Annual Report and Financial Statements
For the Year Ended 31st of December 2012
Charity Number 1145700

Hyndburn Green Spaces Forum, 60 Rhyddings Street, Oswaldtwistle, Accrington BB5 3EY

Entrust Number EB136023
Charity number 1145700
Charity Name: Hyndburn Green Spaces Forum

Charity Registration Number: 1145700

Registered Office:
60, Rhyddings Street,
Oswaldtwistle,
Accrington
BB5 3EY

Trustees:
Mr Neil Mooney Chair
Mr Yvonne Heap Vice Chair
Ms Cath Holmes Secretary
Mr Richard Cliffe Treasurer

Authority Liaison:
Mr Ciaran Wells Portfolio Holder for Parks & Leisure
Mr Craig Haraben Head of Parks & Cemeteries
Mrs Shirley Parkinson Parks Liaison Officer
Mrs Alison Edmondson Minute Secretary
Message from the Chair,

This is our first Annual report as a registered charity having been granted charity status in February 2012.

We are justly proud of the Forum’s achievements since its conception in 2005, and of the successful completion of the projects highlighted in this year’s report.

We would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the dedication of the 100’s of community volunteers affiliated to the forum who have generously contributed their time, and the generous support from the funders who have helped us to turn community dreams into reality.

A special thanks as always to the support of Hyndburn Borough Council, Our Parks Liaison Officer and Minute Secretary.

History

Hyndburn Green Spaces Forum (HGSF) was formed in late 2005, and is run **completely by volunteers**. It all started when five Friends of Parks groups realised that the work they were doing within their community parks was having a major impact on the crime, health & well-being of their residents.

They then approached Hyndburn Borough Council’s Parks Manager about coming together, to encourage more people to care about the open space in which they live by undertaking practical environmental and recreational projects across the Borough. By sharing best practice and supporting other less established community volunteer groups and assisting with funding bids, organising training workshops for members, raising funding for community projects they could then improve the quality of life for the 81,000 residents of Hyndburn.

In the last 7 years the Forum have swelled from five to twenty six community not-for-profit groups, who have given 100,000’s of volunteer hours to help the Forum meet its objectives. The Forum looks at the leisure and green space in Hyndburn as a whole and then targets the areas of greatest need, even when that area doesn’t have an active community group they have then worked with local residents to give them a voice by empowering our communities and promoting social action.

Achievements prior to this report have included:

- HGSF membership has grown from five to twenty six community groups in 2012
- Environmental Status – registered with Entrust.
- 2010/2011 took over as the grants approval panel for Green Partnership Awards for Hyndburn.
• In 2011 Received a Green Apple gold award for its work on transforming a public park to Green Flag status
• Nominated for the Mayor of Hyndburn Environmental Award
• In 2012 gained charity status
• Has helped to raise £1.8 million in external funding for community projects since 2005,
• HGSF priority plan from 2005 to 2012 was to work with the local authority and residents to improve the quality of children’s play facilities across the Borough. The results speak for themselves with 5 playgrounds being refurbished and 7 new playgrounds being installed, benefiting over 20,000 young people under the age of 19yrs.
• Six Hyndburn Parks now have Green Flag Status.
• Community planted with volunteers 200,000 Crocus bulbs across the Borough, providing colour within the town and an early nectar source for bees.

Hyndburn Background

Hyndburn has a population of 81,000 people, from several ethnic backgrounds, but as can be seen from the deprivation maps below, it is an area with a variety of problems low incomes, poor health, poor living environment, each deprivation in turn having an impact on our communities, but together they have result in an average Index of Multi Deprivation IMD rank of 34 for Hyndburn.
Our aims and objectives

Purpose and vision

Our charity’s purpose is set out in the objects in our constitution:

For the benefit of the inhabitants of the Borough of Hyndburn, Lancashire and the surrounding area, to

Provide or assist in the provision of facilities for recreation and other leisure time occupation in the interests of social welfare with the object of improving their conditions of life for the inhabitants of the area of benefit without distinction of sex, or of political, religious or other opinions in particular but not exclusively by the preservation, promotion, support, assistance and improvement of all green spaces within the Borough of Hyndburn.

Our vision is to empower our communities and promote social action, so every resident has a voice and access to free, high quality open spaces.

Ensuring our work delivers our aims

We undertake a Borough wide resident’s survey in order to produce our five year priority plan. The draft plan and proposed projects are then discussed with the Head of Parks & Cemeteries to prioritise strategic need.
We review this plan on an annual basis to help us to stay focused on achieving our aims and outcomes. The community can also approach the forum for help with a project that they feel would benefit their community.

