for young people that help with important social issues. - Use buildings in parks and open spaces to support community businesses that help with adult social care. - Find programmes like tree planting or Men’s Sheds to give people more chances to improve their mental health.		- Open Spaces Team - Environment and Climate Team - Culture and Wellbeing Service - Public Health Department - Children and Young Peoples Services Department - Adult Social Services Department

CASE STUDY:

OFFERING FUN AND ACTIVE OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR ALL



ST HELENS PARKRUNS

In St Helens, we are lucky to have two parkrun events:

- Victoria Park
- Bold Forest Park on Jubits Lane

Parkrun is a free and friendly 5km event where you can walk, jog, run, help out, or cheer people on. It happens every Saturday morning at 9am. There is no time limit, and no one comes last.

The St Helens parkrun takes place at Victoria Park, starting and ending at the Bandstand.

From its start in 2014 to April 2025, there have been:

- 489 events
- 13,854 different people taking part
- 126,535 total finishes
- 1,032 volunteers helping out (for more information on volunteering, visit: <https://www.parkrun.org.uk/sthelens/>)

Victoria Junior parkrun is a free 2km event just for 4–14 year olds and their families. It happens every Sunday morning at 9am in Victoria Park, St Helens.

From the start in 2017 to April 2025, there have been:

- 187 events
- 840 different children taking part
- 6,661 total finishes
- 258 volunteers helping out (for more information, visit: <https://www.parkrun.org.uk/victoriasthelens-juniors/>)

Sutton Manor parkrun is a 5k event that takes place at Bold Forest Park every Saturday morning at 9am. It includes a route past the amazing Dream sculpture.

From the start in 2017 to April 2025, there have been:

- 192 events
- 5,334 different people taking part
- 12,083 total finishes
- 425 volunteers helping out



3. Helping nature grow and stay healthy - The council will make sure parks and green spaces have lots of trees, plants, and wildlife so people can enjoy nature while living, working, and playing nearby.

What will we deliver	How will we deliver it	When will we deliver it	Who will deliver it
Helping nature in our parks and green spaces by changing how often the grass is cut or cleaned up, so plants and animals can grow and thrive. A clear plan will be made to do this and it will use smart ideas from other places to help. Some parks will get more grassy areas, wetlands like ponds, and woodlands to make better homes for wildlife.	- Some parks and green spaces could be turned into wildflower areas, like meadows, to help nature grow. The council is looking after these places in new ways to create a good mix across the borough. This helps bees, butterflies and other important insects (called pollinators) by giving them lots of flowers with nectar to feed on. - The council have different ways of caring for nature in parks - like letting wildflowers grow, mowing some areas more or less often, and planting flowers that last all year instead of ones that need replanting each season. These changes help nature, cut down on waste and reduce carbon. - The council will continue to look after <i>The Duckeries</i>, which used to be a coal site but is now a special place for visitors. It shows off three types of grassy areas - a wildflower meadow full of colourful plants, tidy grass for playing, and rougher grass that is great for nature and wildlife. - Working with local groups and other organisations to help protect nature and wildlife. By teaming up, the council can find ways to make parks and green spaces even better - adding more plants, helping animals find homes, and making sure nature can thrive.	- Short - Medium - Short - Medium	- Open Spaces Team - Environment and Climate Team

What will we deliver	How will we deliver it	When will we deliver it	Who will deliver it
cont-	- Continuing to support the Grow Back Greener programme run by the Woodland Trust. This project helps protect nature by planting more trees, making green spaces healthier, and giving wildlife better places to live. - Working with local community groups to help plant more trees, who make sure people know why trees are important and encourage everyone to get involved. By teaming up, the council can find places to plant trees and make green spaces even better for people and nature.	- Medium - Medium	- Open Spaces Team - Environment and Climate Team
Working to improve special areas, like rivers, canals and green paths, that are part of a big nature plan called the Liverpool City Region Ecological Network. These changes will help animals move around safely and give people more chances to walk, cycle and enjoy the outdoors.	- The council wants to connect all the important parks and green spaces so people can walk, cycle or scoot between them safely. They're working to make these spaces easier to get to by using paths, tracks and routes that support active travel. - Keep on encouraging people to visit green spaces across the wider Mersey area, like the Mersey Forest. They want to make it easier for everyone to explore and enjoy nature in lots of different places.	- Medium - Medium	- Open Spaces Team - Environment and Climate Team - Highways Infrastructure Team - Strategic Growth Department

