



Fakenham Town Council

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Estate Strategy

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1 - Introduction

Well designed and maintained parks, and open spaces significantly enhance our quality of life. They shape the identity of the places we live, work, and visit—creating vibrant, welcoming environments that foster community pride and well-being. These green spaces are more than just beautiful landscapes; they form an essential part of our town's green infrastructure, helping us tackle climate change, support biodiversity, and offer vital spaces for recreation, social connection, and mental and physical health.

2 - Vision Statement

In Fakenham, our parks and open spaces provide vital wildlife habitats, safe and inclusive play areas, and venues for leisure, culture, and community life. Through thoughtful design and care, they contribute to healthier living, environmental sustainability, and a stronger sense of place.

Our vision is to manage and enhance Fakenham's parks, gardens, and open spaces in a way that is environmentally responsible, financially sustainable, and socially inclusive. We are committed to conserving biodiversity, protecting natural habitats, and improving the quality and accessibility of green spaces for all.

We aim to:

- Connect people with nature, foster understanding of local heritage, and support biodiversity.

- Encourage healthy lifestyles by providing well-maintained areas for relaxation, play, and physical activity.
- Build a strong community identity by promoting participation, volunteering, and shared ownership in the care and design of public spaces.
- Ensure our parks are clean, safe, welcoming, and resilient to the challenges of climate change.
- Support local groups and stakeholders in delivering a diverse range of activities and events
- Support strategic goals by aligning our approach with local and national policies, and securing investment to continually improve our open space network.
- Create a legacy of well-loved, well-used green spaces that serve current and future generations, celebrating both Fakenham's natural beauty and cultural heritage.

Through this strategy, we set out a clear direction for the next decade—ensuring that our parks and open spaces remain a source of pride and benefit for all who live in, work in, or visit our town.

3 - Portfolio & Facilities

Fakenham Town Council are responsible for a variety of green spaces and Play areas within the Town including; (for maps see appendix A)

Asset Type	Location	Key Features
Park	Millenium Park	Playground, fitness equipment open space, benches
Park	Aldiss Park	Open Space, Riverbank, benches
Playing Fields	Hayes Lane	Playground, Fitness Equipment, Open Space
Playing Fields	Trap Lane	Open Space
Play Area	Whitelands	Play Equipment, bench
Picnic Area	Goggs Mill	Open space, bench, Riverbank
Amenity Land	Waterfield Close	Railway cutting
Leased Land	Gogg's Meadow / Bacons Piece / Edmonson's Acres	Currently leased to the Hawk & Owl Trust
Cemetery	Peckover Cemetery	Quaker Cemetery
Cemetery	Creake Road	Entrance building, Toilet, benches
Cemetery	Queens Road	Mortuary Chapel, benches
Allotments	Greenway Lane	Cultivation plots, Water supply
Allotments	Grove Lane	Cultivation plots, Water supply
Allotments	Rudham Stile lane	Cultivation plots, Water supply
Charter Market	Town Square	Power, Barriers
Library Corner	Oak Street	Leased Land from NCC, Bike Racks, Seating
Amenity land	Cinema Triangle	Licensed Land, seating/ planting
Tunn Street Triangle	Tunn Street	Open land
Building	Trap Lane	Pavillion, Garage, Container

Building	Creake Road Cemetery	Gatehouse, Toilet, storage
Building	Queens Road Cemetery	Mortuary Chapel



4 - Tree Strategy

Vision

This Tree Management Policy outlines the Council's commitment to the sustainable care, management, and protection of all trees on Council-owned land. Trees are vital green infrastructure, supporting biodiversity, improving air quality, enhancing landscape character, and providing social and environmental benefits to the community.

Responsibilities

- Fakenham Town Council is responsible for all trees on land it owns or manages under both criminal and civil law and any liabilities under health & safety.
- We will implement a programme of formal tree surveys to proactively assess tree health, safety, and maintenance needs across Council-managed land
- The Council will ensure high standards in tree management by engaging Arboricultural Association (ARB) approved contractors and enhancing the skills of Council staff through continued training.
- We will also strengthen community involvement by promoting clear and accessible channels for the public to report tree safety or health concerns

Aims and Objectives

- To maintain a healthy and safe tree population across all Council-owned land.

