



National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces

Strategic Business Plan 2016-2021

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces is the voice of the dynamic and inspirational movement of over 5,000 local Friends of Parks groups – the volunteers who act on behalf of the communities who use and care about our vital public green spaces.

The Federation was set up by and for the friends groups' movement to share learning, develop good practice, strengthen coordination and co-operation throughout the UK and, most importantly, raise the issues impacting on our open spaces at a time when funding cuts are plunging an increasing number into decline and crisis.

The Federation is uniquely placed to support and build up this grassroots movement, and to speak out and campaign for the protection and improvement of the UK's green spaces.

As a Federation we also provide support for friends groups working together to make a difference to their local area, city, region and nationally. Such groups and the coordination forums they set up are almost always totally dependent on unpaid and over-stretched volunteer commitment. The Federation is an essential over-arching coordination body and needs to be strengthened and financed in order to provide the service this important movement requires.

We believe this is the best way that our movement can consolidate and grow, and that most local authority parks services and other managers of public green spaces can gain the ongoing community support they need to be able to keep doing their core work. The voices of the local community groups ensure that the needs of parks remain high on the political agenda.

There is a reason why we have been ambitious in developing our strategic business plan. Our evidence shows that parks' budgets across the UK are under severe threat and that there is a real danger of undoing the past investment into parks and green spaces made over the last decade.

As a Federation we intend to reinvigorate the debate over the financing and management of our open spaces, support our friends groups through networking and partnership, and campaign to improve our parks and green spaces.

In order to achieve this, we need to improve our ability to collaborate at all levels: build new alliances with greenspace bodies and other key organisations, local government and funding bodies, and create a stronger and sustainable parks movement.

Chair
National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces

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1 INTRODUCTION

The summary below outlines the background to the development of the Strategic Business Plan.

Current Context – the need to progress

The National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces (NFPGS) is a unique, democratically accountable, 'bottom up' organisation set up by, and for, the grass roots friends and user groups movement – a dynamic and inspirational movement of over 5,000 local groups – to encourage, support, coordinate and represent their activities, issues and concerns, and to amplify their passionate and knowledgeable voices. In the current economic climate – as public services in general, and non-statutory services like parks in particular, face an increasingly uncertain and, in the case of parks, a potentially catastrophic future – the NFPGS is urgently needed even more.

The Federation was set up in 2010 by Friends of Parks area forums, then representing over 1,000 of the local groups. The aim was to share learning, develop good practice and, most importantly, raise the issues impacting on open spaces and their community volunteers on the national stage; recognising their value to the whole of the UK.

NFPGS has continued to grow, despite being for years entirely reliant on volunteers giving their time, skills and resources to undertake the work needed. It is recognised from past experience that funding enables a group to provide more support in sharing good practice and facilitating development and this is required to help NFPGS grow and create a stronger community voice.

Now that the green space sector has lost the national charity GreenSpace, there is a significant gap in the sector for community support and voices. This has been taken up to some extent by Keep Britain Tidy with their running of, and support for, the Love Parks campaign in England. The NFPGS is their community partner in this. However, the shared support and the lobbying community voice that the friends movement urgently needs, along with the mobilisation of the public to speak out for green spaces, can only be delivered by the NFPGS. We are also needed to deliver the community voice in the new Parks Alliance – the lobby group for the green space sector.

The NFPGS also provides support for friends groups working together to make a difference to their local area, city, region and nationally. This is essential as it is proving to be the best way most local authority parks services and other management can gain the community support they need to be able to keep doing their core work. The voices of the local community groups ensure that the needs of parks remain high on the political agendas, and the groups' activities generally also bring in added value regarding contributions towards monitoring, maintenance and management issues.

Therefore, in order to have an effective voice in the future of our parks and open spaces, NFPGS needs to grow in size, help develop and coordinate more community forums across the country and create a larger, stronger and more influential network of community groups.

The Task – Developing a Strategic Business Plan 2016-2021

In 2015 the NFPGS received funding from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation (EFF). In order to fulfil the funding conditions, the Federation needs to submit a fully developed Strategic Business Plan by June 2016. In order to achieve a coherent and sustainable plan, there have been a number of preparation tasks including:

- Organisation of a number of NFPGS regional conferences to gain first-hand experience of:
 - The current levels of regional and area community forum development;
 - The demand and priorities for future NFPGS activity (needs analysis);
 - Key links and partner opportunities within these regions and nationally; and
 - Promoting the work of friends' groups and their area forums, and communication and coordination generally.
- A SWOT analysis of NFPGS as an organisation, with particular attention to organisational needs and resource requirements.
- An options analysis of partnerships, funding opportunities, organisation status (eg. charity, trust model etc.) and potential 'SMART' actions to deliver our strategic ambitions.

The Strategic Business Plan 2016-2021 will provide a clear framework for the NFPGS to become a sustainable and long-term organisation to champion the parks and green space community/volunteer sector.

Funding Bid 2016-2019

The NFPGS is currently only funded by the EFF to develop this business plan and review its organisational needs. The lottery-funded Love Parks work enables Keep Britain Tidy to support some joint working with the NFPGS until June 2016. We recognise the limited time this gives us to achieve financial sustainability, whilst concentrating on the needs and growth of area and regional forums. It is our intention to submit a further funding application to a funding body for an additional three years of development.

As a long-term supporter of volunteer action in parks, the EFF will be an excellent option for us as a potential source of funding. We will also consider other appropriate options.

The funding bid for the next three years will be developed in line with the Strategic Business Plan. The two will be complementary and reflect the ambitions of the NFPGS.

2 BACKGROUND

In March 2008, the national parks charity GreenSpace facilitated a meeting between representatives of friends' group forums following requests for this from forums at its 'Great Parks, Great People' community group conference in autumn 2007. At the first such meeting, the attendees decided to form the National Open Spaces Forum (NOSF) to provide the means for communications between area-wide forums:

- to make contact with one another;
- to share experiences and discuss issues;
- to support one another in seeking to improve parks and green open spaces;
- to promote best practice.

At a meeting in 2009, the group agreed to develop a constitution and a Steering Group was then elected (See Appendix A1). The group also agreed to hold quarterly meetings to allow the NOSF to develop a greater voice to develop UK-wide coordination and lobby for further park investment. In May 2010 it was agreed to change our name to the National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces (NFPGS). The aim was to become the voice, and amplify the voices, of the vibrant grass-roots friends' groups movement of over 5,000 local groups (*A conservative figure based on our database of 60 area-wide forums/networks involving over 2,500 local groups, and estimates of the number of local groups in many of the cities and areas where there has up to now been little or no coordination*).

The NFPGS has met regularly since, produced its own literature (including leaflets, strategy documents, campaign bulletins, website etc. See Appendix A2), held regional and national conferences and has developed and updated its own Forward Planning Objectives and Action Plan. In 2013 the charity GreenSpace ceased trading due to financial difficulties and the NFPGS lost its main supporting partner organisation.

The independent environmental charity, Keep Britain Tidy (KBT), currently manages a lottery grant until June 2016 to develop and promote the Love Parks campaign in England, which includes the development of the friends' group movement and their area and regional forums. As the key community partner in Love Parks, the NFPGS benefits from some administrative and financial support to cover travel and subsistence costs for the NFPGS volunteer committee to meet on a quarterly basis. This mutually beneficial relationship is guided by a signed Memorandum of Understanding through KBT's 'Love Parks' project.

Over the years NFPGS has grown, with many additional area forums forming and joining and with representatives attending the quarterly meetings. Both the current Chair and CEO have spent a considerable amount of time carrying out presentations and talks across the country, to help clusters of friends' groups come together and create new area forums where required. NFPGS attendance at national green space conferences and seminars is also

maintained where resources allow, to ensure the presence of the community voice, to highlight the issues and problems that parks and green spaces are currently facing and the valuable hard work that volunteer groups undertake to support parks across the country.

In 2014, in partnership with the Birmingham Open Spaces Forum, a grant application was made to the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation for development work in Birmingham and nationally for the NFPGS. The grant application was successful and in 2015 a part time CEO was appointed on a one-year basis to further develop the work, including setting up regional conferences to increase and strengthen the network and encourage greater collaboration between the local friends' groups and any existing area forums. As a condition of the grant, the NFPGS is required to develop a strategic business plan to cover the period from 2016 to 2021.

What does the NFPGS do?