These project proposals are then reviewed by Forum members to assess community value and whether the proposed project would meet our objectives.

All projects undertaken under the Forum’s umbrella are evaluated at the end of the construction phase to look at the benefits that they have brought to the community.

**Structure, Governance and Management**

**Governing Document**

The organisation is a charity established under a constitution adopted on the 18th of January 2011

**Recruitment and Appointment of Trustees**

Under requirements of our constitution the trustees are elected to serve for a period of 12 months after which they must be re-elected at the next Annual General meeting. They can put themselves forward, or be nominated; the nomination must be seconded by another forum member.

All Trustees give their time voluntary and receive no benefits from the charity.

**Forum Member Group - Representatives.**

Member Groups are composed entirely of volunteers from the local areas, we value the local knowledge that they bring to our charity and the hours they spend on helping us meet our aims and objectives. We recognise the importance of their roles within our charity and have nominated them for various awards. One of the groups won the community engagement award for the work they have been doing in Haworth Park.

Each member group can appoint two representatives to attend the monthly forum meetings on behalf of their organisation.

Each member group is entitled to one vote on any issue, project submission or funding application approval. Each affiliated member group must be a community not for profit organisation, legally constituted with their own constitution and bank account. Member groups can choose to adopt the Forum policies (health & Safety, child protection etc.).

One of the barriers to community events is often the cost of event insurance, the Forum therefore has an event insurance policy allowing 25 community events to go ahead in a year; any affiliated group can apply to the Forum to use this event insurance. If approved by Forum members they must agree to undertake prior to any activities taking place the...
necessary risk assessments and supply the Forum with copies of any documentation requested (e.g. Fair-ground test certificates, emergency plan).

Risk Management

The trustees have conducted a review of the major risks to which the charity is exposed. Where appropriate we have adopted systems and procedures to minimise any major risks that the charity may face. We have health and safety policies and procedures in place to ensure compliance from all volunteers, clients and visitors to the projects and throughout any activities. Any future staff will also have to comply with these policies. Risk assessments are carried out prior to activities and updated as necessary throughout the life of each activity.

How our activities deliver public benefit

All our charitable activities focus on engaging with the 81,000 residents of Hyndburn inspiring them to take a more active role / ownership of the open space and leisure facilities within their community.

We use Parks and Recreational activities as the mechanism for delivering the following social benefits.

*Increase Physical Activity – improved community health by:*

- Providing freely accessible play/sports facilities of a good quality (will be based on the 3 Free’s – Free of charge – Free to come and go - Free to choose
- Providing opportunities to take part in a practical environmental event.
- Encourage community food growing projects.

*Increased Biodiversity & Access to Nature - improved environmental understanding and its links to well-being by:*

- Improving access for everyone to some of Hyndburn’s green spaces
- Creating learning opportunities for residents to get close to and learn about nature.
- Improving biodiversity with in the Borough to attract more wildlife to its parks & open spaces.
- Providing training and workshops to undertake wildlife surveys.

*Improved Community Cohesion – Improving family and community relationships by:*

- Providing free opportunities which allow differing communities to connect and interact with each other around a positive similar aim.
- Good quality, open space and free leisure facilities enables the most vulnerable families to spend quality time together.
- Encouraging all to value and appreciate others views whilst creating strong positive friendships, work practices and forming interest clubs, event days and sharing this within our Borough and beyond.
Capacity building within the community - Improved skills and community ownership by

- Giving residents the confidence that they can make a difference within their community.
- Providing a mechanism for residents to have a voice
- Including opportunities to learn new life skills

Our projects this year have been very varied, but each bringing something unique to the community it serves.

Haworth Park – Coming up Roses project.

This project was brought to the Hyndburn Green Spaces Forum by Baxenden Community Forum, whose volunteers worked tirelessly, to help bring this project to fruition.

Aim of the project
To bring back into community use a derelict part of the formal gardens at Haworth Park, by the recreation of a Rose Garden to create a sensory area of contemplation and relaxation.

Background
Haworth Park is situated in the Baxenden Ward of Hyndburn and has a population of 4,304 people.
It is the home of Haworth Art Gallery and Museum a grade II listed building and a major tourist attraction for Hyndburn attracting around 12,000 visitors a year, with visitors from far and wide coming to see its famous Tiffany glass collection. Unfortunately the park grounds were not in the best of condition, so visitors and residents rarely stay for long periods.

