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Patron
HM The Queen

President
HRH The Duke of Cambridge KG KT

Mr Tom Pursglove MP,
House of Commons,
London,
SW1A 0AA

24th July 2019

Dear Mr Pursglove,

I am writing to inform you that Barnwell Country Park in your constituency has been nominated in the Fields in Trust UK's Best Park 2019 award. Fields in Trust champions and supports our parks and green spaces by protecting them for people to enjoy in perpetuity. Because once lost, they are lost forever. Fields in Trust is an independent charity with over 90 years' experience; we protect 2,809 parks and green spaces for future generation to enjoy, totalling over 12,000 hectares of land across the UK.

The UK's Best Park award gives the public the opportunity to vote for their favourite local green space; voting will run until noon on Monday 19th August. The top park in each of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland will be shortlisted with the overall winner and UK's Best Park 2019 announced at the conclusion of our Summer of Parks in mid-September.

As an MP with a nominated park in your constituency, we really hope that you will get behind the award and help promote the important resource that the local park is to your constituents. If you can, a visit to a nominated space for a photo opportunity before close of voting would show your support; although we are unable to send a representative we would be able to provide a template press release to help promote your park. You could also show support for your local park on social media using the hashtag #LoveYourLocalPark and linking to the voting page at www.fieldsintrust.org/best-park.

We wrote to you last year sharing the findings of our Revaluing Parks and Green Spaces research, which estimates the wellbeing value associated with the frequent use of local parks and green spaces at £34.2 billion per year to the entire UK adult population and NHS savings of £111 million per year based on fewer GP visits.

In May we published the Green Space Index, our barometer of publicly accessible park and green space provision, which finds that 2.6 million people in Great Britain live more than ten-minute walk away from a green space. It also shows that, although Britain has a total of 216,160 hectares of publicly accessible local parks and green spaces, less than 6% of this space is legally protected with Fields in Trust.

Please contact me for further information on the Green Space Index – I have enclosed a briefing note on Fields in Trust's work. Our Impact Report for 2018 is available online by visiting www.fieldsintrust.org/impact-reports. We hope you are as excited about the UK's Best Park award as we are, and best of luck!

Yours sincerely,

Alison McCann

Alison McCann
Policy Manager

Fields in Trust

A Briefing Note

Fields in Trust champions and supports our parks and green spaces by protecting them for people to enjoy in perpetuity. Because once green spaces are lost, they are lost forever.

"I was very fortunate that growing up in Jersey I had a huge amount of access to outdoor spaces and it was something I really appreciated as a youngster, not just because I wanted to be a football player but also because I was able to spend time outdoors with my friends. I understand how important these spaces are and the opportunities they provide for our communities."

Graeme Le Saux
Fields in Trust Ambassador and former England international

Our **Revaluing Parks and Green Spaces** research quantifies the health and wellbeing benefits that parks and green spaces provide to the individual. Using HM Treasury best practice, we have identified they provide £34.2 billion worth of physical and mental health benefits every year.

It's a persuasive statistic, as is the fact that £111 million worth of NHS cost savings are made every year because frequent park users have better general health and are less likely to visit the GP.

The creation of a new park on derelict land in Newbold, Rugby resulted in local residents feeling healthier, happier and becoming more active.

Fields in Trust conducted research into Centenary Park in Rugby which opened in April 2016 and features a green outdoor gym, play area, multi-use games area, wildlife meadow, butterfly bank and sensory garden. The space was also protected by Rugby Borough Council as part of Fields in Trust's Centenary Fields programme.

The research found that since Centenary Park opened three times as many people visit local parks daily than before with over 60% of park visitors reporting feeling happier and better about themselves. Half said they had significantly more access to nature and two-thirds said the most important reason for visiting was physical activity.

Policy Context

Parks and green spaces are increasingly prominent on the Westminster Parliamentary agenda. Fields in Trust is a member of the **Parks Action Group** convened by the **Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government.**

The **Department of Health and Social Care** vision document, "Prevention is Better than Cure", supports our research findings stating: "Our mental and physical health is also shaped by the neighbourhoods we live in, including access to green space". **Public Health England** have recently issued a briefing paper about the role of accessible green space in tackling child obesity. Parks and green spaces are vital for the successful delivery of the **Department for Culture, Media and Sport** "Sporting Future" strategy and the aspiration to build a more active nation.

DEFRA's ambitious 25-year plan identifies the need to protect and enhance the natural environment; the plan (Ch3) also identifies the role that urban environments have in improving health and wellbeing.

Published by **DCMS**, the Government's strategy to tackle loneliness, "A Connected Society", recognises "the value of public parks and green spaces, helping them bring together communities now and in the future".

The overarching "Civil Society Strategy" lists several areas of social policy where access to parks can make a positive contribution by supporting positive physical and mental health outcomes and allow space for social mixing. It goes on to include "educational and training opportunities and encourage business investment".

Contributing to this diverse policy agenda is an extensive workload, but parks and green spaces are arguably the most universal of our public services - we believe they are good, do good, and should be protected for good.

Fields in Trust's work

- **Protect:** Green spaces are good, do good and need to be protected for good. They are not pleasant nice-to-haves to be taken for granted - they are the green hearts of our communities.
- **Support:** Parks and green spaces should be open to everyone, connecting people and catalysing community spirit. Places we can all move, breathe, run and play.
- **Champion:** Parks and green spaces have a positive impact on a range of key issues from physical and mental health and wellbeing to community cohesion. They need to be revalued for their contributions to society.

Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play

First published as The Six Acre Standard in the 1930s our guidance on the provision of space for sport and play is firmly embedded in the planning lexicon.