The National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces is the federation for area forums and networks of friends groups around the UK. There are over 5,000 such local community groups. Through the Federation, the movement is able to share experiences, identify and promote best practice, and discuss together a range of issues in order to support friends' groups and to advocate for and improve the UK's parks and green open spaces.

Since 2011, the NFPGS have regularly reviewed our work through developing Forward Planning Objectives and action planning. Below, are the results of one such review undertaken in 2013. The objectives are set out in four areas of NFPGS work, with actions identified under each heading. The accompanying Action Plan provides a little more detail on the expected work of the Federation.

Forward Planning objectives

The Forward Planning objectives were revised by the Federation on 9th November 2013. They can also be found in Appendix A3 with accompanying actions identified by NFPGS.

1. Strengthen the movement:

- a. Encourage and support more friends' forums to develop throughout England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Make pro-active efforts to seek out contacts, and develop regional networking etc.
- b. Encourage all forums to link up with each other and the Federation.
- c. Encourage and promote training initiatives which strengthen grass roots organisations.

2. Consolidate and expand the role and influence of the Federation:

- a. Publicity through press releases and media presence. Officers to be available for comment.

- b. Presence at all key relevant national and regional events in the UK. We aim to contact organisers to seek an invitation and preferably a chance to speak.
- c. Hold an annual friends groups conference/workshop/event. Could be regional or national. Dependant on funding. Could rotate venue.
- d. Take the initiative on key issues. See 3 below.

3. Lobby for green spaces – the resources and policies they need:

- a. Promote Green Flag Awards as national minimum standards for all green spaces. Offer to join Green Flag Awards advisory process.
- b. Promote ‘Love Parks Week’ and ‘World Parks Day’ each year.
- c. National lobbying campaigns for adequate resources and for a statutory obligation to provide and manage.
- d. Work with and ally with others to attain the above results, e.g. Partnership with Keep Britain Tidy, Support the Parks Alliance etc.

4. Improve our internal administration, finances and independence:

- a. Improve the Federation’s public presence and profile; via website, leaflets, banners/stands – discuss developing ‘grass roots’ brand. Write annual newsletter.
- b. Strengthen internal communication:
 - Officers email list and phone numbers;
 - Committee ‘core’ attendees email list and phone numbers;
 - All forum representatives’ email list and phone numbers;
 - Develop full national database of friends’ and user groups, compiled and updated through existing forums and other sources.
- c. Raise independent NFPGS finances. To cover at a minimum basic running costs (for example, room hire, travel for officers and regional representatives, publicity, annual conference) and possibly a member of staff.
- d. Identify, elect or co-opt to NFPGS further regional representatives and officers for key roles, for example fundraising, campaigning, biodiversity, health, planning issues, website, organisational sustainability, policy advice etc.
- e. Consider how to manage potential increased attendance at NFPGS committee meetings as we grow. Improve communications between meetings.
- f. Develop partnership with Keep Britain Tidy. Sign Memorandum of Understanding.
- g. Investigate charity status. Consider the advantages and disadvantages.

Governance

The current structure of the NFPGS is an Unincorporated Association. The NFPGS have a constitution (See Appendix A1) and have honorary elected roles of Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, as well as regional representatives. We also have co-opted officers with specialist skills and interests. A number of the positions are currently vacant. Committee meetings are open to representatives from all area forums. Currently, officers from Keep Britain Tidy also attend committee meetings.

This structure has served the Federation well since the organisation formed a constitution in 2010 (Founding statement – see Appendix A5). However, since that time there is evidence to suggest that this limited legal structure is not now sufficient for the current needs and aspirations of the NFPGS and that a review of alternative structures is necessary.

The management committee, who are all volunteers, meet on a quarterly basis to review progress and set objectives for the following period. Outside the meetings, communication is by phone and email, as the committee members live in various locations around the country. The meetings are normally held in Birmingham.

Membership

There are over 5,000 local friends' groups throughout the UK and around 60 area forums or networks of such groups (51 of them listed on our website, which needs updating). The NFPGS is the umbrella organisation for all such forums, which are our voting membership. The NFPGS encourage local groups in all towns and areas of the UK to form a forum in order that they can support each other and stand up for the green spaces in their town or region.

NFPGS membership is currently free and open to any forum or network of local friends' groups, which are run mainly by and for such groups.

Regional friends' forums, networks and committees are also beginning to emerge and are being strongly encouraged and supported by the NFPGS as autonomous strategic co-ordination bodies building up localised databases, promoting further area forums within their region and involving a lot of otherwise isolated local groups. Two good examples are the North West Parks Friends Forum and the London Green Spaces Friends' Groups Network. Their successes have stimulated the current NFPGS strategy of promoting similar regional networks throughout the UK.



The friends' groups movement is a completely 'bottom-up' movement, and hence the development of effective coordination at every level (local, area, regional, national, UK) is a long, organic and inevitably patchy process dependent on a whole range of factors and the commitment of thousands of unpaid, committed, but too often isolated and frustrated volunteers. The NFPGS has had the unique and vital role of building, supporting and knitting this all together, creating a UK-wide strategic voice.

Publicity and Promotion

The NFPGS maintains contact with forum members through emails and newsletters sent out to the database. Key information, news and messages can be forwarded by these forums to thousands of local friends' groups. Promotion of the Federation's work is also undertaken by attendance at regional and national greenspace conferences and workshops, and at events hosted by the organisation itself. The NFPGS currently does not have any significant social media activity.

Partnership working

The Federation is keen to develop and work in partnership with other organisations where this will help deliver our aims. To date, the Federation has developed or formalised partnerships with the following organisations:

- GreenSpace (no longer in existence)
- Keep Britain Tidy
- Parks Alliance (attending their Board meetings)
- Birmingham Open Spaces Forum

Key achievements to date:

- 2010 - Ongoing: Supporting the growth of area forums and regional networks
- 2010 - Ongoing: Regular, informative bulletins and newsletters
- 2010 - Ongoing: Area forums enabled to share news and views at regular national meetings
- 2011: NFPGS 'World Parks Day' conference. The first conference organised by NFPGS where 80 delegates attended
- 2013: Significant contribution to the Heritage Lottery Fund's 'State of UK Public Parks' Report
- 2013: NFPGS North West England Conference in Liverpool attracts 130 community reps and leads to the founding of the North West Parks Friends Forum, a toolkit for Friends Groups, and a popular series of local seminars for activists.
- 2014: 'Save our Parks!' petition/campaign launched to halt the decline of parks (including launch article in Daily Mirror)
- 2015: Esmée Fairbairn Foundation funding secured through Birmingham Open Spaces Forum for appointment of part time CEO on a one-year appointment; regional workshops and development of a NFPGS strategic business plan.
- 2015: Appointment of a part-time Chief Executive Officer.
- 2015: Regional community conferences held in the East Midlands, West Midlands and Yorkshire, attracting 143 delegates. It is anticipated that other regional conferences will be held in 2016.



Regional NFPGS Conference 2015

SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis was undertaken at the special NFPGS committee strategy sub-group meeting in October 2015. In summary the committee members identified the following:

Strengths

NFPGS was seen as the voice of the grass roots movement for green spaces, was unique, independent and had the support of a number of influential organisations. The Federation has considerable knowledge and experience in campaigning and networking and could call on a wide network of groups and forums who had first-hand knowledge of what was happening in their green space and areas.

Weaknesses

The organisation was seen as having inconsistent delivery across the UK, is lacking in communication skills, does not have any reliable funding income and is reliant on a small number of key volunteers. A lack of training and skills development was seen as an issue, as was delivery between the quarterly meetings.

Opportunities

In the light of continuing pressure on parks' budgets and the loss of investment already made by local authorities and others, there is all the more need for the organisation to grow and develop new opportunities to speak out for and support the grassroots parks movement.

Threats

Threats to the organisation staying as it was included individual burn out, the committee taking on too much work, through to loss of control or credibility if sponsorship was sought from the private sector. However, within the parks movement, there is a fear of over-reliance on council support, which is likely to diminish further in the coming years, along with a loss of the community spirit and optimism still to be found around our parks and green spaces.

Note: The following chart includes points that have been slightly amended to incorporate subsequent comments from Committee members.