- To ensure that tree maintenance is proactive rather than reactive, minimising risk and cost.
- To increase canopy cover and enhance biodiversity through ongoing tree planting.
- To preserve protected trees in accordance with Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) and relevant legislation.

Tree Maintenance

- Maintenance works are prioritised based on inspection outcomes, focusing on:
 - Removal of dead, dying, or dangerous trees.
 - Pruning or shaping to maintain tree health and safety.
 - Managing trees near footpaths, play areas, and roadways.
- Felled trees are reused sustainably—logs are chipped, stacked for wildlife habitats, or recycled.

Protected and Notable Trees

- Trees with Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) or located in conservation areas are managed in strict accordance with planning regulations.
- Notable trees (e.g., the collection of *Taxus baccata* ‘Fastigiata’ (Yews) at Queens Road Cemetery) are identified and celebrated for their ecological, historical, or cultural value.

Tree Planting and Replacement

- The Council will look for opportunities to planting new saplings for every tree removed.
- Native and climate-resilient species are prioritised to support biodiversity and future-proof the landscape.

Community Involvement

- Residents are encouraged to report damaged or dangerous trees.

Review and Monitoring

- This policy will be reviewed every three years or as legislation and best practices evolve.
- The Council will continue to work with industry professionals to ensure its tree management practices meet the highest standards.



5 - Hedge Maintenance Strategy

Vision

This strategy sets out the Council's approach to the management and maintenance of hedges on Council-owned land. Hedges are a vital part of the urban and rural landscape, contributing to biodiversity, providing habitats and corridors for wildlife, offering natural screening, and enhancing the visual appeal of open spaces.

Objectives

- Maintain hedges to ensure public safety and visibility near roads, footpaths, and public areas.
- Enhance the ecological value of hedgerows by encouraging diverse, healthy growth.
- Preserve the character and appearance of local green spaces.
- Ensure compliance with environmental and legal responsibilities, including the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and seasonal restrictions.

Responsibilities

- The Council is responsible for some hedges located on:
 - Parks and recreational grounds
 - Cemeteries and allotments
 - Open spaces and green corridors
- The Council works with approved landscape contractors and trained grounds maintenance staff to carry out inspections and trimming.

Biodiversity & Environmental Considerations

- Hedges are managed as living habitats, with native species such as hawthorn, blackthorn, and hazel encouraged.
- Some areas may be designated for reduced trimming or rotational cutting to support wildlife corridors and flowering cycles.

- Arisings (cuttings) will be composted or chipped for reuse where appropriate.

Community Engagement

- The Council encourages public reporting of overgrown or hazardous hedges via its website or local office.
- Educational materials and signage may be used to promote understanding of hedge trimming practices and biodiversity importance.
- Supporting community planting projects and hedge-laying events to restore and extend traditional boundary features.

Risk Management

- Hedges bordering roads, footpaths, and play areas are prioritised for visibility and safety.
- Regular inspections identify:
 - Encroachment onto paths
 - Obstruction of sight lines at junctions
 - Presence of invasive species or disease

Legal and Compliance

- The Council complies with:
 - The Highways Act 1980 (ensuring clear paths and road safety)
 - The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (protecting nesting birds and native species)
 - The Hedgerows Regulations 1997, where applicable (for ancient or protected hedgerows)

Review and Monitoring

- The strategy will be reviewed every three years, or sooner if legislation changes or following significant community feedback.
- Annual hedge inspections will be documented and maintenance schedules adjusted based on growth trends and environmental condition



6 - Play Area Strategy

Vision

To provide safe, inclusive, well-maintained, and engaging play areas that support the development, wellbeing, and enjoyment of children and young people of all ages, mobilities and abilities.

Strategic Aims

Comprehensive Asset Understanding

- Continue developing and updating our assets to establish a clear and detailed overview of the facilities, condition, age-appropriateness, and features of each of our play areas.
- Reflect the current usage trends, community feedback, and demographic needs.

Condition Monitoring & Maintenance

- Continue to develop a robust system for regular inspection and accurate monitoring of all play areas.
- Ensure staff are appropriately trained and contractors qualified to work on play areas.
- Establish an appropriate maintenance regime to address wear and tear, safety issues, and aesthetic upkeep.
- Use monitoring data to prioritise investment decisions, avoiding reactive fixes and reducing the risk of areas falling into disrepair.

