

South Dublin Joint Policing Committee

RECLAIMING OUR PARKS

Report of the Parks sub-group



Members of the Parks sub-group

Councillor William Lavelle

Chairman

Lucan Electoral Area, South Dublin County Council

Michael Hannon

Senior Executive Parks Superintendent

South Dublin County Council Parks and Landscape Services Department

Michelle Kearns

The Dolcain Project, Bawnogue

South Dublin Community Platform representative on Joint Policing Committee

Inspector Mel Smyth

Clondalkin Garda Station

Inspector Gerry Delmar

Tallaght Garda Station

(until July 2010)

Inspector Raymond Blake

Tallaght Garda Station

(from August 2010)

Acknowledgements:

The sub group wishes to thank the following:

Staff members of South Dublin County Council Parks and Landscape Services Department who met with us on various site visits and meetings including: Jim Walsh, Director of Services; Brian Sheehan, Senior Parks Superintendent, David Fennell and Bill Kearney Senior Executive Parks Superintendents; John Lyons and Matt Rudden, District Parks Supervisors and other staff members who we met along the way.

Management and staff of other SDCC Departments including Joe Horan, County Manager, Billy Coman, Director of Services, Housing and Community Services Department's; John Quinlivan, Senior Executive Officer, Environmental Services Department.; Larry McEvoy, Spatial Planning Unit, Thos McDermott, Coordinator, South Dublin County Sports Partnership and Alison Silke, Sports Officer.

The residents of both Killinarden and Southwest Clondalkin and the young people from the SWIFT programme in Clondalkin who met with the sub-group and to Killinarden Community Centre and the Dolcain Project for accommodating these meetings.

Members and secretariat of South Dublin Joint Policing Committee who contributed to our work programme.

Contents

Executive Summary

1. Chairman's Foreword
2. Setting the context
3. Policing our Parks
4. Managing our Parks
5. Activating our Parks
6. Implementation and Monitoring

Appendices:

- A. List of Recommendations
- B. List of meetings and site-visits conducted by sub-group
- C. Bibliography
- D. Existing SDCC Parks and Landscape Services Department Bye-laws 1996

Executive Summary

The Parks sub-group was established at the November 2009 meeting of the South Dublin County Joint Policing Committee in accordance with Priority Area 3 of the Annual Work Programme 2009: *“to deter crime and anti-social behaviour in public parks.”* It was agreed that the two parks to be primarily examined would be St. Cuthbert’s Park in Clondalkin and Killinarden Park in West Tallaght.

South Dublin County Council manages some 1,700 hectares of public parkland, open spaces, river valleys. These parks, open spaces and recreational amenities are for all the community of our county as well as for the visitors to it and the workers that commute to it on a daily basis. But while visiting our county’s parks and living beside a park should be a pleasant experience, it is regrettable that in too many cases however, park-users and residents in areas near parks suffer the consequences of anti-social behaviour, while our parks themselves show the scars of damage caused by anti-social behaviour. This is unacceptable.

Ireland is currently facing an unprecedented economic crisis and there is risk that our public parks could seriously suffer from cutbacks to both front-line park maintenance services provided by local authorities and to community policing by the Gardaí. A failure to maintain investment in our parks will result in unsafe, unkempt and disconnected parks, becoming no-go areas ultimately failing the community. The most important form of investment is in human resources but while investment must be maintained, money on its own is insufficient unless properly managed. This report considers many matters relating to the need to improve strategic and operational planning and management of our parks as well on improved cooperation between council and Gardaí.