SWOT analysis chart

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unique • Active reps and forums • Freedom to lobby • Committed volunteers with diverse skills and experience • Independent • Massive involvement on the ground • ‘Memo of Understanding’ with Keep Britain Tidy • Involvement with HLF ‘State of the Parks’ report • Grassroots voice • Networking with regional forums 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Need more people to deliver message • Inconsistent delivery across UK • Training, more skills needed • Lack of understanding of situation • ‘Firefighting’ • Lack of ongoing activity between meetings • Very diverse and eclectic groups • Reliance on individual volunteers • Public sector cuts to greenspace • Lack of resources/funding • Need much higher profile • Weak social/IT presence • Patchy regional coverage • NFPG dependant on KBT or similar organisations • Lack of continuity with politicians and key officers
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independence at all levels • Can tap into volunteer networks • To grow beyond current vision • To work with private sector • Getting people to understand our message • To set new clear roles in NFPGS and how it feeds into bigger picture • To work closer in partnership with other organisations, keeping independent voice • Cuts and crises can create passion and open new doors • Ethical policy 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People’s reliance on councils doing everything for them • Demoralisation and subsequent reduction in community spirit and engagement • Fear of working with businesses in case they take control • Fear of going further and taking on too much • Volunteer burn out • Further cuts and changes in political policies and priorities • Public’s lack of awareness of the looming underfunding crisis

What resources does the NFPGS require and when?

The NFPGS management committee also considered the resources that will be needed. A summary is below - slightly amended to incorporate subsequent comments. The results of the exercise can be found in Appendix B1.

2015 - 2017:

People:

- Financial support for volunteers: One or more volunteers up-skilled and being paid for either all or some of their time, eg. to go to network meetings, talk to groups, help new forums get established, develop website, manage paperwork, etc.;
- Regional Networks: Need people to encourage and develop new regional conferences/networks and to liaise, advise and support existing ones – could be in each region and one nationally;
- Communications: Part-time or full-time member of staff to undertake project management;
- Expand number of NFPGS officers/ reps/volunteers with areas of interest or skills to contribute;
- Grow throughout the UK: Bring Wales and N. Ireland into the network more, alongside the English and Scottish Forums. Needs people to make this happen along with travel and subsistence expenses.

IT/Website:

- Improve website: Paid professional to put it together as we want;
- IT development for online newsletters;
- IT mechanism to support online donations.

Social media:

- Develop social media marketing;
- Twitter/Facebook – need time not money.

Communications:

- Ability to send out regular and effective newsletters and promotional material to all contacts;
- Better communication, promotion;
- More regional conferences to spread the word;
- Much more press work – someone designated to work with Chair and CEO, and other officers / reps.
- Lobbying: Develop and run key campaigns and improve our profile nationally.

Management:

- Network co-ordination and database management;
- Expand liaison and partnerships with the sector; develop Memorandums of Understanding with the appropriate national organisations.

Training:

- Training for NFPGS reps and members in relevant skills and special roles.

Money and support:

- Income to support regional and national meetings, conferences and workshops;
- NFPGS questionnaire to all forums appealing for donations/skills for NFPGS.

Analysis of Key Informant Questionnaire Responses

Twelve 'key informants' were asked to participate in a telephone interview that requested their views on the issues and challenges facing the management of green spaces at the current time. We sought their views on the work of the Federation and the potential for joint working in the future. The key informants are all senior level representatives of green space and environmental sector organisations and 10 agreed to give us their views. One declined to participate and we could not get hold of one other. The organisations that agreed to participate include: Birmingham Open Spaces Forum; The Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens; Keep Britain Tidy/Green Flag; Greenspace Scotland; London Parks and Green Spaces Forum; Heritage Lottery Fund; The Parks Alliance; The Conservation Volunteers; Groundwork; and an Independent greenspace adviser based in Wales.

The eight questions put to these key individuals were:

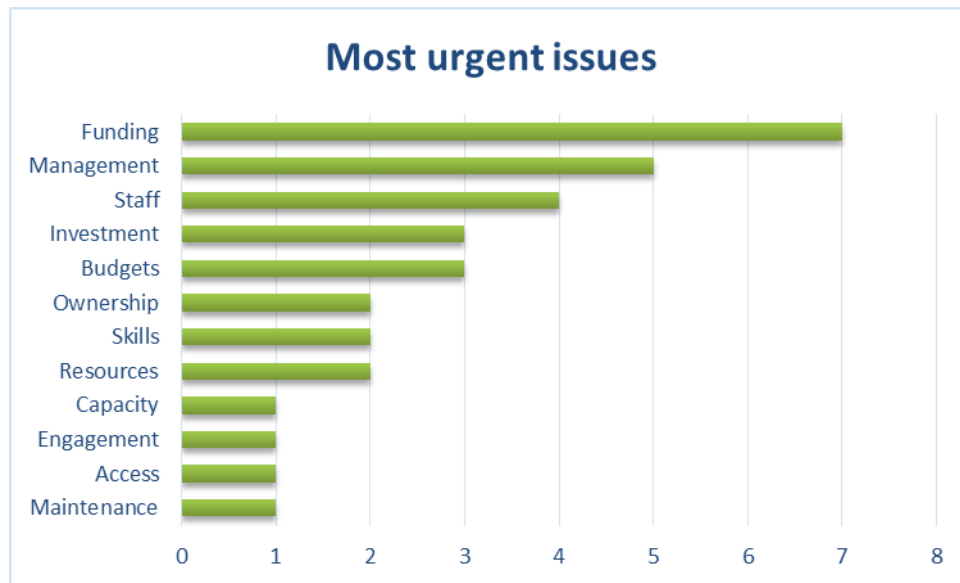
- What are the most urgent issues facing green spaces at the current time?
- In what way are you aware of the work of the National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces?
- Which, if any of their activities or campaigns have had the most beneficial impact?
- Please identify three ways that the National Federation could help improve Parks and Green Spaces in the future?
- Can you identify any opportunities for the National Federation to collaborate more closely with your organisation, if so what might they be?
- Are you the best person to keep links with the National Federation; if not can you suggest who is?
- Would you like to be kept informed about the activities of the NFPGS?
- Can we send a survey link to you?

Summary of responses

Q1. What do you think are the most important issues facing green spaces at the current time?

The main concerns relate to reduced funding, management and staffing. A general lack of investment in all types of green spaces will see skill sets disappear and potentially lead to

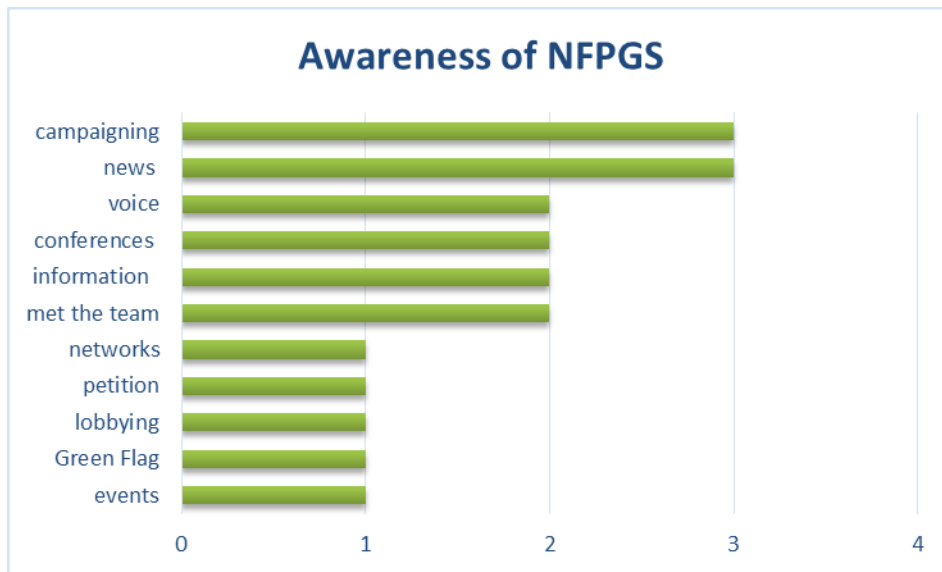
inappropriate use of green space and neglect. There was anxiety that investments already made are at risk if resources and good management are not maintained. Transfer of assets and ownership also bring concerns, as local groups may not have the necessary capacity or skills to manage their local green spaces. With new ownership come worries about responsibility, accessibility and potential development. There is a need for long-term planning, investment and strategies for engaging local communities.



Q2. In what ways are you aware of the work of the National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces?

