



CUTTS CLOSE OAKHAM

Five Year Management Plan 2011 - 2016



Opening of new Toddlers' Play Area in May 2008

OAKHAM TOWN COUNCIL

www.oakhamtowncouncil.gov.uk

Cutts Close
Management Plan 2011 – 2016

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Foreword

Oakham Town Council is committed to providing high quality parks and open spaces throughout Oakham for the benefit of both residents and visitors.

Oakham is a thriving market town which has expanded considerably. Its population in 2001 was 10152 (source: Census 2001). The 2011 Census is likely to show an increase on this figure.

Cutts Close is the main park in Oakham, located only a short walk from the town centre. It is an important asset to both the Town Council and the local community. The aim of Oakham Town Council is to deliver a clean, green and safe environment for all those who use it.

Considerable improvements have been made to Cutts Close over the last few years: A skatepark was initially installed in 2004 and completely rebuilt in 2007 with funding from the Youth Opportunities Fund: A new toddlers' play area was built in 2008 at a cost of £68,000 and further equipment was added in 2010 for 8-13 year olds. Additional lighting was also installed in 2010, at a cost of £10,000, with the help of a 50% grant from the Welland Sub-regional Strategic Partnership. The most recent project has been the refurbishment of the bandstand and decoration of the shelter, street furniture and new play equipment for older children.

The flower beds surrounding the newly refurbished Bandstand are designed, planted and maintained by local award winning volunteer group, Oakham in Bloom.

This management plan has been written as a strategic Town overview for the management of the park and also looks outwardly at the wider environmental, social and economic agendas affecting open space. The plan will also enable the Council and its committees to keep focused on future strategic aims and will be updated and amended annually to reflect developments and changing priorities.

Section 1 Introduction

1.1 Frontispiece

This Management Plan is a statement of intent by Oakham Town Council to improve standards to ensure it provides the highest quality services possible.

1.2 Structure of the Management Plan

The plan is structured to provide easy access to information. It will be used as a first point of reference for those working within Cutts Close, whilst also providing information about the overall aims and objectives relating to the park. The Management Plan is split into the following sections:

Section 1 – **Introduction**

Section 2 – **Where are we now** outlines the baseline information relating to the park.

Section 3 – **Where do we want to get to** lays down the vision, aims and objectives for the park including analysis and assessment of park issues.

Section 4 – **How will we get there** identifies how the aims and objectives will be achieved.

Section 5 – **How will we know when we have arrived** sets out the proposed monitoring and review process.

1.3 Purpose of this Management and Maintenance Plan

- To inform any future, sustainable development of Cutts Close, and to confirm Oakham Town Council's aspiration to gain Green Flag Status.
- To set out a vision and a five-year action plan of improvement.
- To implement an evaluation programme following the Green Flag judging criteria and to provide an assessment of strengths and weaknesses
- To identify management needs and future objectives to improve the park
- To act as a master reference document for key information
- To demonstrate quality management to the local community, funding bodies and potential sponsors and represent both best practice and best value
- To ensure the needs of conservation and recreation are balanced

1.4 Who is the plan for?

The plan is primarily a working document for the Council and its committees to ensure continuous improvement. The plan will also be of use to the wider community for information and anyone involved in activities, work, town conservation or events within Cutts Close. This includes:

- Rutland County Council
- Oakham Town Partnership
- Oakham In Bloom
- Discover Rutland tourism team
- Tree Warden
- Contractors and maintenance staff
- Event organisers
- Other officers who may become involved in work at the park
- Health and safety officers
- Engineering services
- Highways services
- Other professional advisors and their contracted staff

1.5 Who will be responsible for the plan?

The Assistant Clerk will be responsible for the delivery and maintenance of this plan.

1.6 How and when will the plan be reviewed?

This five-year plan covers the period 2011 to 2016. Although there will be a reassessment of the plan on an annual basis to ensure accuracy. The master plan will be in electronic format and will be maintained and amended as necessary. The Town Clerk and Assistant Clerk will oversee the park's operation and development under the direction of Oakham Town Council and its Parks and Recreation Committee.

1.7 Government Guidance

In developing the Management Plan for Cutts Close it is important to recognise the current political and policy context local authorities are operating within. These national strategic contexts set out the framework and determine the aims and objectives for future management of parks and open spaces. Self assessing of the site will enable us to:

- Benchmark the quality across all of our sites
- Identify the strengths and weaknesses of each site
- Draw up an improvement plan for each site
- Strategically plan allocation of resources

A guide produced by CABI Space, sets out a structure for writing such plans to help the future management of green spaces.

Section 2 Where are we now?