This report contains recommendations across three main themes:

Theme 1 - Policing our Parks

Under this theme the sub-group looked at how we better enhance the monitoring and policing of our parks and the enforcement of our laws and parks bye-laws. Key recommendations include:

- That Gardaí implement a programme of enhanced policing of our parks to provide a perceptible deterrent to anti-social behaviour. An internal Garda memo on the operational aspects of enhanced park policing will be prepared by a Garda member of the sub-group and circulated accordingly;
- That new ‘Park Safety Teams’ be formally established to enhanced cooperation between Park Rangers and Gardaí;
- That Garda CCTV monitoring and remote CCTV monitoring with live voice warnings as used in Seán Walsh Park be introduced in more parks across the county. Given the costs involved, additional CCTV monitoring should be focused on anti-social behaviour hot-spots and areas with high-value park amenities such as playgrounds;
- That South Dublin County Council’s 1996 Park Bye-laws be updated to ensure that they are up-to-date and reflective of the issues that now face our parks, such as scrambler bike usage and horse activity; and that particular focus be given to the need to strengthen and coordinate the enforcement powers available to both Council staff and An Garda Síochána;
- That the Minister for Transport introduce legislation to update the Roads Traffic Act 1994 to strengthen the power of An Garda Síochána to seize and hold motorbikes and quads from persons using them in an unauthorised manner in public parks and open spaces maintained by local authorities.

Theme 2 - Managing our Parks

Under this theme the sub-group looked at how we can better reduce opportunities for anti-social behaviour in parks and how best to respond to the affects of anti-social behaviour by the small minority so as not to take from the experience of our parks for the majority. Key recommendations include:

- That a more permanent staff presence be provided in our parks, particularly those that are located in socially disadvantaged areas including both St. Cuthbert's and Killinarden Parks.
- That the overall number and working hours of park staff, in particular Park Rangers staff, be reviewed with a view to increasing the overall number of staff and to provide more flexible working hours, appropriate to the needs of each park or neighbourhood.
- That appropriate work-placement and training programme be established to gainfully engage and/or provide certified training courses for unemployed persons to augment the existing capacity of park department staff in the maintenance and improvement of our parks and to provide a 'visible' staff presence in the park.
- That Park Safety Teams should facilities greater consultation with elected Councillors and local residents through either new models of public meetings or the establishment formal 'Park Users Groups'.
- That the SDCC Parks and Landscape Services Department and Environmental Services Departments implement regular joint high-profile enforcement and cleaning blitzes as pilot-projects in both Killinarden and South West Clondalkin areas.
- That Halloween festivals and supervised bonfires be extended to both Killinarden Park and St. Cuthberts Park.
- That the Council prioritise efforts to preserve St. Cuthbert's Church and associated graveyard as a pilot-project from which lessons may be learned with respect to the preservation of heritage features in other parks in our county.

Theme 3 - Activating our Park

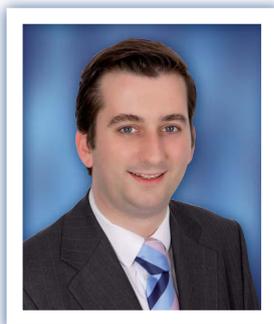
Under this theme the sub-group looked at how we can better increase positive usage of our parks. Key recommendations include:

- That SDCC examine ways of improving the promotion and publicity of our county's parks and their attractions.
- That SDCC take a stricter approach to assessing planning applications for new developments fronting onto parks and open space.
- That SDCC Park & Landscape Services Department in conjunction with the Architects & Roads Departments initiate a research project on 'boundary treatment of parks and the interface between parks and new buildings'.
- That the planning of new schools, community facilities and parks, particularly in the urban context, should be integrated, including where possible as part of an area-based masterplan.
- That SDCC seek to progressively remove all containers from parks.
- That the objective in the new South Dublin County Development Plan to: "*actively seek the provision of a Community Centre in St. Cuthbert's Park to serve the local needs of the community in Deansrath area*" be implemented.
- That on-site caretaker accommodation should be extended to other parks as this is a positive contribution to the maintenance of order and security in our parks.
- That the necessity for the provision of public lighting in parks and open spaces should be actively examined, particularly along strategic pedestrian routes linking residential areas, public transport stops, key community facilities and schools.