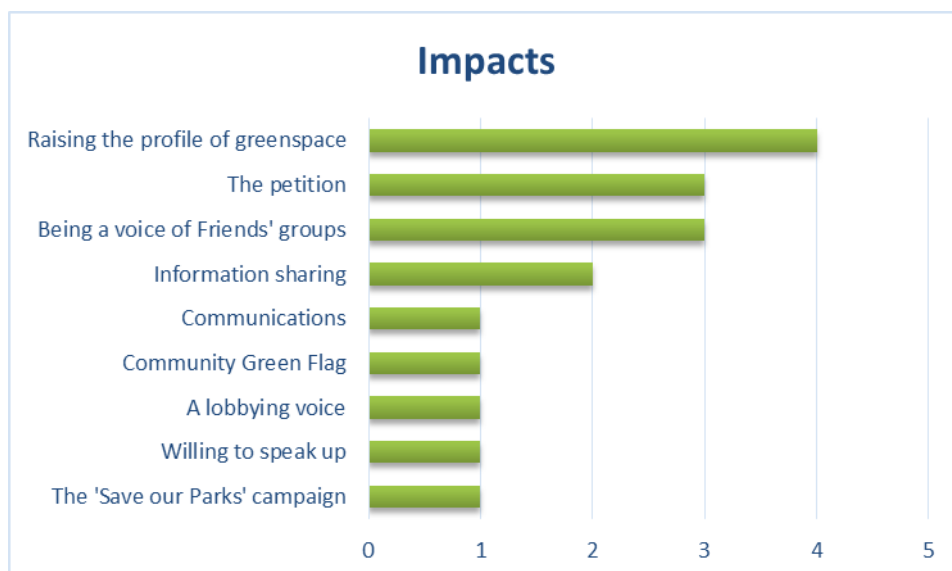
All ten of our key interviewees are aware of the Federation and aware of at least one aspect of the work the Federation does. The most cited specific activity was campaigning (3/10) and the role the Federation has in sharing news with other groups and organisations (3/10). The petition (1/10) and lobbying (1/10) and the role as a voice for local groups (2/10) were also mentioned, whilst several of the key interviewees had attended conferences and events and knew the team personally. Most receive news and information from the Federation and are keen for that to continue.

The following chart represents the number of key interviewees that mentioned a specific aspect of the work of the Federation when answering the question on awareness. For example, three of our ten interviewees mentioned the campaigning role, whilst only one mentioned Green Flag.



Q3. Which, if any, of the NFPGS activities have had the most beneficial impact?

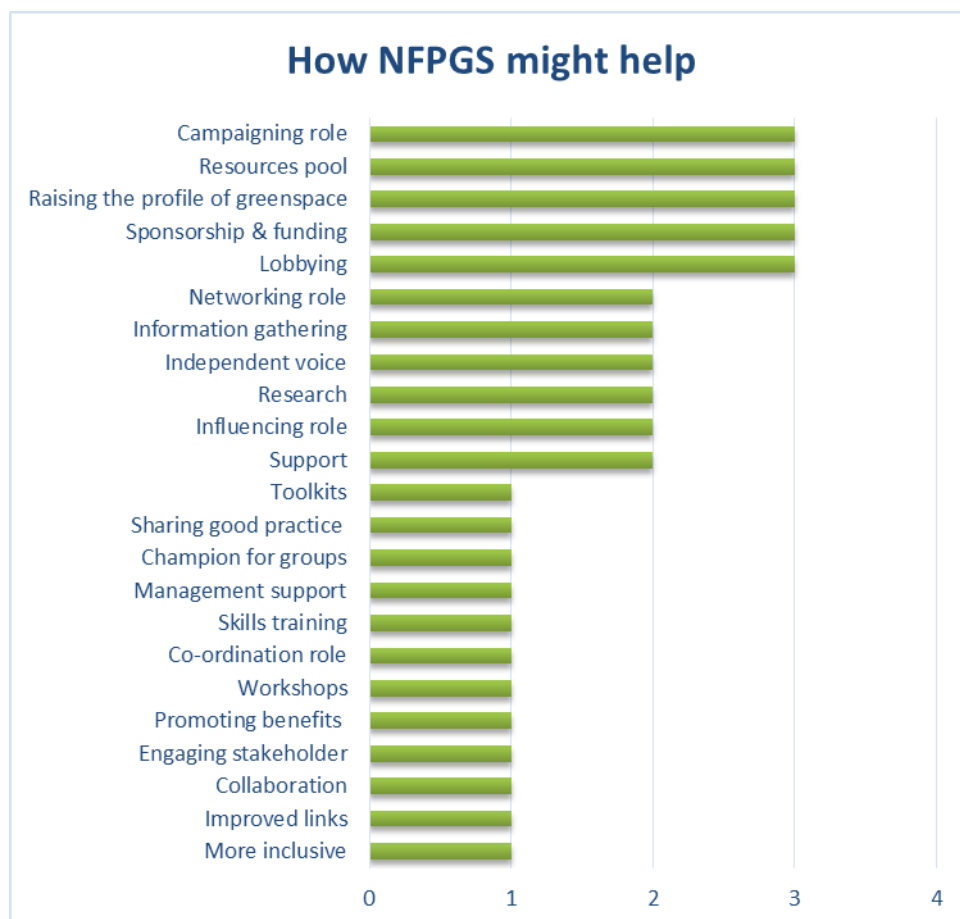
For the majority of our key interviewees, the most beneficial impacts have been in raising the profile of greenspace, through the petition and by being a strong lobbying voice both regionally and nationally. The Federation is seen to be strong on communications and information sharing, but it was hard to determine the impact this has at a local level.



Q4. Please identify three ways that the NFPGS could help improve parks and green spaces in the future?

There were many suggestions offering ways that the Federation might help in the future.

- For many, a continuation of the campaigning and lobbying role to raise the profile of greenspace is important.
- There is the opportunity to be the champion and independent voice for local groups. To do this efficiently, there needs to be representation in all the regions.
- There was a suggestion that NFPGS could bring business and greenspace together.
- The Federation could also act as a pool for resources;
- Gathering and sharing information and research on topics such as sponsorship, fundraising, training, skills and greenspace management;
- Sharing good practice and support via networking, workshops, conferences and events.
- Supporting new groups with toolkits, so there is no need to ‘reinvent the wheel’.



Q5. Can you identify any opportunities for the NFPGS to collaborate more closely with your organisation, if so what might they be?

The main suggestions for closer collaboration included the following:

- Stronger representation in regions
- Building partnerships
- Memorandums of Understanding
- Promotion of friends' groups
- Develop case studies
- Work with existing forums
- Knowledge and information sharing
- Offer training, resources and management skills
- Assist with securing funding for groups
- Community greenspace network
- Develop a database of friends groups.

Q6. Would you like to develop links with the Federation? If yes are you the right person or should it be someone else in your organisation?

Most of the key interviewees were happy to be the link between the Federation and their organisation, although as stronger regional organisations and structures develop, there may be other, more suitable links in the future.

A list of the Key interviewees can be found in Appendix B2.

Online survey

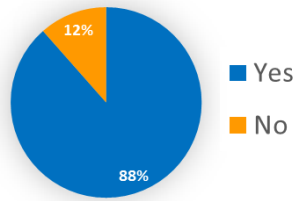
An online survey was undertaken between November and December 2015. The purpose of the survey was to seek views mainly from the member forums and local groups, but also including key individuals, local authorities, greenspace sector organisations and others. The questions were about the threats facing the management of greenspace, and on the work and role of the NFPGS. The opportunity to seek volunteers to assist with the NFPGS was also taken during the consultation.

The survey asked the following questions:

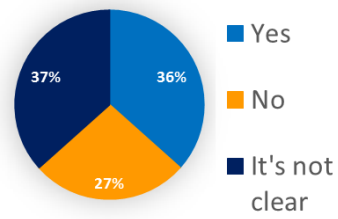
- Your details
- Do you support the work of the NFPGS?
- Are you aware of the support the NFPGS can offer?
- What work of the NFPGS do you most value? Please rank in order: 1 = most value, 4 = least value
- How do you think the NFPGS could help support your green space work in the future?
- What do you consider to be the strengths and weaknesses of the Federation? Please list:
- What do you think are the greatest threats to green spaces in your area at the moment?
- Would you be interested in volunteering for the NFPGS? How would you like to help?
- If you or one of your group would like to volunteer, please let us have your preferred contact details

The next page gives a summary analysis of the 142 survey responses received between 2nd November and 17th December 2015.