Baxenden Community forum under took a consultation exercise with residents and visitors to find out what would make visiting the site more enjoyable and produced a wish list, which they then discussed with the Parks and Cemeteries Manager to prioritise the things that residents felt would improve their enjoyment of the site. Two of the things that came out of this consultation were;

- Elderly residents remembering visiting the park as a child and seeing the 100’s of Rose Bushes that use to dominate the formal gardens and that if the Rose gardens where still there they would in nice weather go and spend time in the park.
- Parents wanted a safe area for the children to play, have a picnic.
- In addition any work undertaken within a given radius of the house would also require conservation planning permission, something the group had no experience of.
Baxenden Forum then approached the Hyndburn Green Spaces and Parks Service, to help them to design a new Rose garden on the site of the old one, cost it and help them secure funding and conservation planning consent.

**Before the project started**

All that remained of the old rose garden was the sundial plinth (minus the sundial) and the circular shape the crazy paving paths made the area unsafe for anyone unsteady on their feet.

The two pillared entrances to the formal gardens had long since lost the gates they housed, making the area open and exposed.

With the area previously suffering antisocial behaviour, which necessitated in polycarbonate covers to be fitted to the museum bottom floor windows it was decided that to rebuild the formal gardens without some form of security would result in an increase in damage. It was therefore decided to reinstate the gates and fencing, this required further consultation with both the Gallery, English Heritage and the Authority’s Conservation planning officer. After months of work, a design for the new Rose garden was selected by the community and the fencing was approved by Government North West.

Work then started on securing the necessary funding including community sponsorship for the Rose beds themselves.

This was done by displays in the local libraries and Area Council Meetings and schools. Volunteers were also asked to come forward and help with the planting.
Tinkerbrook Nursery (a training centre for adults with special needs) came forward to help with planting bare rooted roses into pots.

Church Prospects panel came forward to look after the pots at Gatty Park until the new beds were ready.

By the time the construction phase had been completed the entire Rose beds and arches had a community sponsor.

A local artist generously gave her time to design a lectern showing all the roses and sponsors.

Two days of community planting, saw the Roses planted in their new home.

The old sundial plinth was restored and made into a bird bath as the main focal feature for the garden.

On the 16th of July the new garden was formally opened to the public by the Mayor of Hyndburn, with a big tea party.

Today the area is well used by residents, suffers little in the way of vandalism and the pedestrian gates are never locked and has a dedicated team of visitors who will dead head the roses during the summer and weed the beds.
Volunteers have also planted several thousand crocus around the edge of the rose beds to provide spring colour, plans also include planting 1,600 lawn camomile plants into the grass pathways to enhance the sensory element of the garden. Volunteers are also planning to install 3 benches within the area and 6,000 Bluebells at the back of the Rose garden.

Did we Succeed?
Yes - The project has created greater community ownership of the site, with more residents actively getting involved in the sites maintenance and future development with more residents using the area on a daily basis to meet friends and take part in a physical activity. A quote from one couple

We never use to come before as it wasn’t a very nice place, now we come whenever the weather is nice and sit in the new garden. It’s so peaceful and we can watch the wildlife, watch the children play or have a picnic. I’ve even done a little dead heading but no one minds.

Plans for the future
Baxenden Community forum are now working with volunteers on improving the drainage on the old croquet lawn and the creation of a grass stage in the formal gardens to enable them to increase the number of community events in the park.

Partners/thanks
This project would not have been possible without the assistance of Haworth Art Gallery Staff, Hyndburn Borough Council’s Parks Service and Hyndburn Borough Council’s Conservation Planning Officer.
A special thanks also to Tinkerbrook Learning Centre and Church Prospects panel, Brian O’Rouke of Roukes Engineering, English Heritage, Rachael Stoney – Community Spaces Facilitator for this project and Heather Ashton - community artist
And all the funders and community sponsors/volunteers who made this possible

Mercer Park – Temple Sensory Garden

One of the founding members of Hyndburn Green Spaces Forum, this hard working group of community volunteers was established in 1999 and managed with a little support from Hyndburn Borough Council to turn Mercer Park from a No Go zone to an award winning Green Flag Park, with improved access and play facilities, with annual events organised by the community. The park is now celebrating its 8th year as a Green Flag park.

In 2011 Mercer House also passed to community management under the Mercer 1842 Trust, which now provides, training events and community meeting rooms.

But there was one part of the park that the group desperately wanted to improve, the picnic area below which was water logged hidden by an old hedge and underused.