Sustainable Maintenance Framework

- Develop and adopt a long-term maintenance strategy with scheduled repairs, equipment upgrades, and landscaping improvements.
- Encourage sustainable practices, including eco-friendly materials, rainwater drainage solutions, and low-maintenance surfacing.

Inclusivity and Accessibility

- Pledge a commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion by ensuring that accessible play equipment is installed.
- Design inclusive play areas that cater to a wide range of physical, sensory, and developmental needs.
- Incorporate age-appropriate apparatus to ensure toddlers, older children, and teens all have suitable, challenging, and enjoyable equipment.

Community Investment and Sponsorship

- Actively seek funding partnerships through sponsorship, grants, and donations.
- Encourage investment from local businesses, grant-making bodies, the National Lottery, and other stakeholders.
- Ensure all sponsorship funds are reinvested into the sponsored play area, promoting transparency and community ownership.

Community Engagement

- Engage with residents, schools, and community groups to gather feedback and suggestions for improving play spaces.
- Promote volunteer opportunities for park upkeep and events to foster civic pride.

Rolling Maintenance & Repair Programme

- Operate a rolling short-term maintenance programme to manage urgent repairs and minor improvements efficiently.
- Align this with the long-term asset plan to maintain high safety and quality standards while transitioning toward more strategic, future-proofed improvements.

Outcomes

- Improved quality, safety, and sustainability of all play areas.
- Inclusive and engaging play opportunities for children of all ages and abilities.
- Increased community involvement and sense of ownership.
- Sustainable long-term investment and reduced emergency repair costs.
- Enhanced attractiveness and value of local parks and green spaces.

Review and Monitoring

- This policy will be reviewed every three years or as legislation and best practices evolve.



7 - Open Space Strategy including Cemeteries & Allotments

Vision

To create a comprehensive framework for the management and development of cemeteries and allotments as integral components of the wider network of public open space. The strategy seeks to ensure that these spaces—including grasslands, rivers, meadows, and associated green corridors—are sustainably managed to meet the needs of present and future generations, while preserving their environmental, social, and cultural significance.

Strategic Objectives

- Protect cemetery and allotment land, along with associated open green spaces, from inappropriate development or neglect.
- Enhance the quality, accessibility, connectivity, and safety of these spaces within the wider green infrastructure network.
- Promote sustainable practices in maintenance, burial, cultivation, and landscape management.
- Engage communities in the stewardship, appreciation, and celebration of these multifunctional open spaces.
- Integrate climate resilience and biodiversity goals into green space planning.
- Recognise and utilise the environmental and health benefits of rivers, meadows, and open grasslands in conjunction with cemetery and allotment use.

Background and Context

Cemeteries and allotments have historically contributed to the character, ecology, and wellbeing of both urban and rural landscapes. Cemeteries serve not only as places of remembrance but also as pockets of tranquillity, biodiversity, and informal recreation.

Similarly, allotments support local food production, mental and physical health, and community cohesion.

These spaces are increasingly seen as vital components of broader open space networks, which may include rivers, floodplains, grasslands, meadows, and green corridors that link communities and habitats.

Current challenges include:

- Limited burial space and increasing demand for alternative interment methods.
- Infrastructure deterioration and maintenance backlogs.
- Urban development pressures reducing available land for green infrastructure.
- Climate change impacts, including flooding, heat stress, and biodiversity loss.
- Decreasing volunteer capacity and civic engagement.
- Fragmentation of open space and reduced ecological connectivity.

Strategic Priorities

Cemeteries

- **Capacity Planning:** Conduct burial demand assessments; develop existing cemetery site and natural burial options, considering landscape integration with grasslands and buffer zones.
- **Conservation and Heritage:** Protect listed monuments, support wildlife-friendly management, and enhance landscape character, and integrate native meadows, riparian habitats, and green corridors.
- **Accessibility and Infrastructure:** Upgrade paths, signage, lighting, and ensure compliance with disability access standards.
- **Digital Integration:** Implement digital mapping and records for efficient management and public access.