Implementation and Monitoring

This report though is only a stepping stone, a road-map to reclaiming our parks. It is critical that recommendations are implemented where possible. It is recommended that the Joint Policing Committee appoint an Implementation Group representative to oversee implementation of the recommendations of this report and that an implementation report be brought before the JPC at least every 6 months for discussion and review. The Implementation Group should undertake a costing study to guide preparation of an implementation plan.

1. Chairman's Foreword



South Dublin County Council manages some 1,700 hectares of public parkland, open spaces, river valleys including:

- 5 Regional Parks & 50 Neighbourhood Parks.
- 14 Children's Playgrounds are available to the public
- 160 Playing Pitches are available to cater for the 89 GAA / soccer clubs comprising of 742 teams with approx 16,000 players which have registered with the Council.
- 11 Five-a-side All Weather Astro pitches, 2 All Weather Athletic tracks, one all weather hockey pitch, tennis courts, a skate park and a baseball facility.

These parks, open spaces and recreational amenities are for all the community of our county as well as for the visitors to it and the workers that commute to it on a daily basis. They have the potential to enhance the quality of life of our citizens and to help in protecting and enhancing the biodiversity of our county. They can make a contribution to the economic life of our county by presenting an attractive place that investors, particularly foreign investors, can use as attractors for recruiting highly qualified mobile staff. A recent Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) Working Paper has demonstrated that parks and open spaces have a positive impact on property values: research that mirrors that conducted in other European countries.

But while visiting our county's parks and living beside a park should be a pleasant experience, it is regrettable that in too many cases however, park-users and residents in areas near parks suffer the consequences of anti-social behaviour, while our parks themselves show the scars of damage caused by anti-social behaviour.

This is unacceptable.

The problems in our parks are not unique to South Dublin or to Ireland. They have already been identified and measures taken to deal with them in other European countries. In the United States the most famous and publicly identifiable park with such problems was Central Park in New York and where it was transformed from being a "no-go" park to being restored as a safe, secure environment that has been an asset to the city for over 20 years. In Britain the neglect of the parks system in the Thatcher era was tackled by the new Blair Government and human and capital investment have made them assets to the community. But the lessons learnt from the UK, in particular from more recent research by UK bodies such as 'CABE Space' point to the fact that investment is critical.

Ireland is currently facing an unprecedented economic crisis. Public spending has seen significant reduction over the past two years and there is no question but that further reductions will be required to stabilise Ireland's unsustainable fiscal deficit. The challenge for political decision-makers and public service managers will be to manage competing priorities within constrained budgets ensuring the best outcome for our citizens and communities.

In this context there is a serious risk that our public parks could suffer from cutbacks to both front-line park maintenance services provided by local authorities and to community policing by the Gardaí. Let there be not doubt about it, a failure to maintain investment in our parks will result in unsafe, unkempt and disconnected parks, becoming no-go areas ultimately failing the community.

The most important form of investment is in human resources. It is accepted that a visible staff presence in our parks acts as a deterrent to anti-social behaviour and to the general flouting of park bye-laws as well as ensuring staff are on-hand to keep our parks tidy and well-maintained.

But while investment must be maintained, money on its own is insufficient unless properly managed. This report considers many matters related to the need improve strategic and operational planning and management of our parks as well on improved cooperation between the council and Gardaí.

The primary objective of our sub-group's work as laid down under Priority Area 3 of the South Dublin Joint Policing

Committee Annual Work Programme 2009 is to make recommendations *"to deter crime and anti- social behaviour in public parks."*

This task was not small and it was not one we took lightly. Over the past nine months our sub-group engaged in a comprehensive work programme involving a large number of meetings and visits to parks right across the county. The project we involved ourselves in proved to be very exciting and dynamic as we found ourselves examining and considering in depth many diverse matters relating to park management, community policy and broader areas of public policy.

This report contains recommendations across three main themes:

- **Policing our Parks:** looking at how we better enhance the monitoring and policing of our parks and the enforcement of our laws and parks bye-laws;
- **Managing our Parks:** looking at how we can better reduce opportunities for anti-social behaviour in parks and how best to respond to the affects of anti-social behaviour by the small minority so as not to take from the experience of our parks for the majority;
- **Activating our Park:** looking at how we can better increase positive usage of our parks.