Asset	Current Facilities & Services
<p>Cutts Close Church Street Oakham Rutland LE15 6AA</p> <p>Contact details: Oakham Town Council Victoria Hall 39 High Street Oakham Rutland LE15 6AH</p> <p>Tel 01572 723627</p> <p>enquiries@oakhamtowncouncil.gov.uk</p> <p>Web www.oakhamtowncouncil.gov.uk</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public toilets (Church Street) • Children's (8-13 years) equipment • Toddlers' play area • Skatepark • Bandstand • Shelter with seating • Car parking (Burley Road and Church Street) • Street Furniture • Established grass and bedding areas • Mature trees • Power and water supply • Events

2.1 Location and Size

The park is five acres in size and situated a two minute walk from the busy town centre, which contains a mixture of retail premises, services, offices, pubs and restaurants.

Oakham is situated in the picturesque Vale of Catmose and is the county town of Rutland, England's smallest mainland county.

2.2 Site History and Name

The history of Cutts Close is inextricably linked to Oakham Castle which is next to the park's southern boundary.

Oakham Castle was originally a motte and bailey-style castle, with embankments forming the inner bailey and Cutts Close forming the outer bailey. Little now remains of this apart from the inner bailey embankments.

The building as it is today, a Grade 1 listed Norman Great Hall, was built by Wakelin de Ferrers between 1180 and 1190AD. It is widely considered to be the finest example of Norman domestic architecture of its type in the UK and as such is unique. The Great Hall is listed in the Domesday Book and a 14th Century document describes it in considerable detail with a garden, fishponds and a moat. Cutts Close was the original site for these fishponds and medieval gardens and the word Cutts is thought to derive from the ancient word "cutte" meaning water channel.

Both the grounds of Oakham Castle and Cutts Close were classified as Scheduled Monument 17018 in the Ancient Monuments and Architectural Areas Act 1979 as “Oakham motte and bailey castle and medieval gardens”.

The ownership of Cutts Close was finally transferred, in 1943, from the Hanbury family to Oakham Urban District Council. This conveyance contained the covenant that “...the Council will use the said plot of land hereby conveyed for ever hereafter as an open space”

Subsequent changes in Local Government organisation finally saw ownership pass to Oakham Town Council in 1974.

The site was registered with the Land Registry in 2005 as Title Number LT375494



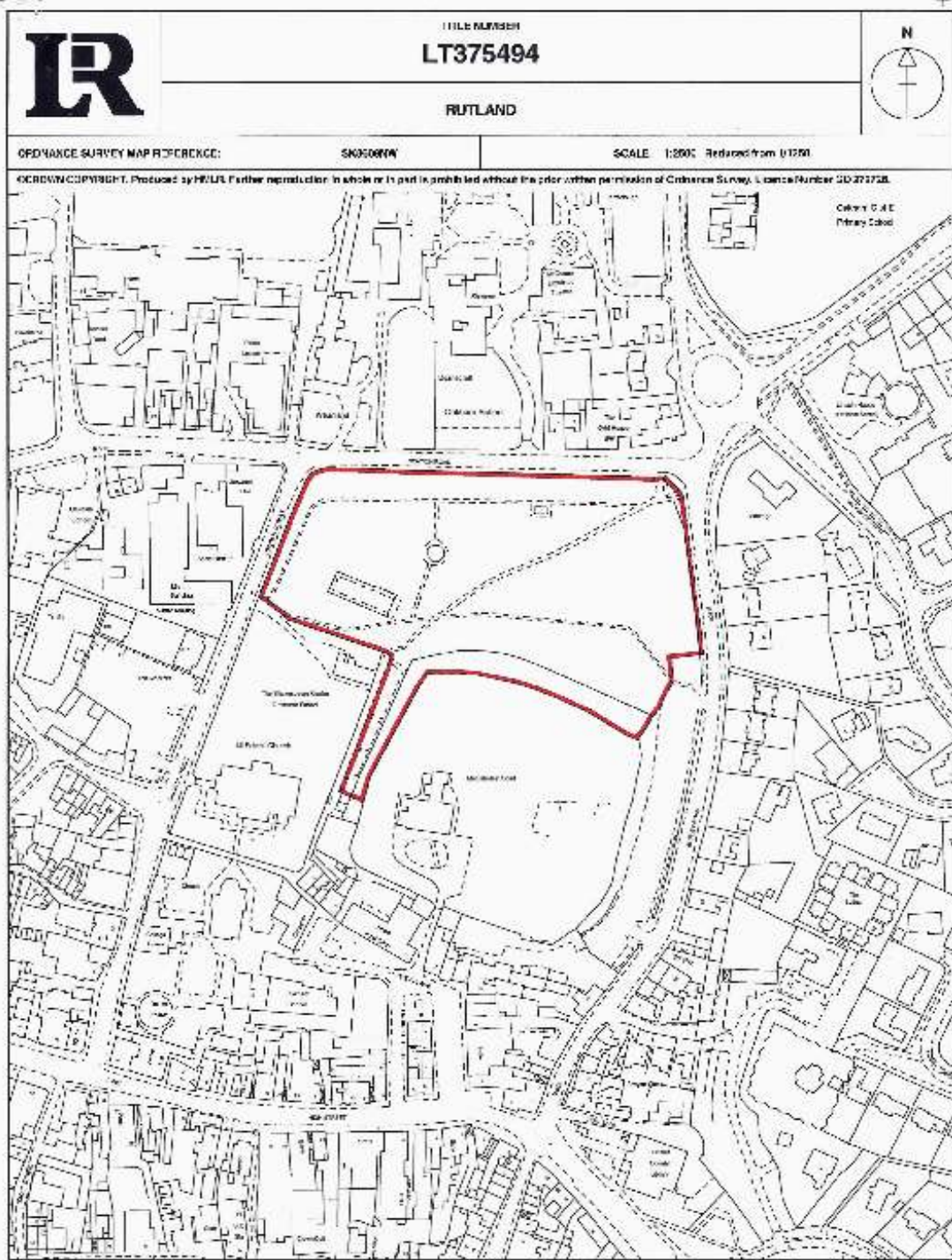
Cutts Close looking north east, with the original Old School in the foreground and the bandstand at its centre. Oakham Castle's site is out of the frame beyond the bottom right of the picture