The Friends of Mercer Park with the backing of Clayton & Altham Community Association had been trying for 10 years to incorporate a Sensory Garden into Mercer Park.

In 2012 with the help of the Hyndburn Green Spaces Forum enough funding was finally secured to turn this underused area of park into a sensory haven for visitors and wildlife. The forum enlisted the help of Lancashire County Councils Environment design team to create a design for the site.
The community chose a Gaudi inspired design, Gaudi was inspired with forms of structure, nature, curvature and sculpting that followed the form of twists.

The garden has a scalloped shaped stone wall, and within the walls. The paths, consists of grass and herbs leading to a central mosaic (that local children created).

Raised beds of shrubs and plants, four beds represent each season spring, summer, autumn and winter and three beds to represent the different senses, touch, smell, hear and sight.

12 tall scented juniperus skyrocket provide the focal points for the garden. Located within the garden are several areas for visitors to sit.

The successful contractor for this project was a CIC (Community Interest Company) who runs work based placements for young people. Several were involved in the gardens construction learning valuable skills to take forward into future employment.

Volunteers from Park View Resource Centre (A centre for adults with special needs) now come every Wednesday and work with the retired parks keeper to help maintain the beds.

How did we help?

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The experience of Forum members helped to identify funders who the Friends of Mercer could apply to for funding.
The Forum registered the project with Entrust to enable the group to apply for Landfill Tax funding.
The park now has an area improved for biodiversity, and an area which provides visitors with a sensory and safe environment. A new group of volunteers now use the area as horticultural therapy, creating more community ownership of the park.

Plans for the Future
The friends of Mercer Park are now working with the local young people on replacing and expanding the skateboard facility within the park.

Oakhill Park – Project Quakers

This project started as a request from the children of Woodnook Primary School to Woodnook Residents Association to please do something about the pet’s corner in Oakhill Park.

The formal duck pond in Oakhill Park was over 100 years old and part of the original grounds when the land was in private ownership. In 2011 the pets had gone apart from the wild duck population, who had taken up residence, and the old high fence had seen better days.

Volunteers from Woodnook Residents Association visited the children at the school to hear first-hand what they liked and disliked about the area. The children wanted the area to allow greater community interaction with the wildlife. The current fence didn’t even enable them to feed the ducks. They wanted it to be useable as an educational resource, with a pond dipping and opportunities to get close to nature on class visits. The group then undertook a questionnaire within their community about the duck pond, older residents agreed with the children that something needed to be done about the area as it detracted from the rest of the park, they also requested an area where they could sit and watch the wildlife with perhaps a bird table, and some more native planting which would attract wildlife, butterflies and bees.
Woodnook Residents Association tried to secure funding for over a year, but without a properly drawn and costed plan this proved difficult.

In 2011 The Forum and Parks Development Team then joined the group, and together a plan was drawn up and fully costed.

Advice was sought from the Lancashire Wildlife Trust on the most appropriate plants to use to create the new habitat zones, and Anglican Wildfowl on the best ducks for the area.

Funding was sourced and work commenced in early 2012. All the over grown rhododendrons were removed and a platform over the pond was created, the pond was cleaned and a shelf was added for water marginal plants. A large tree stem was saved and added into a new gravel beach area to provide habitats for dragonflies.

A large bird table was created by a group of volunteers from Sandy Lane Gardening Club. (A training facility for adults with both physical and mental health problems).

Funding also allowed for the purchase of pond dipping equipment and entomology equipment for school groups to use as part of any school visits.

What did we achieve?

- Increase in the areas biodiversity.
- A great educational resource for local schools and groups.
- An area of quiet contemplation for visitors to come and sit.
- A valuable community asset in this Green Flag park.
- A dedicated group of community volunteers who come daily to Check on the new ducks and the bird table.
Future plans
Woodnook residents are looking to include some willow sculptures into the area, as part of a community training workshop.
Incredible Edibles (a new community food growing group) are looking to create a community (Alice Garden) on an area of waste ground within the park. The group are also looking at how they can restore the main waterfalls and Japanese Rock Garden in the park.

St James Church – Accrington

St James Church is a closed church yard in the centre of Accrington. The church itself dates from the 18th Century and is grade II listed. It is affectionately known across Hyndburn as the Accrington Pals Church so holds historic value to the Borough and its people.

It is also the only bit of open space in the town centre, but offered nothing in the way of a useable community space.

As a closed church yard its maintenance was limited to mowing the grass, maintaining the grave stones and trees on the site.