CASE STUDY: HELPING NATURE GROW AND STAY HEALTHY

PLANTING TREES TO KEEP NATURE HEALTHY AND DIVERSE

St Helens is working with other towns and cities in the North of England to help create a huge new forest called the Northern Forest. It is a big plan to plant 50 million trees! The council is helping through a project called Grow Back Greener, which is led by the Woodland Trust and other nature groups like The Mersey Forest.

St Helens has received money to plant 246 large trees (each around 3 metres tall) and 8,325 smaller trees during winter 2024, in lots of different places across the borough.

The council has asked for more money to plant 201 extra trees in agreed places around the borough. They are also planning to improve the woods in Sherdley Park and The Duckeries by adding smaller trees.

Local gardening and community groups - like Rainford in Bloom - are helping out, using their knowledge to choose where trees should go. The bigger trees will be planted between November and March, which is the best time because the tree roots are resting during the colder months.



4. Looking after nature for the future - Our green spaces can help fight climate change by keeping the air clean and cutting down on pollution. This supports our climate goals and helps to protect the environment and reduce the effects of climate change.

What will we deliver	How will we deliver it	When will we deliver it	Who will deliver it
Making sure parks and green spaces work even better and are more connected. This involves careful planning and taking better care of these places to make the most of nature. This includes using trees, plant waste, and clean energy (biomass and renewables) from natural sources to bring benefits for people and the environment.	- Promote parks and nature areas by showing all of the different things they can be used for. - Support walking, cycling and scooting within and between parks, with safe paths and signs to help people get around. - Set rules to stop motorbikes from using paths meant for walking and cycling. - Explore ways to use clean energy like solar power, and make green spaces even better for more plants and animals (for Biodiversity Net Gain - BNG). - Find out how places like Carr Mill Dam could be used for nature and clean energy projects.	- Ongoing - Ongoing - Short - Medium - Short	- Open Spaces Team - Environmental and Climate Change - Strategic Growth Department - Planning Service

What will we deliver	How will we deliver it	When will we deliver it	Who will deliver it
Find out what areas may flood in the future and improve parks, green spaces and rivers with special systems that manage rainwater and flood water. This includes things like drains that soak up water slowly and places that can safely hold extra water when there's a lot of rain. These changes help keep homes, nature and people safe.	- Some places in the borough can flood when there is lots of rain, so it's important to keep checking which areas are at risk. The council are also looking at using parks and green spaces to help manage rainwater in smart ways - like adding special drains that soak up water slowly to stop flooding. - Some open spaces can help stop flooding if they are designed in smart ways. The council is looking for new places where parks or green areas can be made to soak up rainwater and help protect homes. They follow special guidance called SuDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems) 2020 to make sure water is managed safely and carefully.	- Ongoing - Ongoing	- Open Spaces Team - Environmental and Climate Change - Strategic Growth Department - Planning Service
Planting more trees and greenery in parks and open spaces to help clean the air, especially near busy roads, schools and homes. Trees can trap tiny bits of pollution in the air (particulates) and can cool down the air.	- Encourage walking, cycling and other fun ways to get around - especially by making safer paths for children to get to school. - Apply for money to help plant trees, especially along roads and near schools. This makes the area greener and healthier. - Find places in towns where trees can help cool things down - by managing parks, roads/routes. This helps fight climate change by making hot areas cooler and more comfortable.	- Ongoing - Short - Short	Strategic Growth Department

CASE STUDY:

