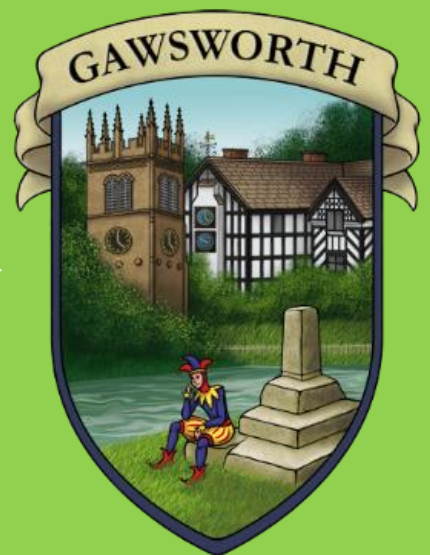




Gawsworth Park

Management Plan 2020-2030





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Where we are now

Introduction

Gawsworth is a rural parish close to Macclesfield in the north of Cheshire East. Gawsworth Park is the principal open space for the community of Gawsworth and one of five open spaces within the parish. The park is owned and managed by Gawsworth Parish Council and the emerging Gawsworth Neighbourhood Plan designates it as a Local Green Space.

Formerly known as the Gawsworth Playing Field, the park was redeveloped in 1971 by the Parish Council with financial aid from Cheshire County Council, Macclesfield Rural District Council and the National Playing Field Association, reopening on June 3rd, 1972. It was redeveloped again in 2005, when it was renamed Gawsworth Park and the majority of the equipment in the park dates from this renovation.

This is the first management plan for Gawsworth Park and follows a commitment made in Gawsworth Parish Council's first Strategic Plan (2016-2020) to set out a management plan for a ten-year period (GPC, 2016). This plan has been instigated in recognition that the park will require investment in the next decade as play equipment may begin to reach the end of its usable life – the council is already having to undertake repairs to parts of the equipment to ensure they remain safe and usable.

Parks and Open Spaces are hugely important to a community. 90% of households with children under five visit their local park at least once a month (HLG, 2016) with the most common reasons for visiting including going for independent walks, seeing nature, enjoying peace and quiet and taking children for play (CLG, 2017). CLG research also highlighted the importance of parks to both physical and mental health (2017). This highlights how important Gawsworth Park is for our community and is the reason the council places such high importance on its continued preservation and good management.

Site Description

Gawsworth Park is located to the western side of Gawsworth Village bordered by private homes and Gawsworth Scout and Village Halls. It sits lower than the A536 the retaining wall of which forms part of the boundary to the north-west side of the park. The park is an irregular plot of land covering 3.65 acres and comprising:

- Football Pitch
- Wooden Trim Trail
- Basketball hoop
- Enclosed play area (ages 1-6)
- Open play area (ages 6-12)
- Picnic Area
- Tennis Court
- Table Tennis Table

The majority of the equipment was installed in 2004/05. The most recent changes in park

management have been the installation of a concrete table tennis table (2014) and the removal of fees for use of the tennis court (2018).



Figure One: Outline of the park within the village

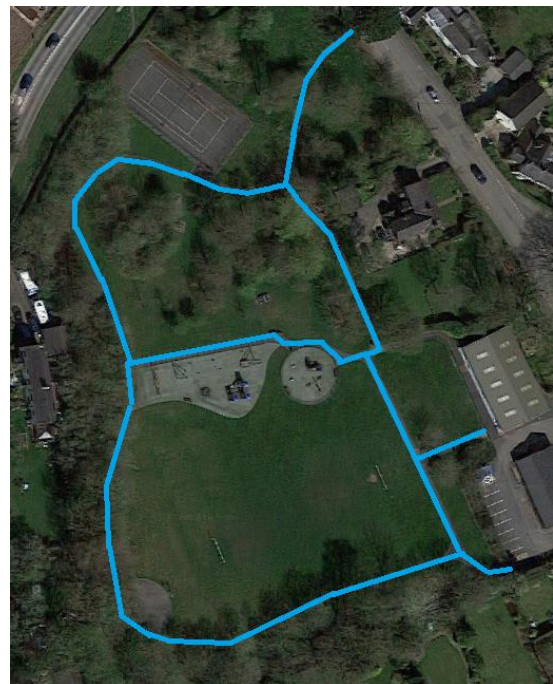
The park benefits from its location next to two community halls and their car park. This enables the park to be utilised for community events and, if utilised, can provide toilet facilities. The community shop (proposed to be a community hub incorporating a café) is a three-minute walk away.

There are four access points to the park, two of which are in use. The two entrances are both gated and accessed from the car park, one is down a small number of steps, the other via a ramp, providing an accessible entrance. The third access is also off the car park, a double gated vehicular access which is reserved for maintenance. A fourth entrance was directly onto Church Lane but was sealed due to inconsiderate parking affecting residential properties.

Tarmacked paths run from each of the entrances and allow users of the park to travel to the majority of the facilities in the park.