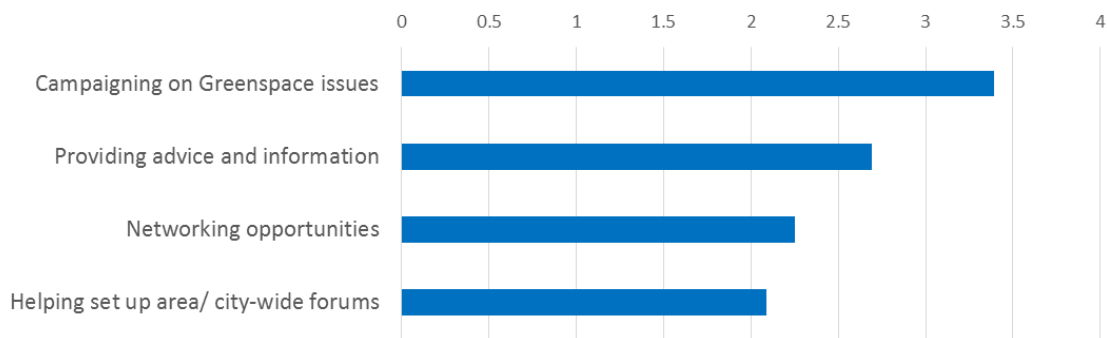
Do you support the work of the NFPGS?



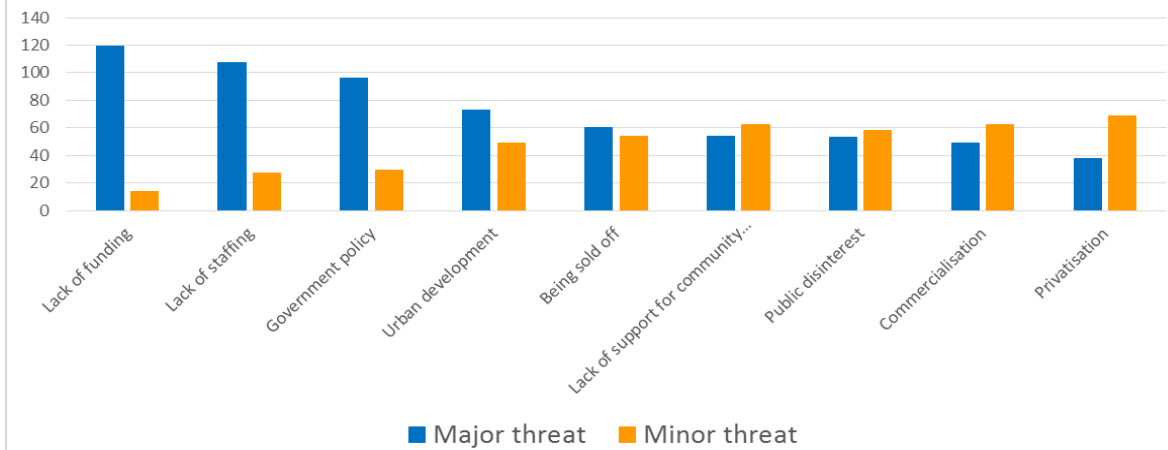
Are you aware of the support the NFPGS can offer?



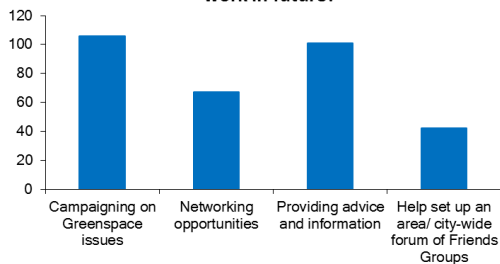
What work of the NFPGS do you most value?



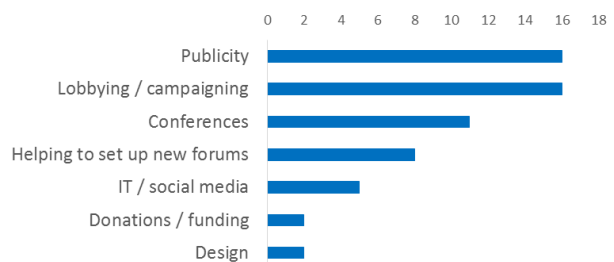
What do you think are the greatest threats to green spaces in your area?



How could NFPGS support your green space work in future?



How would you like to help NFPGS?



Regional conferences

The development of this strategic business plan coincided with a number of regional conferences organised by the NFPGS. These events were all well attended (average 50 attendees +) mainly by local park friends' and user groups, all keen to share information, ideas and best practice. Problems relating to individual parks were discussed, as well as the issues over ever-decreasing parks' budgets. Evaluation from the conferences showed that the events were well organised and valued. In particular, a number of the presentations made by the groups would make useful case study material for the website. Opportunities exist for following up offers of support and the contacts made at the events, and most importantly the development of contacts gained into ongoing, locally-led regional networks / structures. The eventual aim of the NFPGS would be that each regional network, with ongoing NFPGS support, should become an independent body promoting communication and coordination across the region, encouraging the formation of additional area forums within the region, and sending reps to the NFPGS Committee meetings. (See Regional Structure, Appendix A4).



Regional NFPGS conference November 2015

Findings from Audit of the NFPGS

No	Finding	Evidence	Action required	Priority
1	Considerable enthusiasm shown for work of NFPGS but impact of work not always visible.	Attendance at management meeting, external events and feedback from stakeholders.	Redesign Federation work into distinct areas 'Campaigns' and 'Networking and Support'.	H
2	Volunteer Management Committee (MC) stretched to capacity due to lack of resources, both human and financial.	Feedback from MC meeting, SWOT analysis, lack of regional representatives.	Seek funding for staff appointment to assist with capacity issue. Plan to prioritise areas of work.	H
3	Reliance on a few dedicated volunteers at MC level.	Feedback from MC meeting, SWOT analysis.	Clarify and define honorary roles clearly. Undertake volunteer recruitment to support existing MC. Consider funding for staff appointment	H
4	Current governance structure as an Unincorporated Association not fit for purpose to meet aspirations of MC	Review of governance structure. Ambition of MC to employ staff and seek external funding	Consider becoming a charity/CIO. Seek external funding via Big Assist or Esmée Fairbairn Foundation to support change in structure. Obtain legal advice on choosing correct structure.	H
5	MoU, funding and staff support from KBT beneficial to NFPGS. Similarly, access to groups beneficial to KBT/Love Parks	Attendance at MC, personal communication, and attendance at regional conferences.	Maintain MoU with KBT. Develop further where required to ensure continuing relevance to both organisations.	H
6	Significant support shown by key stakeholders in developing/strengthening partnership with NFPGS. No duplication of roles found with other stakeholder organisations.	Key stakeholder interviews.	Start to develop MoU arrangements with 6 or 7 'community-facing' greenspace/environmental sector organisations. Through partnership working build contact and networks with range of parks and greenspace groups.	M
7	There is support for the work of the NFPGS but lack of public awareness of what support the NFPGS can offer the sector	Feedback from MC, SWOT analysis, consultation, independent review of website.	Develop website strategy with redesign to ensure website is a 'shop window' for NFPGS. Seek expert web advice and external funding.	M
8	Campaigning for greenspace role of NFPGS should be strengthened.	Feedback from MC, SWOT analysis, regional conferences, personal communication.	Undertake to recruit and train regional/area volunteers to act as reps/links for campaigns on local/national greenspace issues. Share learning and knowledge.	M
9	No Social Media content to promote campaigning role.	SWOT analysis, lack of any social media activity.	Develop social media plan, incorporating social media into website design. Training for volunteers.	M

4 WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE?

The results of the consultation and market research for the business plan show that there is enthusiasm for the work of the NFPGS and that the work of the organisation is valued. This evidence comes from the members of the Federation itself, from senior representatives of greenspace sector organisations and from individual members of the wider greenspace network.

However, the research reveals there is tension between the present capacity of the NFPGS to deliver the objectives agreed in 2013, let alone expand any activity further. Indeed, there is a significant risk that, without additional resources – including volunteers, finance and possibly the appointment of staff on a medium length contract – the organisation will cease to be an effective community voice for the parks and greenspace movement. Therefore, the following objectives are put forward as a framework for the NFPGS to become a sustainable organisation that can make a difference.

Objective 1: Organisational structure

Develop the legal structure of the organisation so that it is capable of employing staff, undertaking contracts and managing income and expenditure through grants, fees and donations. A summary of possible organisational structures is presented in Appendix B3.