LOOKING AFTER NATURE FOR THE FUTURE

NATURAL FLOOD MANAGEMENT (NFM) AND SUSTAINABLE URBAN DRAINAGE SYSTEMS (SUDS)

Leaky Dams (Sankey Valley) Project

- Leaky dams are special features added to landscapes to slow down rainwater and help stop flooding. They're good for the environment and can also create homes for wildlife.
- The Environment Agency says these dams are an important part of how we protect against flooding and climate change.
- A trial project using leaky dams has been set up in Sankey Valley Park to help with flooding further down the river.
- The council teamed up with Natural England, the Environment Agency and Liverpool University to carry out this special project.
- Four leaky dams were built using logs and planted hedges in the old mill dam. These slowed down water and held about 2,500 cubic metres - the same as an Olympic-sized swimming pool!
- The project did not just protect the area from flooding - it also helped clean the water, reduce pollution, support wildlife and gave volunteers a chance to learn new skills.
- More Natural Flood Management work is now being planned in the Sankey Valley area.
- Heavy rain can cause flooding, but there are clever ways to help stop it. Natural Flood Management (NFM) uses things like trees, plants and ponds to soak up water and slow it down. Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) include special drains and green spaces that help rainwater flow away safely, especially in towns and cities. Together, these systems protect homes, parks and nature from floods and help manage water in a safe and eco-friendly way.



5. Working with the community and partners to look after these spaces - Different groups of people, like the council, local teams, and even you, help look after our parks. This means these places stay high-quality, safe and fun.

What will we deliver	How will we deliver it	When will we deliver it	Who will deliver it
Looking into smarter ways to get extra money and help for green plans. This includes teaming up with nearby towns and cities, earning funds from new building projects, and creating a special pot called a “natural wealth fund” that can grow over time and support nature in the future.	Look for extra money from grants and other sources to help take care of green spaces across the area. This support can be used to improve parks, plant more trees and make nature spots even better for people and wildlife.	Ongoing	- Open Spaces Team - Environment and Climate Team - Planning Service - Policy Team
	Work with developers to make sure they help pay for green spaces nearby new houses.	Ongoing	
	Develop parks as great places for health and wellbeing, alongside effort to make them more welcoming and fun for everyone. Money should be raised through special projects relating to this.	Short	
	- Green space projects can get extra help through community payback schemes, where people give back to the community by helping out in parks and nature areas. There should also be chances for local people to get involved through volunteering. - Look into ways to let sports clubs and other groups take over certain buildings or spaces - when it makes sense to do so. This could help attract outside support and money to improve facilities, giving more people better places to play and get active.	- Short - Medium	

What will we deliver	How will we deliver it	When will we deliver it	Who will deliver it
cont-	- Look at different parts of the borough to see if they have too much/too little of certain things (like parks, playgrounds etc). - Making sure a site is being used in the correct way - developing a process which can be used for someone to check what is already available in the area.	- Short - Short	- Open Spaces Team - Environmental and Climate Team
Working together with local businesses and community groups to make projects stronger while inspiring more people to get involved through volunteering, through park-based groups and activities (social enterprises) which help people and nature while earning money.	- Working with different organisations to make green spaces better across the area. This includes teaming up with health groups to use parks for social prescribing, where spending time outdoors can help people feel better. Local volunteer groups, like “Friends of” parks, help care for nature areas, and allotment teams grow food and build stronger communities. These partnerships help parks stay healthy, active and fun for everyone. - Checking how other landowners, like schools that have become academies, use their land. They want to make sure these places are still open for local people to enjoy, like playing, relaxing or exploring nature. - Make sure schools and other learning places keep sharing their outdoor spaces with the community. Its important that these areas to stay open for local people to enjoy for a long time - like for playing, walking or joining in fun activities.	- Short - Short - Ongoing	- Open Spaces Team - Environment and Climate Team - Children and Young People Services Department