Drainage was installed in the park as part of the 2004 refurbishment but has begun to fail leaving the play area unusable at times. The park was designed with two wetland areas and wide borders for wildlife.

The grass below the Scout Hall is used by the scouts for their activities and benefits from being lit by the hall floodlights. It will be left clear to ensure this can continue.



Where do we want to get to?

What we know

The Parish Council undertook consultation with users of the park in 2017/18. 57 responses were received through an open session in the village hall and online/paper questionnaires.

- 65% of users rated the park as good or excellent
- The football field, paths for bicycles and table tennis were noted as the key highlights
- The absence of toilets and ban on dogs were the most noted negatives, although the lack of dogs was highlighted as a positive too
- The top suggestions for improvements were a rope swing, outdoor gym, skatepark MUGA, monkey bars, BBQ area and climbing wall. The top second suggestions were toilets, rollerblading, sensory garden, refreshments, lighting and football nets

In preparing this management plan the council recognised the need to provide space for the older population of the village such as additional seating within a community orchard and sensory garden.

Vision

By 2030 Gawsworth Park will feature a range of facilities for users of different ages including young children, teenagers and the older population. It will be a bustling facility well used by the community for play and relaxation year-round. New facilities will have been installed to expand on the offer and the park will have attained Green Flag status. There will be an active *Friends of Gawsworth Park* group providing greater community say on the management of the park.

Aims and Objectives

Aim: Gawsworth Park offers facilities for all

To meet this aim the council will:

- a) Replace the equipment in the two play areas as it reaches the end of its serviceable life
- b) Develop an area of the park aimed at the older population including a community orchard and sensory garden
- c) Install a covered BBQ area
- d) Maintain basketball and tennis provision
- e) Install outdoor gym equipment and trim trail items (including monkey bars)
- f) Install a rope swing, supernova and spiders nest swing
- g) Install a small skate park comprising around three ramps

The play area is one of the key facilities in the park and many items are reaching the end of their serviceable life. The council will look to replace items throughout the plan period to ensure that children continue to enjoy a variety of equipment.

To meet the needs of the older population in Gawsorth the council will install a community orchard and sensory garden in the north-east section of the park. This will be a quiet area of the park and provide something the community does not already have. As part of this it will review whether this entrance should be reopened. The sensory garden will need to be carefully designed to create an accessible and attractive space for its users.

A covered (or uncovered, depending on costs) BBQ area will be installed in the south-east area of the park, designed carefully to minimise any disturbance to the existing park facilities.

The tennis court is mossy and the ground beneath part appears to have subsided, leaving a dip in the court. The net is in need of replacement and the fencing has holes. The council will investigate the option of converting this into a MUGA which could be used for a wider range of games, otherwise it will undertake maintenance of the courts.

Subject to a decision on the MUGA, the council will look to lower the basketball hoop and investigate resurfacing the court with a wet-pour in place of the harder asphalt, markings will be considered as appropriate.



Figure Three: Spiders web swing and Supernova

Outdoor exercise equipment provides a free option for users to keep fit. Two items are now at the end of their life and will be removed, to be replaced with monkey bars and pull up bars. Two pieces of outdoor gym equipment will be installed near the play area.

One of the most requested items of play equipment was a rope swing, there are a number of areas in the park that could host this. A Spiders web swing and supernova have also been identified for installation and the play area will be expanded to accommodate this.

Skate ramps have been highly desired by the over twelves for a number of years. There is a large skate park in Macclesfield, but our young residents want something they can use without travelling outside the village, close to home. The council recognises that a full skatepark would be inappropriate in the park but that a small number of ramps could provide the children with what they desire. The area near the basketball court could be a suitable location for this, although consideration will need to be given to the impact this could have

on neighbouring properties. An alternative space is near the tennis courts, but it is recognised this would be detrimental to the creation of a peaceful sensory garden.

Aim: Gawsworth Park is well maintained and accessible

To meet this aim the council will:

- a) Undertake works to improve the drainage in the park
- b) Rationalise the signage at entrances to the park and install signage to match the council's corporate identity
- c) Resurface the paths as necessary to ensure accessibility around the park
- d) Undertake a review of seating and benches

Land drains were installed in 2008 and are likely reaching the end of their life tackling the poor drainage on the football field is the council's highest priority.

The signage installed at the entrances to the park features a number of logos from previous funders and supplementary signage provides user information (no dogs, smoke free site etc) – this could be combined. The council has since adopted a logo and more defined style which if included on the signage will help develop community identity.

The paths around the park are generally in a good condition, but the south and eastern paths were gravel-surfaced rather than tarmac. They have narrowed and deteriorated over the past few years and require upgrading.



Figure Four: Narrow paths need widening and resurfacing

The table tennis table is a popular facility in the park. It is the only facility which is not connected to a path and users must walk across a short stretch of grass to reach it, the council has considered installing a path but decided not to at this stage, unless there is demand from the community.