Some of these recommendations are long-term, subject to recovering public finances while some can be more short-term. Some recommendations can form the basis for pilot-projects in St. Cuthberts and/or Killinarden Park. Many of the recommendations may need to be dealt with on a national basis through new or amended legislation.

This report though is only a stepping stone, a road-map to Reclaiming our Parks.

While the subgroup is grateful to large number of people who gave their time to meet with us during our work-programme, I would personally like to express my sincere gratitude to the members of the sub-group for their superb commitment to our task.

Thank you Michael, Michelle, Mel, Gerry and Ray.



Councillor William Lavelle
Chairman, Parks sub-group

2. Setting the Context

The Parks sub-group was established at the November 2009 meeting of the South Dublin County Joint Policing Committee in accordance with Priority Area 3 of the Annual Work Programme 2009: *“to deter crime and anti- social behaviour in public parks.”*

The terms of reference of the sub-group and the objective of this report are in accordance with the following table contained under Priority Area 3 of the Annual Work Programme 2009:

Action	Target	Time-scale	Stakeholders
<p>To establish small working group comprising of Community Gardaí, SDCC Parks and Landscape Services Department and Landscape Services Department and local community representatives</p> <p>To identify the levels of anti-social behaviour in two public parks and open spaces and to pilot a initiative to improve co-ordination between Gardaí ,SDCC and community representatives</p>	<p>To identify causes/ problems associated with anti-social 'hot spots' in public parks and open spaces and to identify solutions to reduce these incidents</p>	<p>To report back to JPC with its findings and recommendations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Gardaí • SDCC Parks and Landscape Services Department • Local community representatives

It was agreed that the two parks to be primarily examined would be St. Cuthbert’s Park in Clondalkin and Killinarden Park in West Tallaght. These parks were chosen because they have suffered from intense anti social activity and are reflective – in an extreme sense - of the generality of problems in the county as a whole.

In addition, the sub group also visited Waterstown Park, Seán Walsh Park, Griffeen Valley Park and Rathcoole Park to make a comparison between the extremes of St. Cuthbert’s and Killinarden Parks and these parks that have generally lower levels of anti social activity.

St. Cuthbert’s Park is a 14ha park (a Neighbourhood Park) situated in the middle of a predominantly social housing area of Deansrath, Melrose, Lindisfarne, Lealand, Kilmahuddrick and Kilcronan; and with some private housing nearby in Ashwood, Grangeview, and Westbourne and a privately managed apartment complex Rath Gael. The park is linked by green space to the - as yet undeveloped - nearby Grand Canal Park. Adjacent to the park is the Deansrath Community School and there are three national schools nearby (St. Ronan’s, Talbot and Scoil Nano Nagle).

St. Cuthbert’s Park has within it St. Cuthbert’s Church and associated graveyard which are listed as Recorded Monument DU017-038 which refers to Kilmahuddrick Church, graveyard and possible moated site. The Council has endeavoured to protect this monument but both the church and graveyard have been severely vandalized.

There is a circulatory pedestrian path system and one soccer pitch. At one time there were two soccer pitches and one GAA pitch located in the park and the local soccer and boxing clubs had a small temporary dressing room and meeting room accommodation located in the park also. These were burned out some years ago. Due to intimidation neither a local football club nor its predecessors could use the park until recently and instead located in the Phoenix Park or in Corkagh Park. The GAA pitch was removed some years ago after a year long occupation by an unauthorised encampment. The area was subsequently used to create a viewing area within the park.

Killinarden Park is an 18ha park also situated in the middle of a predominantly social housing area of Killinarden, Donomore, and Knockmore. There are two national schools located adjacent to the park (Scoil an Croí Rí Naofa) and two in Knockmore (Scoil Caitlin Maude and Cnoc Mhuire) and Killinarden Community School at Killinarden Heights. The Killinarden Community Centre is linked to the park but at a distance of 170m from it.