- Apply for a BIG Assist Voucher/Esmée Fairbairn Foundation to seek professional assistance on the organisational structure of the NFPGS. *NB. The BIG Assist Voucher scheme is closing in March 2016, so an application is required before the scheme closes to new applications.*
- Establish a legal structure for the organisation, such as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, whilst preferably maintaining democratic accountability to our members, and an ability to lobby and campaign.
- Discuss and develop an appropriate amended or new constitution to reflect any agreed new structure

Have policies in place, such as staff recruitment, equal opportunities, data protection, financial administration, office location etc. to ensure the organisation can grow and develop as planned. Objective 1 will be subject to grant funding, aim to have in place by April 2017.

Objective 2: Organisational Capacity

Review and develop the honorary roles within the organisation so that each role has a clear purpose and role description.

- The Honorary role descriptions will include: Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, Campaigns, IT, Publicity, Fundraising, Policy, Health, Youth, Planning and Development, Regional/Country representative.
- Undertake a volunteer recruitment drive to fill these roles where they are currently vacant. When funding is available, develop or signpost a training programme to support the volunteers in these roles. New volunteers to assist with development of business plan.
- Develop IT support for the organisation (e.g. Teleconferencing, webinar and training)

Aim to start to develop new volunteer recruitment by March 2016.

Objective 3: Financial stability

Develop and submit two funding bids that will support the organisational development of the National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces and provide support and assistance to the voluntary greenspace movement.

- Seek an exploratory meeting with the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. Subject to the outcome of the meeting, submit an application to help deliver the Strategic Business Plan to 2019.
- Seek an exploratory meeting with the Heritage Lottery Fund to investigate funding options. Subject to outcome, consider a small scale application via a Start Up/ Sharing Heritage grant (10K) or a larger Our Heritage application to support delivery work.
- Consider other funding options, such as a grant to the LUSH Charity Pot to strengthen NFPGS campaigning role on greenspace.
- Consider developing a membership fee or annual appeal for donations from 2018 onwards.

Aim to complete discussions with funding bodies by March 2016 and completed application/s to funding bodies by September 2016.

Objective 4: Grassroots Delivery

Reconfigure the delivery objectives of the NFPGS into 2 main areas of activity: Campaigns, and Networking and Support for beneficiaries.

- **Campaigns:** To cover national and local campaigning on greenspace issues such as:
 - Adequate resources for green space management
 - Promoting Green Flag standards
 - Protection of green space

- Developing a regional network of greenspace facilitators to coordinate campaigns
- **Networking and support:** Supporting the friends groups (beneficiaries) through networking and support such as:
 - Encouraging, supporting and developing area and regional forums/networks
 - Regional conferences
 - Promoting skills development and training initiatives, education and publicity
 - Fundraising

Aim for new Grassroots Delivery by April 2017.

Objective 5: Working with the Greenspace sector

Develop a programme with national greenspace organisations to facilitate improved support for friends groups and community groups involved in parks and greenspaces.

- Aim to renew the existing MoU with KBT and develop an MoU with at least 5 other organisations over the next 3 years.
- Each MoU is likely to be different depending on the partner organisation, but the aim is to include an element of lobbying/campaigning, network support and advice for greenspace groups and administration/project support for the NFPGS.
- New arrangements with the greenspace sector could play a part in any grant applications as a way of strengthening support for community groups.

Aim to have some or all of the key MoU arrangements in place by December 2016.

Objective 6: Marketing and Promotion

Develop a new website that becomes the 'marketing heart' of the organisation.

- Develop a website that clearly explains: what the organisation does, who it is aimed at and the services it can provide.
- The website should be developed so that usage can be monitored, updated and expanded as the organisation grows.
- Capacity to allow online donations should be part of the requirements.
- Social media, such as a Facebook page and Twitter to be developed to engage and interact with the membership, the movement, and the greenspace sector on campaigns and networking.
- Consider development of the NFPGS 'grassroots' theme, eg. in publicity.

Aim to have marketing and promotional plan in place by April 2017.

5 ACTION PLAN AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Communications planning

NFPGS was set up to share learning, develop good practice and to raise issues impacting on green spaces – in effect acting as a voice for the community groups involved with green space with the ultimate aim of improving green space for all.

As such, effective, consistent and clear communication is essential in order to reach the intended audience, whether that is a friends' group, a national greenspace organisation, the public or a politician.

How the communication plan works

Each NFPGS core objective is translated into a communication objective, with the communication objective aiding the delivery of the core objective. The communication objectives will change as the NFPGS refreshes its core objectives. Identifying the Federation's primary audience is an important process in targeting communication to the right people and organisations. From identifying the objectives and audience the plan then focuses down onto messages, communication methods and priorities for action.

Communication objective 1. Strengthen the movement

NFPGS objective (as at November 2013)	Communication objective
Encourage and support more friends' forums to develop throughout England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.	Research and develop database of friends groups and forums in each region (or support existing regional organisation to do so), as this can then be used to monitor, communicate and strengthen coordination.
Encourage all forums to link up with each other and the Federation.	Use examples of best practice on the website and in the newsletter to demonstrate the value of networking and linking up at all levels. In particular, encourage development of regional structures. Encourage all to send reps to NFPGS meetings.
Encourage and promote training initiatives which strengthen grass roots organisation.	Promote a number of relevant training courses from across greenspace organisations to membership.

Communication objective 2. Consolidate and expand the role and influence of the Federation

NFPGS objective (as at November 2013)	Communication objective
Publicity through press releases and media presence. Officers available for comment.	Establish and build a relationship with industry press (eg. Horticulture Week) and national media, and identify in advance one or two events / themes per year to promote / issue press releases.

NFPGS objective (as at November 2013)	Communication objective
Presence at all key relevant national and regional events in the UK. We aim to contact organisers to seek an invitation and preferably chance to speak.	Identify 2 to 3 events per year where an NFPGS speaker is likely to be required. Link speaking engagement with press release to gain maximum impact. Prepare PowerPoint presentation / display material / 'freebies' for NFPGS reps to use.

Communication objective 3. Lobby for green spaces – resources and policies they need

NFPGS objective (as at November 2013)	Communication objective
Promote Green Flag Awards as national minimum standards for all green spaces.	Encourage support and take up of Green Flag Awards by membership, eg. by showcasing examples of best practice on the website and in the newsletter, and joining the GFA advisory group. Publicise where local authorities are sticking with or joining Green Flag Awards.
Promote the friends groups movement	Press Release on 30 th March 2016 featuring results of online survey highlighting issues raised by those responding to survey. Launch new campaign, or announcement of funding.
Promote World Parks Day each year.	Raise profile of parks and the NFPGS via an activity backed up by press release
Promote 'Love Parks' Week each year.	Encourage all member groups to undertake activities in 'Love Parks' Week during 15 – 24 th July 2016, its tenth year. Issue Press Release.
National lobbying campaigns for adequate resources, for a statutory obligation to provide and manage, and for effective protection.	Re-launch Petition; call a UK conference on protection of green space; lobby Government; Prioritise work with campaigning/lobbying organisations e.g. Parks Alliance, Love Parks and Fields in Trust
Work with others to attain the above results. E.g. Partnership with Keep Britain Tidy, support Parks Alliance.	As MoUs are agreed with organisations, promote partnership and developing areas of work on website and newsletter.

Communication objective 4. Improve internal administration, finances and independence

NFPGS objective (as at November 2013)	Communication objective
Improve the Federation's public presence and profile via website, leaflets and annual newsletter.	Consider rebrand of name and logo. Develop new website, with training for person/s responsible for management. Develop social media, and the range of basic leaflets and resources, and regular newsletters
NFPGS leaflet.	Design a generic A5 leaflet that can be printed as required.
Newsletter.	Design a template for newsletter on software such as Mail Chimp to ensure consistency of message.
Strengthen internal communication.	Update and maintain a database of committee members; Update and maintain membership database, and also supporters list.

Stakeholders and main audiences

Understanding who the main audiences are for the NFPGS will take time and can be developed and fine-tuned over the life of the business plan period. If the Federation is to effectively cover the whole of the UK, then the stakeholder list will not only be potentially large but also complex with the differing organisations covering parks and green spaces. The table below shows an example of mapping stakeholders and the potential interest and the priority of each specific audience.