Cutts Close looking north, showing the original bandstand and shelter. The wall in the foreground was later included in the enclosed toddlers' play area

Photography by Trevor Hickman
Reproduced with permission

2.3 Map



This title plan shows the general position of the boundaries; it does not show the exact line of the boundaries. Measurements scaled from this plan may not match measurements between the same points on the ground. For more information see Land Registry Public Guide 7 - Title Plans.

This official copy shows the state of the title plan on 21 June 2005 at 12:56:23. It may be subject to distortions in scale.

Under s.67 of the Land Registration Act 2002, this copy is admissible in evidence to the same extent as the original.

Issued on 21 June 2005.

This title is dealt with by the Leicestershire District Land Registry.

Title Number LT375494 Ordnance Survey Map SK8608NW Scale 1:2500

2.4 Access

The park is easily accessible by foot, by cycle and by car, from:

- Oakham's Market Square, via All Saints Church Passage (approximately 150m away)
- Burley Road (B668) (Nearest car park adjacent to Cutts Close)
- Church Street (Car Park 100m away)
- Railway Station (Station Road approximately 500m)
- Station Road (North eastern entrance)

Vehicular access is not generally permitted within the park. However, if necessary for maintenance purposes, vehicles only traverse footpaths which are approved for vehicular use. When large events are taking place in the park, vehicle access is gained from the north eastern corner at the junction of Burley Road and Station Road.



Via All Saints Passage



Via Burley Road & Car park

2.5 Park Hours

Due to the open nature of the park it is, in effect, always open and accessible; most people visit the park on a dawn until dusk basis.

The hours of work of any contractors are between 07.45 – 16.00.

The dog warden service and police officers also routinely patrol the area.

2.6 Description

The park is predominately a large, informal open space with grassy banks, floral displays and surrounded by impressive mature lime and chestnut trees. There is also a concrete and steel post and rail fence running around the perimeter which allows free pedestrian movement and does not impede sight lines.



2.7 Mature Trees and Wildlife

The treescape forms an integral part of the park. The mature lime trees help to frame a mature and aesthetically pleasing open space with a sense of history and belonging. The trees are considered to be of some wildlife value to the area.



A comprehensive arboricultural survey took place in the winter of 2006 and, as a result, some *de minimis* work took place. The survey will be repeated in 2011 in line with the recommendations contained in the report. However, the removal of basal epicormic growth is undertaken on an annual basis by suitably qualified professionals.

A full ecological survey of the park has never been undertaken but informal sightings of a wide variety of birds and grey squirrels have been reported. An active badger sett is located in the northern banks of the grounds of Oakham Castle which also forms the southern boundary to the park.

2.8 Car Parking

The Park does not have a car park. However, there is a long term pay and display car park next to the park on Burley Road and a short term pay and display car park 100m away on Church Street.

2.9 Lighting

Paths in the park are lit by 5m lamp post columns spaced at approximately 30m intervals. This was further augmented by the introduction, in 2010, of additional lighting in the passageway running to the east of All Saints Churchyard.

The columns are maintained by contractors acting on the Town Council's behalf.

2.10 Picnic Area

There are two picnic tables on grass to the north of the toddlers' play area. The Town Council has never considered introducing a more formal picnic area as it believes it would detract from the open and informal style of the park.

2.11 Toilets

There are no toilet facilities onsite, but there is a separate free to use toilet block in Church Street car park about 100m from the park. This was completed in May 2008 and was jointly funded by Oakham Town Council and Rutland County Council. The toilets are managed and maintained by the Town Council. The toilets contain male and female facilities and a separate nappy changing area. There is also a RADAR key accessible disabled facility that, along with a toilet and hand wash basin, also contains a bench, hoist and shower for those with complex needs. The toilets are constructed from local Clipsham stone under a blue tiled roof. They are open from 8.00am to 6.00pm daily throughout the year except Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.