There are two GAA pitches (Croí Ró Naofa) and three soccer pitches (Sacred Heart FC and Killinarden Athletic FC). Croí Rí Naofa GAA has planning permission for the construction of a new clubhouse and dressing rooms on a site adjacent to the local Scoil an Croí Rí Naofa national schools. The Whitestown Stream runs though the park but has been unsympathetically concreted as part of the original housing developments. There is a circulatory pedestrian path system in the park.



Site visit to St.Cuthberts

3. Policing our Parks

Under this theme the sub-group considered how we can better enhance the monitoring and policing of our parks and the enforcement of our laws and parks bye-laws.

3.1 Enhanced policing

The sub-group is aware of the widely-held view among the residents of our county that an increased Garda presence is needed in our parks, especially at weekend nights. The sub-group is of course supportive of an enhanced policing presence in our parks, in particular on weekend nights and during summer months. The sub-group accepts however that the policing of parks is a matter which can be difficult given the many entrance and exit points to parks.

The simplest and most effective policing is achieved through a high usage of our parks and open spaces by the public combined with an identifiable staff presence and regular visible Garda patrols. High usage of our parks can only be achieved when the users feel confident of their security and safety and when our parks provide a wide range of facilities that can be used and enjoyed. For example;

- a wide range of sporting possibilities for both team and individual use;
- facilities for all, men, women, the old and the young, the disabled;
- experience of a protected natural environment.

One of the biggest obstacles to enhanced policing and more rapid response times is the overall number of Gardaí on duty and the availability of Garda vehicles. Garda vehicles operate 24-7 across every shift and clock up massive mileage. However the sub-group is aware that certain local Garda districts have not received delivery of any new vehicles since 2007, not even replacement vehicles for damaged/broken-down cars so overall numbers are down.

In the case of all parks examined by the sub-group the local Gardaí had master-keys for the park gates.

Recommendations:

- The sub-group recommends that Gardaí implement a programme of enhanced policing of our parks to provide a perceptible deterrent to anti-social behaviour. This enhanced policing should include targeted policing operations on weekend nights in particular during summer months with a zero-tolerance approach to consumption and possession of alcohol in public areas and enforcement of South Dublin County Council bye laws. An internal Garda memo on the operational aspects of enhanced park policing will be prepared by a Garda member of the sub-group and circulated accordingly.
- The sub-group calls on the Minister for Justice to ensure adequate funding is made available for new and replacement vehicles for local Gardaí.

3.2 Park Safety Teams

During its work programme the sub-group considered the coordination between SDCC Park Rangers and Gardaí. Park Rangers respond on an emergency basis when required and they liaise closely with the Gardaí. However the sub-group is of the view that this relationship could be further strengthened and formalised through the establishment of Parks Safety Teams.

The sub-group notes that the Fingal Joint Policing Committee has developed a Parks Safety Teams pilot-in four parks in the Fingal Area whereby the parks staff and community Gardaí meet monthly to discuss all matters of public safety using all of our open spaces. Hartstown Park was selected as the pilot-project park in the Dublin 15 area. As part of its work programme a safety analysis of Hartstown Park has been prepared while public meetings were held involving the communities adjacent to Hartstown Park the sports clubs and other users.

Recommendations:

- The sub-group recommends, notwithstanding the existing liaison with Gardaí, that the arrangements for cooperation between Park Rangers and Gardaí be enhanced through establishment of Park Safety Teams. Park Safety Teams should be established on an area basis involving Community Gardai from the local station and park staff from the local depot. Park Safety Teams should meet regularly to plan for particular situations and to share information. Countywide meetings of all Park Safety Teams should also take place to review and share experiences across all areas and to advise county-level strategic planning. Reports from these countywide meetings should feed back to the Joint Policing Committee.