Allotments

- **Provision and Allocation:** Ensure transparent and equitable plot allocation systems.
- **Infrastructure Investment:** Improve site security, water access, storage facilities, and waste management. Improve ecological enhancements—e.g., hedgerow planting, rainwater harvesting, and shared green spaces.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** Encourage organic growing methods, promote composting and water conservation, support pollinator-friendly planting.

Open Space Integration

- **Ecological Corridors:** Create and maintain linkages between cemeteries, allotments, rivers, and meadows to enhance biodiversity and habitat connectivity.
- **Flood Resilience:** Align cemetery and allotment strategies with natural flood management, using open spaces like grasslands and meadows for water retention.
- **Community Engagement:** Encourage community-led initiatives such as riverbank cleanups, meadow maintenance, and nature-based educational programming.

Health and Wellbeing

- Promote use of green spaces for quiet reflection, walking, therapeutic gardening, and nature engagement.

Implementation and Monitoring

- Partnerships & collaboration with local councils, Friends groups, community organisations, environmental charities, river trusts, public health bodies, and biodiversity partnerships.
- Funding Identify diverse funding streams including grant applications, S106 developer contributions, and income-generating activities.
- Monitoring and Evaluation Develop key performance indicators (KPIs) including:
 - User satisfaction surveys
 - Biodiversity metrics (e.g., pollinator counts, river health)
 - Plot occupancy rates
 - Green space connectivity and habitat value assessments
 - Maintenance and ecological improvement audits

Leased Land

- Management of leased land by overseeing tenant activities in accordance with the terms of their leases and our Open Space vision.

Review and Monitoring

- This policy will be reviewed every three years or as legislation and best practices evolve.



8 – Council Buildings & Equipment Strategy & maintenance Policy

Vision

To provide safe, accessible, sustainable, and well-maintained buildings that support community needs, preserve local heritage, and deliver long-term value for residents.

Purpose

This sets out Fakenham Town Council's strategic approach to the maintenance, refurbishment, and ongoing improvement of its building assets. It ensures public & staff buildings are managed effectively to promote safety, efficiency and accessibility.

Scope

This policy applies to all buildings owned, managed, or leased by the Council.

Strategic Aims

- Preserve asset value through proactive and cost-effective maintenance.
- Ensure safety and compliance with health and safety legislation, fire regulations, accessibility standards (Equality Act 2010), and building codes.
- Support community use maintaining clean, welcoming, and functional spaces.
- Promote sustainability through energy-efficient upgrades and low-carbon refurbishment practices.

Objectives

- Implement a planned preventative maintenance (PPM) programme across all buildings.

- Develop and maintain a rolling refurbishment and repair schedule informed by condition surveys.
- Minimise emergency repairs through regular inspections and risk assessments.
- Ensure all buildings are accessible, inclusive, and aligned with community expectations.
- Set targets for energy efficiency, water use reduction, and carbon emissions mitigation in refurbishment projects.

Sustainability and Energy Efficiency

- Where feasible retrofit existing buildings with insulation, LED lighting, low-energy systems, and renewable energy technologies.
- Monitor energy and water usage, setting targets for reduction.
- Use sustainable materials and contractors with strong environmental policies.

Asset Condition Surveys

- All buildings will undergo a detailed condition survey at least every five years.
- Surveys will assess structural integrity, building systems, internal finishes, DDA compliance, and more.
- Findings will feed into the Capital Works Programme and inform annual budget setting.

Budgeting and Funding

- Maintenance and refurbishment works will be planned annually as part of the Council's capital and revenue budget.
- Opportunities will be explored for external funding, including grants for heritage, energy efficiency, or community facility improvements.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Council Officers: Oversees planning, Manages day-to-day upkeep, inspections, and contractor liaison, monitoring, and delivery of maintenance schedules.
- Elected Members: Approve funding and strategic priorities through committees.
- Approved Contractors: Carry out all maintenance, repairs, and refurbishments in accordance with agreed standards.

Monitoring and Review

- An annual building maintenance report will be prepared for Council review, summarising:
 - Works completed
 - Condition updates
 - Budget performance
 - Upcoming priorities

Review and Monitoring

- This policy will be reviewed every three years or as legislation and best practices evolve or upon asset reclassification.