The toilets are unmanned but are cleaned five times a day by contractors.

The toilets received a maximum five stars in the annual Loo of the Year award, following an unannounced visit and inspection in August 2010.

2.12 Play Areas

There is one main play area at the southwest side of the park. The toddlers' play equipment was installed in 2008 and replaced an existing facility that had become increasingly in need of updating. The site is a former paddling pool and incorporates fencing and safety surfacing and a wide range of equipment for those up to seven years of age. There is seating within the area and two self closing gates ensure maximum safety for young children playing in the area. There are various swings surrounding this area and in August 2010 Oakham Town Council was given permission by English Heritage to install some additional pieces of equipment for 8-13 year olds.



View of toddlers' play area looking north towards bandstand (prior to its refurbishment)



Toddlers' play area

2.13 Skatepark

Originally installed in 2004, the skatepark was completely rebuilt in October 2007. The 2007 project cost £25,000 and was funded entirely by a grant from the Youth Opportunities Fund. The grant was obtained following an application from young people themselves. The design of the new facility was greatly influenced by input from those who would be using it. Some slight modifications have subsequently been made.

The skatepark is positioned in a hollow on the south side of the park and during peak times in the summer is extensively used by skateboarders and BMX bike riders of all ages and abilities.

A local graffiti artist was commissioned to paint the facility in 2008.



Oakham's skateboard facility



View of skatepark from the Bandstand

The skatepark is inspected regularly for any defects and the Town Council allocates an annual sum towards its maintenance. The Council, in collaboration with the police and users of the facility, will be installing a floodlight to enable the facility to be used during the winter months.

It has been suggested, by those who use it, that the facility could be enlarged. However, English Heritage has indicated that they would be opposed to any such moves.

2.14 Bandstand

The Bandstand was officially opened in 1948 and gifted to the people of Oakham by the Finch family of Ayston Hall, near Uppingham.

It is situated centrally and was completely refurbished in May 2010 at a cost of £27,000. The work entailed replacing the roof, the stone steps and the floor and the removal and stripping back to bare metal of the iron railings prior to being repainted. The base was also re-rendered and re-pointed and capping stones internally bolted to the new flooring to prevent any movement.

It is of stone and timber construction with black and gold traditional iron railings and surrounded by traditional mixed shrub borders. The Bandstand is the focal point of the park and is an important part of the heritage of Oakham.

The Bandstand hosts band concerts and other events throughout the summer.



Newly refurbished bandstand May 2010

2.15 Shelter

There is a shelter situated on the north side of the park. This has a water supply and is used for storage.



Shelter

2.16 Land Tenure

The park is owned freehold by Oakham Town Council and registered with the Land Registry

2.17 Legal Factors, Bye Laws, Leases and Covenants

The land for Cutts Close was originally leased to Rutland County Council but its ownership was subsequently transferred to Oakham Urban District in 1943. This conveyance contains a covenant for the land to be used as an open space.

The overall maintenance and management of the park is undertaken under the Open Spaces Act 1906

As Cutts Close is classified as a Scheduled Monument, under the Ancient Monuments and Architectural Areas Act 1979, any new development requires the consent of English Heritage. The Town Council has built up a good relationship with the English Heritage officer responsible for the area. A condition of any new development is that an archaeological survey must take place and the Town Council has, again, built up a good relationship with the Archaeological Services team at the University of Leicester.

The park is not, as yet, covered by any specific laws or orders as the Town Council simply does not have the resources necessary to carry out enforcement. The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 gives a parish council the power to introduce specific measures if it considers they are appropriate. This Act covers such things as dog control, littering, flyposting and graffiti, and amended other previous Acts of Parliament. Guidance produced by DEFRA would be used if it was ever considered necessary to introduce measures to combat such issues.

The main path running from the north east corner to the southern boundary is a designated footpath, E206, and as such the riding of bicycles is prohibited on that footpath.

An Alcohol Designation Order is in force throughout Oakham which gives police officers discretionary powers to confiscate alcohol from over 18s. The Order was introduced in 2009 with the full support of the Town Council under the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001.

Leicestershire Constabulary carries out enforcement where appropriate.

Legislation	Relevance	Responsibility
Crime and Disorder Act 1998	Community safety, nuisance and antisocial behavior	Police
Highways Act 1980	Illegal access by motor vehicles Including motorbikes	Police
The Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996	Fines, education and disposal	Rutland County Council
Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 (Alcohol Designation Order)	Community safety, nuisance and antisocial behavior	Police

2.18 Local Demographics & Current Users

Local population data for residents of **Rutland**, the main users of the park, compiled in 2009 using the Office of National Statistics population estimates

Aged 0-14	Aged 15-29	Aged 30-64	Aged 65-84	Total
6,500	7,000	17,400	6,500	37,400

The park caters for a wide range of uses

- Informal recreation such as walking and light exercise
- Picnicking, relaxing and sunbathing
- Children's play
- Acts as a town centre thoroughfare for residents from the north east of the town
- Informal outdoor games
- Community events and musical performances
- Somewhere to sit, eat and meet
- Skateboarding and BMX biking

2.19 Employment Data

Rutland has an employment figure of 14,400 with 80% of these employed in service industries. These figures were obtained from the Office of National Statistics business enquiry employee analysis undertaken in 2008

2.20 Social Deprivation

Rutland is ranked 148th out of 149 county councils by 'Rank of Average Score' in the indices of deprivation. Number 1 (Liverpool) has the highest level of deprivation, whilst Woking (149th) has the lowest.