What will we deliver	How will we deliver it	When will we deliver it	Who will deliver it
Community asset transfer (giving local groups the chance to look after parks, buildings or spaces so they can be used and cared for by the community).	• Each park or green space will be looked at carefully to see if it is suitable for the community to manage. This means checking what other public spaces are nearby and making sure plans follow the rules for improving parks and open areas. • If the space is right, the council will help decide how people we be able to access it, relating to what already exists nearby and how this may interact with the space.	• Ongoing • Ongoing	• Open Spaces Team • Environment and Climate Team • Planning Service



CASE STUDY:

WORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY AND PARTNERS TO LOOK AFTER THESE SPACES

COMMUNITY PROJECTS AND FRIENDS OF GROUPS

In Colliers Moss North, work has been done to help nature return to moss land areas. Over 10,000 Cotton grass and 40,000 Sphagnum Moss plants were added to keep the ground wet and healthy. Old birch trees were also trimmed and treated to make space for more plants. This has helped improve the area so special birds, like Willow Tits, have a better place to live.

With money from a key agreement (Omega Section 106), Mersey Forest worked with Royal Mail to make a new woodland connecting Clock Face Woodland with Griffin Wood. The new area is 8.2 hectares and includes restored ponds and special grasslands for butterflies. Some of the tree planting was done by local community groups and Royal Mail staff, helping nature grow and bringing people together.

Community by Nature has been given funding to run special outdoor health sessions in Griffin Wood, where people take care of woodland areas and do other nature-based tasks. These activities have helped people feel happier, move more, and grow in confidence when visiting green spaces.

Work is being done to improve Red Brow Wood in Newton. This 4.41-hectare area is being regenerated, with help from Groundwork and Wargrave Big Local groups. These changes will make the area better for nature and more useful for people.

Victoria Park has had a community garden since 2013. It has 22 growing spaces in an area of the park, where people can grow their own fruit and vegetables and spend time in nature.

Rainford in Bloom is a charity group that works in Rainford village and nearby places to make gardens and open spaces look better. They get money from groups, like Saint Gobain, to do their projects - like the improvement of Rainford Linear Park.