Appendix A

- Millenium Park – Queens Road



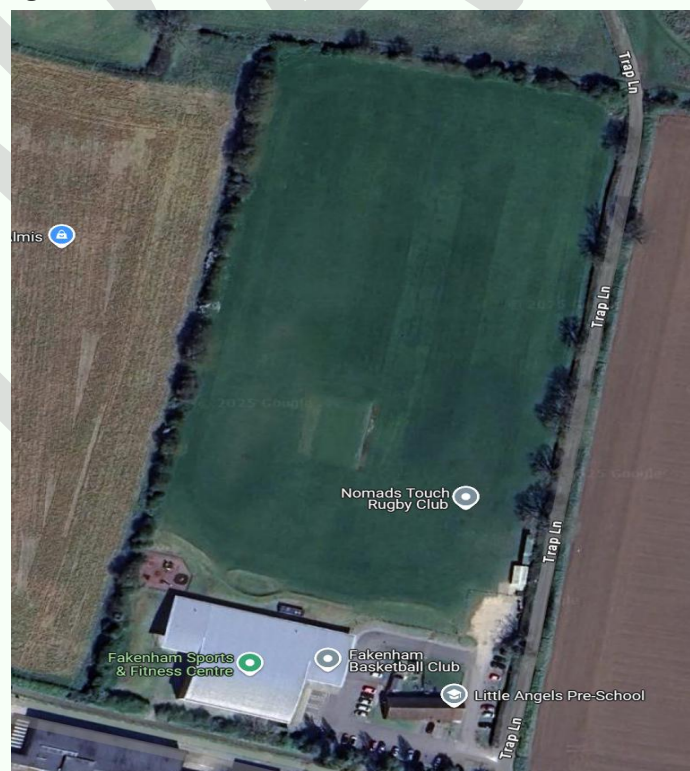
- Aldiss Park – Hempton Road



- Hayes Lane Playing Field



- Trap Lane Playing Field



- Whiteland's Play Area



- Goggs Mill Picnic Area



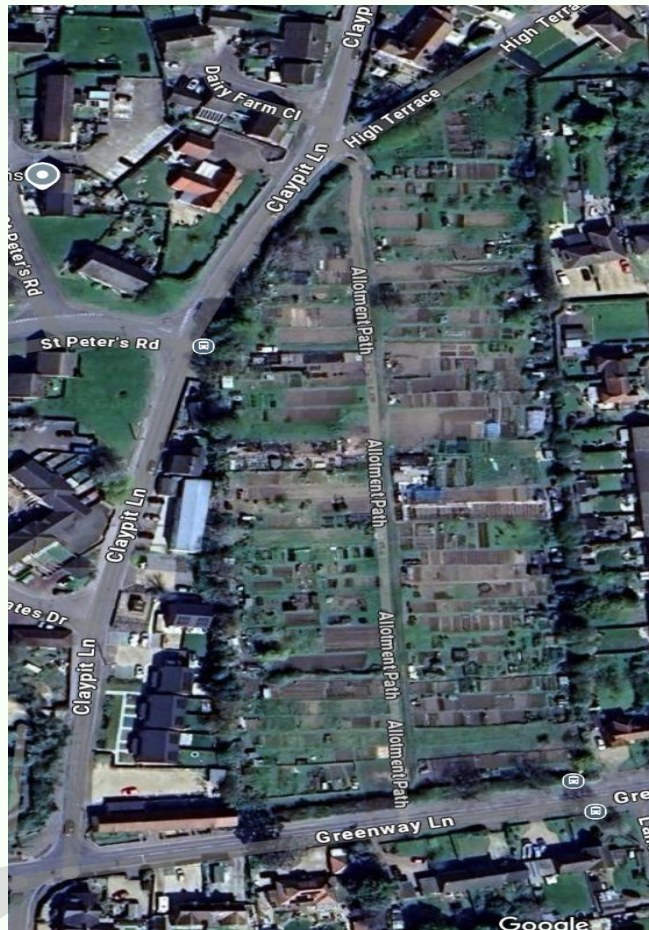
- Creake Road Cemetery



- Queens Road Cemetery



- Greenway Lane Allotments



- Grove Lane Allotments



- Rudham Stile Lane Allotments



- Tunn Street Triangle