2.21 Tourism

Research was undertaken in 2009 on behalf of East Midlands Tourism, EMDA's regional tourism development body, by Global Tourism Solutions Ltd using the Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Model (STEAM)

Tourism generates approximately £85.79 million for the Rutland economy and approximately 1,800 people in the county are employed in tourism related industries.

Some 257,070 overnight trips were made to Rutland in 2009. The average length of stay in commercial tourist accommodation was 2.20 nights, equating to some 566,320 tourist days. Visitors who stay in serviced tourist accommodation represented the largest category of over-night staying visitors to Rutland (58%), albeit the average length of stay was 1.71 nights. Day visitors are the largest by far the largest category of any visitor making some 1.37 million individual trips throughout the calendar year.

Section 3

Where do we want to get to?

3.1 Introduction

Oakham Town Council has made a commitment to improve parks throughout Oakham and will be using the Green Flag criteria as a benchmark on quality and sustainability.

3.2 Vision

Oakham Town Council will seek to continually improve the parks and open spaces in Oakham where both appropriate and sustainable and wishes them to continue to be a focus for community activities.

3.3 Aims

- To provide a safe, healthy and secure park for all users
- To achieve a consistently high standard of cleanliness and maintenance
- To promote and demonstrate environmental sustainability
- To protect and promote the heritage and conservation value
- To enable community participation and involvement
- To promote the park by maximising marketing opportunities and tourism
- To ensure effective management and corporate support

3.4 Objectives

- To ensure that Cutts Close remains as a special area for recreation and enjoyment for present and future users
- To ensure that the character of the park is respected and retained for the people of Oakham
- To ensure that the strong vegetation structure is retained for the future
- To encourage continued public use
- To ensure the park is safe for public use and does not feel intimidating

3.5 The Green Flag Criteria

The Civic Trust oversees the Green Flag Award. The scheme was first launched in 1996 and it has become a recognised national standard for publicly accessible parks and open spaces.

It is a quality award recognising well maintained green spaces and encourages high standards to be achieved and sustained.

The eight judging criteria are as follows:

- A welcoming place
- Healthy, safe and secure
- Well maintained and clean
- Sustainable
- Conservation and heritage
- Community involvement
- Marketing
- Management

3.6 A Welcoming Place

The park is at the heart of Oakham. It can be accessed by four main entrances and site-specific signage has never been considered necessary.

Overgrown shrub areas have been pruned back, and flowering shrubs planted to create all round seasonal interest.

A programme of painting has been carried out to improve the appearance of lampposts, bins and seating.

Play areas have been refurbished, providing a clean and safe environment with all conforming to current British Standards. Quarterly inspections are carried out by an external company.

There are four paths into the park including one vehicular access from Burley Road (B668). These tarmac paths are well maintained and run around and through the park. The paths are wide enough to accommodate most pushchairs and wheelchairs and those with mobility difficulties. However the topography of the park is not level and therefore some caution must be exercised.

There are numerous benches throughout the park. These are well maintained and repainted annually. Benches are gradually being replaced to ensure a uniformity of design.

Strengths

- Easily accessible site
- Seating areas
- Well maintained toilets and parking nearby
- Play areas for different ages
- Centrally located

Weaknesses

- No wheelchair access into the bandstand
- No signage

Threats

- Antisocial behavior as the park is open at all times

3.7 Healthy, Safe and Secure

Oakham Town Council has a legal responsibility and is committed to ensuring employees and visitors who visit or work within parks and surrounding areas can do so safely.

The park has adequate lighting. An alcohol ban is in place and enforced. It is important that acts of antisocial behaviour are addressed quickly so they do not become the norm. This allows the public to feel safe and secure.

Street furniture (bins, benches and lamp posts) are uniform and well maintained.

In addition it is important all facilities and equipment are maintained in a safe condition and all working practices have been adequately risk assessed to safeguard employees, contractors and the public. Play equipment conforms to the appropriate British Standards and is inspected quarterly. Any work required as a result of these inspections is actioned as soon as possible.

All relevant contractors are briefed accordingly to carry out specific duties within the park and during events volunteers are trained and supervised.

- Risk Assessments are carried out annually
- Safe working procedures are required of all contractors
- Recognised First Aiders are in place during events
- Regular inspections of play equipment and power to the bandstand

Oakham Town Council does not operate an out of hours service for emergencies.