Audience	Policy	Campaigns	Advice and information	Regional networking	Annual report
Gov Depts.	x	x			
Greenspace orgs	x	x		x	x
Press / Media	x	x			x
Community groups	x	x	x	x	x
Committee	x	x	x	x	x
Funders	x	x			x
Potential donors	x	x			
The public	x	x			

Messages

As the main audiences are identified, the next step is to develop the messages to each audience, in priority order. In the table below the key audiences are identified as new volunteers and funding bodies but this focus should change over the life of the plan.

Audience	What they need to know	Key communication messages
New committee members and forum reps	We have the ability to make a change if you support us. We have a variety of roles that you can help us with.	We are a friendly and supportive group of people. We can provide mentoring and support to people who join our committee, volunteer or take on roles.
Funders	We support a large, much-needed and very popular grassroots movement; We understand the needs of our membership; There is a clear need for funding.	We can help raise your profile with the greenspace sector
Community groups	What we can offer them. The services we can provide. Where to go to for advice.	We can offer strategic support for the improvement and protection of green spaces.

Audience	What they need to know	Key communication messages
		<p>We can help people set up forums and regional networks, and we can run seminars / networking opportunities, and signpost people to relevant training.</p> <p>Together we are stronger and have a louder voice.</p> <p>Together we can make a difference.</p>
Greenspace organisations	<p>We are the community voice(s)</p> <p>We have access to a large number of friends groups and the movement;</p> <p>We are a campaigning organisation.</p>	<p>Together we can build an alliance to strengthen the parks movement, and public awareness and engagement.</p>

Key communication methods

For each audience, an appropriate communication channel is identified. The example below shows the three priority areas for the NFPGS. As these priorities change over time, the audience, the messages and the channels will also change to reflect the evolving circumstances of the organisation.

Audience	Key communication messages	Key communication channels
New committee members and forum reps	<p>We are a friendly and supportive group of people.</p> <p>We can provide mentoring and support to people who join our committee, volunteer or take on roles.</p>	<p>Initial email and follow up call leading up to a meeting/introduction day.</p> <p>Media training for people who are offering to act as spokespeople.</p>
Funders	<p>Throughout the UK greenspace is in slipping into decline and with community support we want to reverse that decline.</p> <p>We have up to date evidence to support our bid/s.</p> <p>We do not overlap with other organisations.</p> <p>We are willing to change and improve our systems to be more effective.</p>	<p>Bespoke correspondence and face to face meetings for core funding.</p> <p>Face to face meetings with organisations when developing MoUs with partners.</p> <p>Website and newsletter for awareness of campaigns.</p>
Community groups	<p>We can offer strategic support.</p> <p>We can help set up regional networks and run seminars/meetings and signpost people to training.</p> <p>Together we are stronger and have a louder voice.</p> <p>Together we can make a difference.</p>	<p>Website, regular newsletter, social media, attendance at area forums, regional networking and conferences.</p>

Communications priority

In order to be able to deliver all the communications objectives we believe the priority for the NFPGS management committee is Communications objective 4. Without stronger infrastructure, our communication work will be diluted and less effective. The work plan can be expanded as resources allow.

Obj	Communication Objective	Audience	Activity	Time
4	Consider rebrand of name and logo. Develop new website, with training for person/s responsible for web management.	Funders: Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, HLF, Big Assist and LUSH.	Face to face meeting / initial application/full application to develop NFPGS over 3 year period.	Jan – March 2016

Reference: NCVO/KnowhowNonprofit/developing a communications strategy.

www.ncvo.org.uk

Strengthening the greenspace and community sector

A practical example of the NFPGS effectively working together with other organisations in the greenspace sector is to be seen with the work undertaken with Keep Britain Tidy. In this example the arrangement provides a good flow of communication between the two organisations and in particular with the KBT's 'Love Parks' programme.

The good relationship between the two organisations has developed into a Memorandum of Understanding which identifies the key areas of participation and provides a framework for the organisations to improve contact and assistance to community greenspace groups. The 2014/15 MoU currently provides a financial contribution to the NFPGS to help the Federation run national meetings.

Developing the MoU format with other national organisations

The MoU format could be extended to other organisations which interface with friends groups and other community groups which are involved in green space work. In a time of retrenchment of parks services provided by local authorities, the advantages of developing this MoU programme include:

- Collaboration on advocacy/lobbying/campaigning for greenspace improvements and protection;
- Improving communication and a better understanding of the services that the voluntary sector can provide to friends' groups;
- Effective use and planning of scarce resources available to the voluntary sector;
- A way of generating good practice and improving skills and knowledge.

Developing MoUs with organisations can be a time consuming business and will incur costs. However, this arrangement is seen to be working well with KBT and it is recommended that the process is expanded to other organisations, as outlined below, over the next 3 years. The time taken to communicate with the organisations, set up meetings and agree a final version of the MoU will be dependent on the voluntary or staff resources available to the NFPGS.

Organisations which could establish an MoU with the NFPGS

Fields in Trust

Fields in Trust (FIT) is a national charity and operates throughout the UK to safeguard recreational spaces. They campaign for better statutory protection for all kinds of outdoor sites. Fields in Trust is an independent UK charity dedicated to protecting and improving outdoor space.

Rationale for an MoU: FIT have a strong role in supporting local outdoor space for sport, play and recreation and they cover the UK.

Groundwork

Groundwork is a federation of independent charities. Each Groundwork Trust is a member of the Groundwork federation and signs up to a series of common aims, objectives and processes. Groundwork UK is the national body of Groundwork and works to support its local delivery through national relationships, resources and representation.

Groundwork provides training and creates jobs, encourages reduction in energy use and waste and re-connects people with nature and helps transform whole neighbourhoods. Groundwork runs campaigns such as 'My Treasured Space', where they say 20 million people lack benefits; "Together we can fix this. Join our campaign."

Rationale for an MoU: Good contact with community greenspace groups. Clear offer of support from CEO on training, fundraising and work with national and regional leads. Positive MoU negotiations have already started.

Keep Britain Tidy

Keep Britain Tidy campaigns to improve the environment. It is a charity which fights for people's right to live and work in places of which they can be proud. KBT run two programmes that relate directly with the work of NFPGS: 'Love Parks' and Green Flag Awards.

Rationale for MoU: An MoU is already in place. Aim to monitor and maintain existing MoU. Ensure feedback is given on the joint benefits gained and identify any additional requirements to be agreed in a timely manner. For example, contact made six weeks before the MoU is up for annual renewal.

“Keep Britain Tidy uses MoUs to set clear objectives between us and an organisation we are working with in a non-contractual basis. It is useful to for referring back to in situations where new activity is being discussed to ensure it will not cause a conflict of interest and is mutually beneficial to both groups.”

Anthea Thomas, Love Parks Manager, KBT



National Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens

The National Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens is the leading national charity dedicated to supporting city farms, and community gardens across the UK.

The NFCFCG is a membership-based organisation that provides support and practical assistance to city farms and community gardens in the form of workshops, training courses and major projects such as the Big Lottery funded ‘Growing Together’ partnership that will help unlock income, land and skills for community groups to enable them to become more self-sustaining.

Rationale for MoU: A federation covering similar issues to those of community groups and ‘friends of’ groups that engage with public green spaces. An MoU would enable closer collaboration and joint working where appropriate.

The Conservation Volunteers (TCV)

TCV say, *“Right now, when one third of the UK’s green places are in danger of being lost or degraded, our work is more important than ever.*

The everyday green places that people use are especially vulnerable. 10,000 playing fields were sold off between 1979 and 1997. And only 10% of the UK’s allotments remain. Places like these do not have special protection. They are all under threat at a time when local councils are cutting budgets.

But neglecting green places is a false economy. It doesn’t take long for a once-loved open space to become a magnet for anti-social behaviour, and a cost to society.”

TCV are a national UK charity that has a strong local conservation groups’ network, and run Green Gym, an accredited outdoor health programme.

Rationale for MoU: TCV supports many Friends Groups through advice and training, and can provide insurance cover for practical conservation activities.

The Parks Alliance

The Parks Alliance (TPA) was set up in 2013 by 40 key sector executives from across the UK to provide a unified voice for parks and green spaces and to address the serious funding crises across the UK. The TPA says it is the voice of UK parks, representing the people and organisations that create, maintain, invest in and use the public green spaces that we are proud to have at the heart of British life. The TPA campaigns at local, regional, UK and EU levels to ensure that parks are properly funded, their roles recognised and developed, and that the benefits that they provide are clearly understood and recognised.