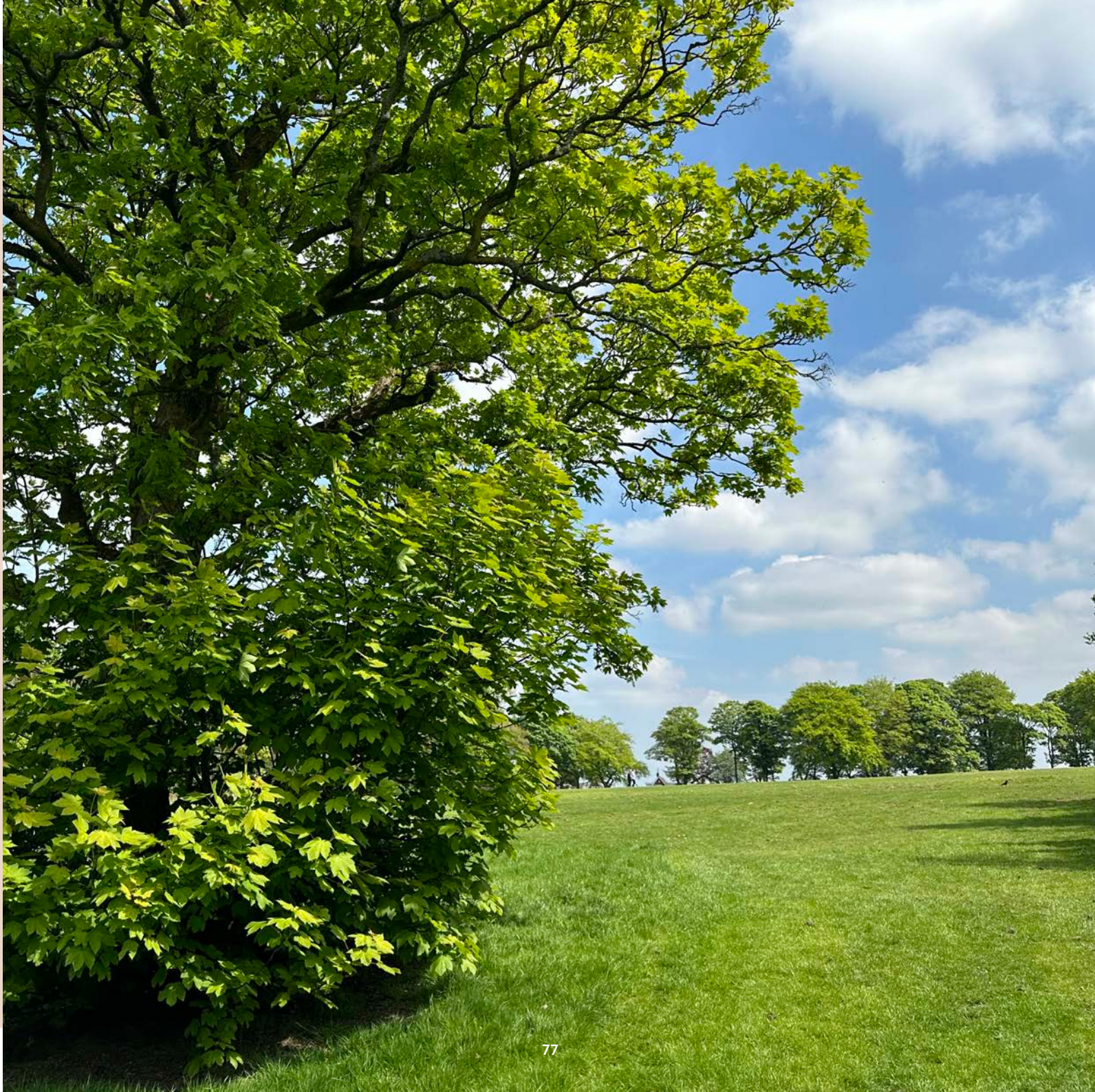


6. Developing Commercialisation & Funding opportunities - Services such as cafés and ice cream vans help make parks more lively and welcoming. They encourage people to visit more often, stay longer, and enjoy the space. They also support small businesses and help bring the community together in a fun and friendly way.

What will we deliver	How will we deliver it	When will we deliver it	Who will deliver it
Exploring how these fun outdoor spaces could attract more visitors and generate money (via things like cafés or outdoor activities) to go back into keeping the parks at the highest quality.	- Working with other groups to find fun and useful ways to make the most of green spaces across St Helens. These ideas could include: - Using open water for activities like fishing, paddle boarding and canoeing. - Opening cafés, food stalls and catering spaces. - Hosting concerts, outdoor theatre shows and live events. - Adding leisure activities such as funfairs, Padel tennis and fitness sessions with instructors. - Finding sponsors to make events even better and exciting. This extra money can improve activities, bring in cool new ideas, and make sure everyone has an even better time. - Find ways to make clean energy in/through our green spaces. This includes things like using plant waste to create power (called biomass) and earning rewards for helping the planet through carbon credits. These ideas could also help bring in money to support local nature projects.	Medium	- Open Spaces Team - Environment and Climate Team - Culture and Wellbeing Services - Property Services - Commercial Transformation Team
		Medium	
		Medium/ Long	