3.8 Dog Fouling

Under the Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996, enforcement of this law is carried out by Rutland County Council.

3.9 Toilets

The nearby Church Street toilets are managed by Oakham Town Council and have appointed a local cleaning company to maintain them. The toilets are cleaned five times a day to ensure an exceptionally high standard of cleanliness and hygiene. The toilets are open from 8.00am to 6.00pm daily throughout the year except Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.

3.10 Promoting Well Being

Good access encourages residents from the north west of the town to cut through to the town centre promoting walking and leaving the car at home.

- **Exercise** for people to walk their dogs, joggers and local workforce at lunch times
- **Relaxing** for people picnicking, sunbathing or just to sit. There are areas for peace in an attractive environment, so achieving a balanced stress-free lifestyle
- **Socially** for the community as a meeting place and music performances
- **Safe** play areas for children to play and stretch themselves

3.11 Risk Assessment for Cutts Close

Item	Hazard	Seriousness of potential injury	Likelihood	Measures
Paths	Slips and trips	Low	Medium	Paths are generally in good order
Trees	Falling branches	Medium	Medium	Trees are informally inspected regularly by the Tree Warden and contractors. Maintenance work carried out as necessary. Five yearly full arboricultural survey undertaken
Children's Play Area	Injury from playing on equipment	Low	Medium	The equipment and installation conform to current British Standards. Quarterly inspections carried out by qualified inspectors
Toddlers' Play Area	Injury from playing on equipment	Low	Medium	The equipment and installation conform to current British Standards. Quarterly inspections carried out by qualified inspectors
Skatepark	Injury from playing on equipment	Low	Medium	The equipment and installation conform to current British Standards. Quarterly inspections carried out by qualified inspectors
Dogs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attack from a dog • Contact with dog mess 	<p>Low</p> <p>Medium</p>	<p>Medium</p> <p>Medium</p>	Dog safety is promoted through the dog warden from Rutland County Council
Public Safety	Antisocial behavior and crime	Medium	Low	Police officers carry out enforcement where appropriate

3.12 Well Maintained and Clean

- **Litter and dog waste management**

Oakham Town Council employs a contractor who is responsible for the daily clearing of rubbish and emptying of bins.

- **Grounds Maintenance**

Oakham Town Council employs a contractor for its grounds maintenance and the standard has improved steadily over the years. Please see Appendix 1 for the current Grounds Maintenance Schedule and Appendix 2 for comments from In Bloom judges relating to Cutts Close.



Floral displays are limited due to the area's designation as a Scheduled Monument so Oakham in Bloom has focused on the beds around the bandstand.



- **Building Maintenance**

Cutts Close prides itself on being safe clean and green. The Town Council views the park as a focal point in the heart of Oakham and its aim is to provide a positive image of the park.

Oakham Town Council has a good working relationship with local contractors who can action minor repairs immediately. Larger repairs are dealt with as quickly as possible.

- **Equipment Maintenance**

All play areas are inspected quarterly by an independent, qualified inspector.

3.13 Sustainability

Oakham Town Council recognises the importance of ensuring that the methods used in maintaining the park are environmentally sound.

- **Resource Conservation**

To reduce water requirements Oakham In Bloom has designed a planting scheme that provides all year interest with no watering.

- **Environmental policies and Waste Minimisation**

Oakham Town Council employs a contractor for its grounds maintenance. The company was awarded registration to the ISO 14001 standard in October 2002. As part of the ISO 14001 system the company has in place its own environmental policy. The company is particularly proactive in the recycling of grass cuttings and the shredding of green waste from the pruning of trees, hedges and shrubs. As part of this commitment to green waste management, the company has invested some £35,000 in a green waste centre including an £18,000 Pezzolato waste shredder. In respect of this contract, any woody tree and shrub prunings will either be chipped on site and disposed of to existing shrub beds, or removed off site and chipped up.

- **Proposed use of Herbicides and Pesticides**

Wherever possible, the company will endeavour to reduce the use of herbicides by the use of recycling tree and shrub prunings, used as mulch onto shrub beds and borders. The company regularly reviews its requirement for utilising herbicide as part of its environmental objectives.

3.14 Conservation and Heritage

Cutts Close is not believed to hold a high nature conservation value. However, the trees are a good source of habitat for birds and other wildlife.

The park is a green area in the middle of a busy market town and the mature lime trees are a major feature of the area. The planting is traditional and in keeping with this type of park from the last century.

The park is surrounded by residential and commercial properties.

3.15 Community Involvement

Information on the park's users and visitor numbers is at present limited to current and past informal observations. However the park is used by a wide variety of people, including young people, older people, families, local residents, those participating in events, shoppers, school students and tourists.

Oakham Town Council endeavours to promote and encourage public involvement and support in maintaining tidiness and reducing any environmental impacts. When events take place there is an excellent record of tidiness.