The Forum was contacted in 2011 by the Diocese of Blackburn to work with them as a partner on this project to improve the grounds of Church for improved community accessibility.

The proposals included:

- The removal of some of the overgrown trees and shrubs from the grounds.
- Installation and creation of new stone paved paths to improve access.
- Bulb planting to provide spring colour.
- New tree planting to replace the ones that had been removed.
• The installation of 50 bird nesting boxes.
• Especially important in this project was the creation of an area where residents could come together for events and concerts, or just to sit and eat their lunch.
• And lighting for darker nights

The Forum worked with the Diocese and Hyndburn Borough Council on a successful bid to the Lancashire Environment Fund for £39,500.

The Bishop of Blackburn did the official opening the improved grounds on the 30th of November and was well attended despite the cold.

**Plans for the Future**

**What did it achieve?**
The grounds are now a place where residents sit and eat their lunch. The improved access allows easy access for less able-bodied residents.

The new event area, has provided opportunities for band concerts and other activities (outside coffee mornings)

**Training/Capacity Building**

The Forum tries to share its knowledge and experience with less experience community groups, with advice on setting up and writing a constitution, writing risk assessments, organising community events and applying for funds.

In 2012 we held a Funding Skeleton Workshop- To aid member groups with funding applications, our Liaison Officer, gave a free 2hr workshop to member groups, on the research necessary to make a good funding application. A follow on workshop is planned for early next year.

**Financial Information**

**Principal Funding Sources**

Funding secured by the forum is usually project specific. Our day to day operational costs are currently at zero thanks to the generosity of the trustees who do not take any payment from the charity and the generous support from Hyndburn Borough Council in the form of a
free room for meetings or training courses, secretarial minute support, photocopying. The forum also tries to be as paper free as possible corresponding where possible electronically. This allows us to use every penny raised by the forum to meet our aims and objectives.

Funding for this year’s project has been made possible thanks to the generous support of

**Haworth Park – Coming up Roses**
Lottery – Community Spaces Fund,
Lancashire Environment Fund
Britvic Fund
Community Sponsorship
Local Area Council
Green Partnership Award

**Oakhill Park – Project Quackers**
Duchy of Lancaster Fund
Lottery – Community Spaces Fund
Co-operative Fund

**Mercer Park – Sensory Garden**
Lancashire Environment Fund
Lottery – Community Spaces Fund

**St James Church**
Lancashire Environment Fund
Hyndburn Borough Council
Lottery - Community Spaces Fund.

**The Future**

The Charity is continuing to seek funding to improve the following facilities:

- To Improve the play facilities for teenagers at Milnshaw Park, in partnership with the Friends of Milnshaw Park.
- To Improve the playing fields, drainage and levels at Highams playing fields in partnership with Laneside Residents Association
- To replace the Bowling and Tennis Pavilion at Lowerfold Park, with a new community building, In partnership with Totally Tennis and Great Harwood Bowling Club.
- Assist Friends of Rhyddings Park in their bid too Heritage Lottery Parks for People.
- Assist the Friends of Memorial Park in their plans to create a Sensory Garden at Memorial Park
- To create a walled garden of remembrance at Accrington Cemetery.
The Charity is continuing with it training/seminar/support program for member groups:

- Seminar on the becoming an incorporated charity.
- Funding Jigsaw workshop - on writing better funding bids
- Funding workshop – Children in need and Windfall fund.
- SROI workshop
- Support for new community groups.

We are currently undertaking a Borough wide survey for the creation of our priority plan for 2014-2019
We will also be reviewing the benefits and disadvantages of registering for incorporation status as the best method to protect Forum Trustees and members.
We are also hoping if successful in securing the funding for the Milnshaw park project to employ our first staff as out-reach workers.
We are developing plans for a community tools store for member groups and the necessary training to use them safely, as a way of increasing practical based engagement.

The charity will continue to work with the Young Peoples Service, Hyndburn Youth Council, Community Safety partnership, Lancashire Wildlife Trust, Groundwork Pennine Lancashire and other multi-agency organisations to help deliver on local priorities and deliver the best possible outcomes for our community.

We will continue to assist
- Incredible Edibles Accrington with their plans for a community food growing project at Oakhill Park
- Hyndburn Federation of Allotments in their promotion of food growing at the RHS Show at Tatton Park
- Friends of Arden Hall on their Biodiversity improvement plans for Peel Park & the Coppice.
- Working with member groups and partners on improving the Borough’s Biodiversity and wildlife habitats.