The council has not undertaken a review of the seating in the park for some time. It would be prudent to consider if the form and location of the different seats (benches/picnic tables etc) is sufficient and identify improvements.

Aim: Gawsworth Park involves the community

To meet this aim the council will:

- a) Establish a *Friends of Gawsworth Park* community group
- b) Install an information panel / noticeboard within the park
- c) Install focal points to add interest

The council strives to involve the community more in the management of the park. Establishing a Friends group will provide the mechanism for this, allowing interested individuals within the community to take a leading role in the management of the park, under the council. This has wider community benefits in strengthening the community governance of the parish. The council recognises that establishing community groups is not straightforward and, in the meantime, will strive to engage the community in on-site projects.

The installation of focal points (such as carvings and artwork) and an information panel/noticeboard will add interest to the park, strengthening the parks identity and the community's relationship with it.

Aim: Gawsworth Park cares for the environment

To meet this aim the council will:

- a) Commission an ecological study to inform the management of the park
- b) Maintain the designed-in wetland areas
- c) Manage the border areas to balance the aesthetics of the park and providing habitats for wildlife
- d) Consider the provision of recycling bins
- e) Not use chemicals in grounds maintenance unless absolutely necessary

Managing the environment is a key priority in managing the park. By caring for the environment, the council will ensure that the park can continue to be enjoyed beyond the life of this management plan. The park was designed to include wetland areas but little management of these has been undertaken in the past decade. The deep borders around the park look unsightly and neglected in places and could provide potential space for the installation of a skatepark – this must be balanced with improvements to the site's ecology.

Commissioning an ecological study of the park early in the plan period will provide guidance and essential reference in the management of the park. A focus of this will be to develop a programme of maintenance for the wildlife areas and guide potential planting schemes.

The bins provided in the park only allow for the disposal of mixed waste. The council will consider if it is feasible to implement separate recycling facilities, but this will depend on ease of its disposal and the likely volume of such waste.



Figure Five: Two deep border areas which stand to be improved

Masterplan



Sources of funding

The ambitions in this masterplan are likely to cost in excess of £250,000. This is almost ten times the precept raised by the council and doubling the precept to fund this over ten years is not a sensible option. However, the council may consider raising the precept a small amount to contribute towards some larger works.

Gawsworth is fortunate to have a local charity, the John Upton Charity, which could provide grant funding towards some items in the plan.

The council will also explore external funding such as Awards for All, Cheshire East Council New Homes Bonus and other small funders such as Tesco's Bags for Help fund.

Within the next ten years the parish council is likely to receive Community Infrastructure levy from the strategic housing development near Penningtons Lane. The council will consider using this funding, as appropriate and considering other demands within the parish, to contribute towards the costs.

The Friends of Gawsworth Park will have access to funding sources which the council does not. The council will work closely with the Friends to maximise investment opportunity.

Monitoring and Review

This masterplan is a living document. It does not set in stone the council's plans for the park and these will evolve as further community input is gathered and as the results of research help inform what is right for the park. This is especially true following the formation of a Friends of which once established will generate their own priorities for the management of the park.

As a minimum, this plan will be reviewed annually in May at the council's annual meeting.

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Action Plan

Ref	Action	Priority	Estimated Cost	Target Date
1	Shockwave the playing field to attempt to resolve drainage issues	High	£250	Spring 2020
2	Undertake works to improve drainage	High	£15,000	Autumn 2020
2	Undertake a review of seating	High	Nil	Spring 2020
3	Install new signage	High	£250	Spring 2020
4	Create a community orchard	High	£1,000	Spring 2020
5	Commission a study to advise on ecological improvement in the park	High	£2,000	Summer 2020
6	Research options for conversion of the tennis courts to a MUGA	High	nil	Summer 2020
7	Paint play equipment	High	£1,000	Summer 2020
8	Install monkey bars and pull up bars	High	£3,000	Summer 2021
9	Install a rope swing	High	£5,000	Summer 2022
10	Install two pieces of outdoor gym equipment	Medium	£4,000	Summer 2023
11	Resurface paths where necessary	Medium	£10,000	Summer 2023
12	Implement findings of seating review	Medium	£5,000	Summer 2023
13	Consider the installation of recycling bins	Medium	£1,000	August 2023
14	Extend play area to include spider web swing and supernova	Medium	£20,000	Summer 2024
15	Develop a sensory garden	Medium	£5,000	Summer 2024
16	Establish a Friends of Gawsworth Park group	Medium	nil	Autumn 2025
17	Subject to output of (6) install a MUGA or Undertake improvements to Basketball area Undertake improvements to Tennis Courts	Medium	£50,000 £15,000 £20,000	Summer 2025
18	Install skate ramps	Medium	£30,000	Spring 2027
19	Install a covered BBQ area	Low	£10,000	Summer 2025
20	Install AstroTurf around the table tennis table	Low	£5,000	Summer 2027
21	Install information panel/noticeboard in park	Low	£1,000	Spring 2028
22	Install focal points to add interest	Low	£3,000	Summer 2029