Oakham Town Council is working with and actively developing new relationships with a number of groups and organisations across a range of activities.

- **Oakham In Bloom**

Oakham In Bloom was formed in August 1997 - the committee consists of volunteers drawn from the community and works in partnership with Oakham Town Council, Rutland County Council, schools and youth groups, voluntary organisations, residents and businesses. The committee and their gardening and fundraising volunteers strive to: improve the environment for people who visit, work and live in the town; reduce graffiti, vandalism and litter; encourage the community to plant and care for flowers, trees and shrubs.



Oakham in Bloom volunteers working on the flower beds around the Bandstand

- **Oakham Town Partnership**

Its overall aim is to create a vibrant town that provides an exceptional quality of life for Oakham's residents, businesses and visitors.

- **Provision for the Community**

Cutts Close offers the community a wide range of facilities for all ages including well equipped play areas, formal seating throughout the park and picnic benches.

3.16 Marketing

The park is well known to local residents. Various events are held throughout the year which also advertised in the local media and on Oakham Town Council's website.

The web site www.oakhamtowncouncil.gov.uk contains general information about the Town Council, contact details and information about how to comment, compliment or complain to the council.

Throughout the year various events are held in Cutts Close:

- **Oakham Carnival and Fun Day**
- **Rutland Dog Day**
- **Summer Concerts**
- **Funfair**
- **Animal free Circus**

The following appeared in the bandstand during the Summer of 2010 and a similar schedule will be in place during Summer 2011. The bandstand is licensed for musical performances.

4th July - Rutland Concert Band
11th July - Ouse Valley Jazz Band with Angela
25th July - Kibworth Band
8 August - Wrinkle Rock
29th August - Youth Brass 2000
26th September – Bandstand Marathon

In addition the park hosts Churches Together for an annual gathering at Pentecost attended by around a thousand people in 2010.



In recent years Cutts Close has also been the setting for major youth events.

3.17 Management

Parties involved in the management and development of the park.

Representatives include:

- The Parks and Recreation Committee meets monthly and consists of all members of Oakham Town Council. The committee has delegated authority to deal with issues relating to the open spaces the Town Council is responsible for as well as spending money allocated to it in the budget. The committee may also make recommendations to the Town Council on such issues as it sees fit and these are considered by the Town Council prior to a decision being made.
- Neighbourhood Safety representatives, comprising Rutland County Council, the police and the police community safety officer;
- Oakham In Bloom
- Tree Warden
- Oakham Town Partnership
- Tourism Team – Discover Rutland
- The Town Clerk and Assistant Clerk

- **Finance**

Below are details of expenditure on the park in 2009 – 2010 and the estimated spend in 2010 - 2011

Expenditure Type	2009/10 (£)	2010/11 (£ Estimated)
Play Equipment Maintenance	3500	3500
Other Maintenance	600	500
Utility Services	50	50
Insurance	Included in Council's Public Liability Insurance	Included in Council's Public Liability Insurance
Grounds Maintenance	10000	10500
Capital Expenditure *	30000	3000
Licences	70	70
Play Area Inspections	140	140

***Capital Expenditure**

2009 – 2010 £28000 to refurbish and paint the bandstand.
£ 2000 for additional painting

2010 – 2011 £ 3000 for provision of 6 new benches (subject to Council approval)

• Financial Management

Cutts Close receives some income from hosting events. This is relatively minor as community non-profit making events are allowed free use. The grounds maintenance is part of the overall contract for Oakham Town Council and equates to approximately 50% of the total value of the contract.

Community Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake regular satisfaction surveys • Promote and encourage use of the park by local schools for educational visits • Ensure that the range of features and activities on offer are in line with local community needs
Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure high park profile locally • Develop a link from OTC web site to include site specific information • Annual review and update of Interpretation material
Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the Management Plan is followed and regularly reviewed • Ensure suitable financial commitment • Ensure a fundamental review in 2016 • Attain and retain a Green Flag Award • Monitor annual revenue spending • Provide adequate training for all staff and volunteers involved in managing and maintaining the park • Set out and monitor key performance indicators

Section 5

How will know when we have arrived?

5.1 Action Plan 2011 - 2016

- This section sets out the intended actions and improvements to improve Cutts Close over the next five years.
- This is the first management plan Oakham Town Council has written for Cutts Close. It will enable the Town Council to track progress and outline achievable targets in a realistic time frame.
- The contents of the management plan will be in line with the expectations of the community.
- Oakham Town Council will implement the action plan, with support from relevant partners.
- This plan will act as a working document and will be subject to change and improvement.
- New strategies and policies may affect the plan during the course of the five years and these will be incorporated if relevant.
- A fundamental review will be taken in year five (2016). A thorough investigation will be made to evaluate whether objectives were met.