What will we deliver	How will we deliver it	When will we deliver it	Who will deliver it
Looking into smarter ways to get extra money and help for green plans. This includes teaming up with nearby towns and cities, earning funds from new building projects, and creating a special pot called a “natural wealth fund” that can grow over time and support nature in the future.	Look for extra money from grants and other sources to help take care of green spaces across the area. This support can be used to improve parks, plant more trees and make nature spots even better for people and wildlife.	Ongoing	- Open Spaces Team - Environment and Climate Team - Property Services - Planning Services - Commercial Transformation Team
	Work with developers to make sure they help pay for green spaces nearby new houses.	Ongoing	
	Develop parks as great places for health and wellbeing, alongside effort to make them more welcoming and fun for everyone. Money should be raised through special projects relating to this.	Short	
	Green space projects can get extra help through community payback schemes, where people give back to the community by helping out in parks and nature areas. There should also be chances for local people to get involved through volunteering.	Short	
	Look into ways to let sports clubs and other groups take over certain buildings or spaces - when it makes sense to do so. This could help attract outside support and money to improve facilities, giving more people better places to play and get active.	Medium	
	Look at different parts of the borough to see if they have too much/too little of certain things (like parks, playgrounds etc).	Short	
	Making sure a site is being used in the correct way – developing a process which can be used for someone to check what’s already available in the area.	Short	

What will we deliver	How will we deliver it	When will we deliver it	Who will deliver it
Investing and planning in green spaces to match the council's new plans for the environment and open spaces. This includes exciting work to make the Bold Forest Park even better and continuing improvements in Sankey Valley Park - helping nature grow and making outdoor spaces more fun and useful for everyone.	• The council is continuing to use special money from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to improve Sherdley Park and other green spaces. This support helps make parks better for people, wildlife and the environment. • Working alongside builders and groups that give money to make sure special parks get help first. This has worked with Sutton Park and Bankes Park, and particular places such as Sankey Valley, which is deemed as a future top quality site. • Deliver the Bold Forest Park Action Plan.	• Short • Medium/ Long • Short	• Open Spaces Team • Environment and Climate Team



CASE STUDY:

DEVELOPING COMMERCIAL & FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

REMINISCE AT SHERDLEY

Reminisce is a two-day music festival held in Sherdley Park, St Helens. It's for people aged 18 and over, and brings together music fans from all over the North West.

This year, around 22,500 people came to enjoy live bands, DJs, and lots of classic dance and pop music. The first festival was in 2014, with about 3,500 people. Since then, it's grown bigger every year, with changes made to make the site better after each event.

Now, the festival has seven music stages inside a fenced-off area of Sherdley Park. The fence goes up two weeks before the festival to get everything ready, and comes down two weeks after it ends.

Even when the Reminisce Festival is happening, Sherdley Park stays open for local people. Special paths are set up so everyone can still get to places like the children's play area and the skate park. Because lots of people visit, traffic controls are used around the park and across the town to help stop traffic jams.

The festival happens every September and brings money and jobs to the local area. This year, it made £30,000 for the council, which is used to improve parks all over the borough.

It also helps the local economy by giving people jobs and helping local businesses.

A vibrant festival poster for 're❤inisce 24' celebrating its 10th birthday. The background is a bright blue sky with white clouds and several birds in flight. In the foreground, there's a lush green field with yellow daisies and large orange and yellow flowers. A large, multi-colored swirl graphic (red, yellow, green, blue) is on the left. The text 're❤inisce 24' is prominently displayed in the center, with '10th birthday' and 'festival life' in smaller text. At the bottom, a large white swirl of whipped cream with colorful sprinkles sits on a rainbow-colored cupcake liner, with a single lit red and white striped candle on top. The overall theme is celebratory and nostalgic.

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re❤inisce 24
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reminisce festival

CASE STUDY:

DEVELOPING COMMERCIAL & FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

COMMERCIALISATION IN TAYLOR PARK

Taylor Park is the biggest Victorian park in St Helens and the second most visited. People like it for many reasons, but the café, visiting fairground, and special events make it stand out. These activities help bring in money, which is used to look after the park and make it even better.

The park has several things that help bring in money:

- The ice cream van
- The visiting fairground
- The Boathouse Café
- Taylor Park Visitor Centre

Together, these businesses bring in around £70,000 for the park, which easily covers things like routine repairs, vandalism and maintenance. This income is also used to improve the park. Improving areas like the quarry, which is currently closed off to the public, is something that could benefit the park and provide new spaces for people to enjoy.



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