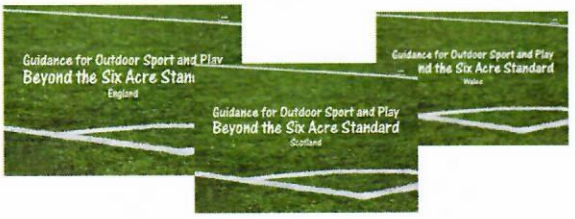
The 2015 edition Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play is a one-stop shop for all practitioners in the planning and design of both informal and formal space to meet the recreational needs of the community.

Barn Elms Playing Fields, London

Fields in Trust's history

Since our founding in 1925 we have been protecting and improving outdoor space under key protection programmes:

- King George V Playing Fields: protected in tribute to our first Patron, King George V.
- Queen Elizabeth II Fields: protected in celebration of the 2012 Diamond Jubilee and the London Olympic and Paralympic Games.
- Centenary Fields: our recently concluded programme, delivered with The Royal British Legion to permanently protect recreational spaces connected to World War I.
- Active Spaces: our programme protecting spaces and supporting community activation; the first UK-wide funding by the London Marathon Charitable Trust.



Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play is available in versions for England, Scotland and Wales, plus a Welsh language version

Protected parks and green spaces

Fields in Trust uses charity and contract law to protect valuable public and recreational land for the long term.

We protect land through a Deed of Dedication. It's a robust yet flexible way to do it. The Deeds are a legally binding document which means each space is protected for future generations to enjoy. We work in partnership with landowners including sports clubs, private individuals and local authorities to achieve this protection.

A total of 2,809 parks and green spaces across the UK are protected with us in perpetuity. To find out if your local park or green space is safe, visit: **www.fieldsintrust.org**

Fields in Trust, 36 Woodstock Grove, London, W12 8LE | **www.fieldsintrust.org**
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Green Spaces for Good

May 2019 release

Green Space Index

Analysing Great Britain's publicly accessible park and green space provision

The Green Space Index is Fields in Trust's barometer of publicly accessible park and green space provision. Our Revaluing Parks and Green Spaces research demonstrates that these spaces across the UK provide people with over £34 billion of health and wellbeing benefits. We believe that green spaces are good, do good and need to be protected for good. Through the Green Space Index we are taking stock of the nation's quantity of local parks and green spaces and providing analysis on its impact on communities.

216k hectares

of total green space provision in Great Britain

35.22 square metres

of green space provision per person in Great Britain

2.60m people

live more than ten-minute's walk from a green space

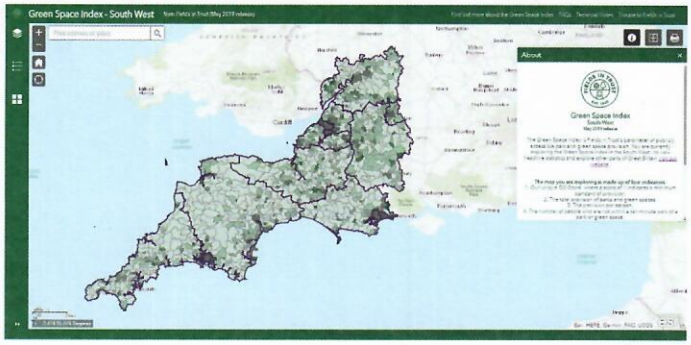
Fields in Trust legally protects 12,300 hectares of green space provision across Great Britain, working with local authorities, voluntary organisations and private landowners to protect land in perpetuity for current and future generations to enjoy.

The Green Space Index

Nation/region	GSI Score	Provision of green space (ha.)	Provision of green space per person (sqm)	Population not within a ten-minute walk of a green space	Green space legally protected with Fields in Trust (ha.)
East of England	1.24	24,998.26	42.75	314,562	1,639.21
East Midlands	1.00	15,912.57	35.10	228,518	727.59
London	0.61	17,150.11	20.98	10,579	907.90
North East	0.91	8,191.79	31.54	88,596	241.16
North West	0.88	21,561.04	30.57	194,016	1,153.40
Scotland	1.33	24,285.04	45.86	303,965	2,143.41
South East	1.25	37,241.29	43.13	378,560	1,315.33
South West	1.08	19,943.31	37.71	403,711	1,620.96
Wales	1.09	11,573.43	37.78	236,929	1,129.54
West Midlands	1.05	20,441.13	36.49	255,128	1,010.37
Yorkshire & Humber	0.80	14,862.94	28.13	180,652	459.44

Explore the Index

Alongside the headline findings, a series of interactive online maps allow anybody to explore the Green Space Index in more detail. Data is presented at local level with a different layer for each variable. Maps showing the Index in each nation and region are available to explore by visiting:
www.fieldsintrust.org/green-space-index



"The recent Green Space Index, measuring public access and use of parks across the country, is an invaluable contribution to the sector's evidence base and will have a lasting legacy. The charity's vision for the nation's parks and green spaces is commendable and I continue to value the contribution to government's work arising from it."
Rishi Sunak MP, Parks and Green Spaces Minister

About Fields in Trust

Fields in Trust is an independent charity with over 90 years' experience supporting and championing parks and green spaces by protecting them for people to enjoy in perpetuity. We work with landowners, community groups and policymakers to demonstrate the value of our parks and green spaces and achieve better protection for their future at both local and national level. Our Revaluing Parks and Green Spaces research, which underpins the Green Space Index, establishes a baseline for the value that parks and green spaces contribute to health and wellbeing of communities. Rather than simply being judged by what they cost to maintain the research demonstrates parks and green spaces across the UK provide people with £34 billion of health and wellbeing benefits annually. Fields in Trust sits on the government convened Parks Action Group of sector experts providing insight and evidence to the MHCLG and Park and Green Spaces Minister.

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Green Spaces for Good

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