Cutts Close Action Plan 2011 – 2016

Aim	Description	Estimated Cost	Action
Create a Welcoming Place	Paint railings, swings and street furniture	£2,200	Completed 2010 – Review 2012
	Clean Toddlers' Play area	£300	Annually
	Paint benches	£1000	Annually
	Ensure suitable planting	£	
	Provide directional and welcome signage	£1,500	Liaise with English Heritage 2011
Healthy, Safe and Secure	Additional lighting to the skatepark	£300	Sourcing funding
	Ensure weekly informal inspections	Officer time	Ongoing
	Quarterly inspection of play equipment	£140 per annum	Ongoing
Well Maintained & Clean	Replacement of bins	£500 per bin	As required
	Replacement of benches	£500 Per bench	6 due in Spring 2011 (Subject to Council approval)
	Promote positive liaison with Community Officer	Officer time	Good links with the police and RCC
	Review maintenance schedules and tender	£10,000 Per annum	April 2011 – 2013
	Refurbish planted areas	£100 per annum	Rolling programme
Sustainability	Level of recycling	0	Completed
	Reduce the need of herbicides	Operational	
	Reduce the need for watering	0	Completed
Conservation and Heritage	Carry out tree survey	£500	December 2011

Community Involvement	Conduct user and satisfaction surveys	Officer Time	2011 – 2016
	Consultation with the community	Officer Time	2011 - 2016
	Promote and encourage use by schools	Officer Time	2011 – 2016
Marketing	Develop a site specific section on website	Officer Time	2011
	Work with Discover Rutland to ensure higher profile	Officer Time	2011
Management	Ensure this Management Plan is adhered to, and updated and regularly reviewed	Officer Time	Review in January 2012
	Ensure a fundamental review of the plan	Officer Time	2016
	Monitor annual review spending	Officer Time	April 2011

Conclusion and Summary

Cutts Close is the main focal point for leisure in Oakham Town Centre. The Town Council is committed to ensuring it remains as such. Much improvement has taken place in the park and the Town Council wishes to ensure this process continues. However, given its status as a Scheduled Monument any further development is unlikely. The overall management of the park has always been a part of the Town Council's work and this document is seeking to put this work on a more formal level.

The Town Council believes this Management Plan will ensure the park continues to provide an important informal recreational space for residents and visitors and safe enjoyment for all those who use it.



View of Cutts Close from Church Passage looking north

APPENDICES

GROUNDS MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME 2010 - 2011

Cutts Close

	Occ.	Comments	April 2009	May 2009	June 2009	July 2009	Aug 2009	Sept 2009	Oct 2009	Nov 2009	Dec 2009	Jan 2010	Feb 2010	March 2010
			WEEK BEGINNING											
Grass Cutting	32	Weekly From April 6 To Sept 7	6,12, 19,26	4,10, 17,24	1,7,14, 21,28	5,12, 19,26	2,9,16, 23,31	6,13, 20,27	11,25	1 if required			1 if required	7,21
Edge Trimming	32	As per grass Cutting	6,12, 19,26	4,10, 17,24	1,7,14, 21,28	5,12, 19,26	2,9,16, 23,31	6,13, 20,27	11,25	1 if required			1 if required	7,21
Hedges	1	Southern boundary hedging to be pruned back to fence line in March												
Litter	362	Daily throughout year Excluding Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Years day												
Waste Bins	365	Daily throughout year Excluding Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Years day												
Hard Areas Sweep	362	Daily throughout year Excluding Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Years day												

Judges' Comments – with special reference to Cutts Close

All the comments below are extracted from the published judges' notes and given to all contestants in the East Midlands in Bloom (EMIB) and Britain in Bloom competitions.

The Royal Horticultural Society runs the In Bloom competitions and therefore adds more credence to their opinions.

2005 East Midlands in Bloom (EMIB)

Oakham should consider developing the Cutts Close area. With careful consideration the impact of the bandstand could be accentuated with suitable planting. This areas obvious attribute as a focal point within Oakham would then, we feel, be strengthened further

2005 Britain in Bloom

Increase the width and standard of the path used to access Cutts Close near the churchyard.
Restore a grass verge

2006 EMIB

Cutts Close continues to improve, but is rather stark on its banks and would benefit from appropriate planting and management perhaps along part of its southern margins

2007 Britain in Bloom

The new beds in Cutts Close are one of the many examples of excellent community involvement. The judges encourage boldness in further development to ensure the style and substance of additional planting is in proper scale with its environment

2008 EMIB

The judges were particularly impressed by the improvements to Cutts Close and the churchyard. They were also impressed by the high quality of the new children's playground at Cutts Close

2009 EMIB

The higher standards of maintenance in Cutts Close were particularly apparent since this judge's last visit in 2005. Excellent quality street scene complemented by well-chosen and maintained furniture (Mel Henley last judged Oakham in 2005)

2009 Britain in Bloom

The judges support the bids of Cutts Close and the bandstand in securing a Green Flag site
2010 EMIB

The level of recycling being achieved was impressive as were the high levels of cleanliness throughout the town centre and park