Rationale for MoU: There is potential for confusion of the differing roles played between that of the TPA (for the whole sector) and that of the NFPGS (for the community level of the sector). An MoU between the TPA and NFPGS would help to clarify roles, avoid confusion or misunderstanding with the public and other greenspace organisations and provide a stronger voice for parks, green spaces and friends groups. NFPGS has recently joined the TPA Board with observer status, and this may help establish clear relations.

Additional MoU development

Other 'community-facing' greenspace organisations which should also be considered for future MoUs within the plan period (subject to resources) include:

- Campaign for the Protection of Rural England
- Civic Voice
- Forest Schools
- National Federation of Cemetery Friends
- National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners
- National Trust
- Park Run
- RSPB
- Tree Council
- The Wildlife Trusts
- The Woodland Trust

Funding Plan

The Funding plan section covers the expected funding required by the NFPGS over the period up to 2018. The plan is written on the basis that the Federation is wishing to grow in size, raise more income than it has in the past and deliver an improved service to its beneficiaries.

Current position

A grant from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation has allowed the appointment of a CEO on a part time basis to the end of June 2016. The grant has also enabled several regional conferences and the development of a strategic business plan. Funding to support the management committee to meet on a regular basis is currently funded through an MoU with Keep Britain Tidy, although the amount available for this may reduce as from summer 2016 onwards. Financial reserves are low and there is no other reliable source of income.

Funding priorities

The immediate funding priorities for the Federation are as follows:

- Seek £88,000* in grant funding from EFF by the end of December 2016, to enable the NFPGS to employ a CEO. This would allow the Federation to become a sustainable organisation, able to champion the parks and green space community sector at a senior level.
- By the end of February 2016, apply for up to £15,000 from the BIG Assist voucher or Esmée Fairbairn Foundation Grant Plus scheme to enable the Federation to secure professional assistance on finding the right legal structure for the organisation.
- Seek £77,000* in grant funding from the HLF by the end of December 2016, to employ a project worker to develop the skills, provide advice and support the volunteer networks of the Federation member groups.
- Apply to LUSH charity pot, by December 2016, for £4,000* for a 'Save Our Green Space'¹ campaign and/or national conference to enable NFPGS members and friends' groups to be better supported to protect and safeguard green spaces under threat from deterioration, privatisation, closure or development.

*Exact figures to be agreed.

¹ 'Save Our Green Space' is a working title.

Key strategies

Overall direction

The NFPGS is ambitious and there is evidence, from research undertaken for this business plan, to suggest there is a clear role for the Federation to take a lead in the mobilisation of the public to safeguard past investment in parks and in supporting the voluntary greenspace sector at a local level.

Positioning

A positioning statement or strategy defines what is unique about the organisation and what sets it apart from its 'competitors'. Positioning is important as it will help funders distinguish who they should support and allocate their funding to over and above others seeking funding.

The positioning statement for the NFPGS is as follows:

The National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces is the voice of the dynamic and inspirational movement of over 5,000 local Friends of Parks groups - the volunteers who act on behalf of the communities who use and care about our vital public green spaces.

The Federation was set up by and for the friends' group movement to share learning, develop good practice, strengthen coordination and co-operation throughout the UK, and most importantly raise the issues impacting on our open spaces at a time when funding cuts are plunging an increasing number into decline and crisis.

The Federation is uniquely placed to support and build up this grassroots movement, and to speak out and campaign for the protection and improvement of the UK's green spaces.

Case for Support

The case for support is a critical step in raising funds for the Federation. It should provide a framework and rationale as to why a funder should support the organisation. It should engender a sense of immediacy, excitement and call to action. In designing a case for support and in applying for funds it should address:

- Who is the organisation and critically what does it do?
- Why does it exist?
- What is distinctive and unique about the organisation?
- What must be accomplished and when?
- Why should the funder/donor give to the cause?
- Increasingly, many funders also look at the outcomes that will be achieved following any funding, and how any specific problems or issues will be addressed.

It is also important to be able to tell a story as to why your organisation is important and what it is you are trying to change or improve. One such story might go like this:

We held a regional conference in Nottingham for 40 friends' groups from around the East Midlands. The aim of the conference was to offer advice and support and encourage networking between groups so that greenspaces could be better managed and protected. Colin, a volunteer who chairs a friends' group in Derby, gave a talk about his greenspace. The feedback we got from his talk was very positive as he gave practical advice about funding, management and about how to get the community engaged. We would like to utilise his knowledge and skills to help other groups!

Compiling and sharing a number of stories in advance is useful as they can be used in a variety of situations such as funding bids, press articles and website. They help tell the story of why the Federation exists and help raise the profile and awareness of what it does.

Tactical Planning

In developing a funding plan for the Federation, the priorities must be to support and strengthen the central function of the organisation such as providing a suitable legal structure to allow it to accept grants and donations, enter into contracts and employ staff. The organisation must also be in a position to recruit and train new members to the committee, develop and work with regional structures, maintain good financial records and provide a service to its membership and supporters. Relevant funding opportunities are presented in Appendix B4.

Priority funding

The strategy for raising funds for the Federation is to seek 'continuation' funding from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation to support and strengthen the structure and capacity of the organisation. This would enable it to function better and provide an improved service to its membership and would allow the continuation of the CEO, along with office and support costs. A meeting with the Foundation has been held January 2016 to discuss progress on the Strategic Business Plan and the potential for Grant plus funding.

The Federation needs to register and apply to the BIG Assist programme for professional assistance and support on developing the organisational structure of the organisation. An application would be required in February, as the scheme is due to close in March 2016.

Grassroots Delivery could be supported by an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund, either as a Start Up Grant or, more ambitiously, for an Our Heritage grant which would enable a project officer to be appointed to work with communities. A meeting with the HLF would be helpful early on in 2016 to explore these options.

To develop the campaigning element of the NFPGS and to encourage a greater number of people to campaign for greenspace, it is suggested that an application is submitted to the LUSH charity pot for funding to support the organisation of a conference, recruitment of regional campaign coordinators, training and support costs. The bid to LUSH Charity Pot could be supplemented by a bid to Awards for All. The timing of this application is not seen as time sensitive.

Monitoring and Control

As the plan is implemented it will be the responsibility of the Treasurer and CEO to ensure that adequate monitoring and control measures are adopted and that reporting back to funders is undertaken as per grant conditions. In time, as the Federation grows, it may need

to consider investing in a Customer Relationship Management system to manage member data and funding conditions and requirements.

Additional funding opportunities will need to be considered in time and these include:

- A financial contribution to the NFPGS as part of any MoU arrangement with major well-funded greenspace organisations;
- Donations or membership fee from our members, the area forums;
- A charge to outside organisations and bodies in return for services provided by the NFPGS;
- Applications to other grant funders such as the Garfield Weston Foundation;
- Annual appeals for donations;
- Appropriate private sector sponsorship opportunities.

6 WORK PLAN: NATIONAL FEDERATION OF PARKS AND GREENSPACES

Work Plan and main actions required over first 15-month period:

Jan - March 2016:

- Seek exploratory meeting with Esmée FF and HLF to discuss potential application/s;
- Submit stage one/initial enquiry forms;
- Register/apply for BIG Assist voucher/EFF Grant Plus to agree best organisational structure;
- Review and develop honorary committee roles;
- Start volunteer recruitment drive to fill vacant roles;
- Renew MoU with KBT.

April - June 2016:

- Develop/submit funding bid/s to EFF & HLF;
- Induction discussion and/or training for new volunteers;
- Explore MoU options with other greenspace organisations.

July - Sept 2016:

- Develop/submit funding bid/s to EFF & HLF;
- Campaigns policy developed with volunteers;
- Reconfigure work of NFPGS into Campaigns, Networking and Support.

Oct - Dec 2016:

- Consider application to Lush Charity Pot for campaigns work;
- Results of grant applications may be known, implement as required.

Jan - March 2017:

- Staff interviews/appointments, if funding available;
- Grassroots delivery;
- Marketing and promotion delivery.

April 2017

- Review business plan and update objectives and delivery as necessary;
- Delivery post April 2017 will be dependent on income received in the preceding year.
- Continue negotiations over MoU arrangements with identified green space organisations.

Future work priorities to be developed following outcomes up to April 2017.

CONTACTS

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The logo for 'pjelements' features the word 'pjelements' in a lowercase, serif font. A small, stylized green bird icon is positioned above the 'e' in 'elements'.

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