3.3 Alcohol

Q: *"Who uses the park?"*

A: *"Everyone goes drinking in the park; it's not only kids, its adults too"*

Q: *"What other uses do people make of the park?"*

A: *"Where many kids are conceived!"*

These were the responses given to two questions tabled at the facilitated meeting with female members of SWIFT programme in Clondalkin.

The sub-group is very aware that many of the problems of anti-social behaviour in our parks are alcohol related. During site visits to numerous parks, it was noted that alcohol containers form one of the most common forms of litter. Unsurprisingly there is no shortage of anecdotal evidence to indicate that parks with high levels of alcoholic consumption suffer worst from problems of anti-social behaviour such as littering, vandalism, graffiti and intimidation of nearby residents.

Drinking in our parks can also have potentially-serious negative impact on the lives of the young people involved as there are clear links between unsupervised drinking and unplanned sexual activity and transition to drug usage.

As stated above the sub group support a zero-tolerance approach to consumption and possession of alcohol & drugs in our parks.

The sub-group is aware of anecdotal reports that young people are using unsupervised off-licence delivery services where alcohol can be delivered in many cases to locations in the parks or open spaces. Under current laws, the purchase of alcohol made over the phone or online and paid for by credit or debit card is legal whereas purchases paid for on-delivery are illegal. The sub-group also notes significant advertising of home delivery services right across the county. The sub-group is of the view that banning all forms of delivery services should be pursued. This may inconvenience

some, but tough choices must be made. In too many cases these services have become a recipe for disaster with alcohol getting in young hands far too easily

The sub-group notes that section 22(b) of the Intoxicating Liquor Act 2003 allows the Minister for Justice to issue regulations to require off-licences to include their details on alcoholic products sold from that store. However this provision of the act has not yet been commenced or implemented.

Recommendations:

- The sub-group recommends that the Minister for Justice introduce legislation to immediately prohibit all forms of distance sales of alcohol i.e. off-licence home-delivery service.
- The sub-group recommends that section 22(b) of the Intoxicating Liquor Act 2003 be commenced and that the Minister for Justice issue regulations to require off-licences to include their details on alcoholic products sold from that store. This provision still has not been implemented. The sub-groups recommends that it should be implemented immediately applying to all cans and bottles of including those in multi-packs. This would assist the Gardaí programme of intelligence-led policing of the 'off-trade'.
- The sub-group recommends that the Ministers for Justice & Environment introduce a pilot-project imposing a refundable levy on drinks containers to be applied at purchase point. This levy could be redeemable on return of the drinks containers and would result in cleaner and safer parks.

3.4 Increased usage of CCTV monitoring

The sub-group examined matters relating to the use of CCTV monitoring during our site-visits to a number of parks:

St. Cuthberts Park

Garda CCTV cameras located at one end of park only. Entire of park not covered by CCTV.

Killinarden Park

Gardaí have now take charge of eight 'community cameras' overlooking the park which were up to now not monitored regularly. It was suggested that SDCC litter wardens be allowed to access Garda CCTV to investigate acts of illegal dumping.

Seán Walsh Park

Private operator 'Netwatch' provides CCTV monitoring of the playground. The system utilises remotely-controlled loudspeakers to issue live voice warnings to offenders. The firm liaises with Gardaí. 'Netwatch' claim a 99% success rate. The sub-group noted that the playground was in superb condition, free of vandalism and graffiti.

Griffeen Valley Park

No CCTV. Playground suffering from superficial vandalism and graffiti/damage. Area around playground considered regular hot-spot for anti-social behaviour

Waterstown Park

CCTV located at entrance to car-park. No CCTV at the Riversdale estate end of the park. It was noted that areas not covered by CCTV suffered from significantly more incidents of bin-burning.

Recommendations:

- The sub-group recommends increased use of both Garda CCTV monitoring and remote CCTV monitoring with live voice warnings as used in Seán Walsh Park. Given the costs involved, additional CCTV monitoring should be focussed on anti-social behaviour hot-spots and areas with high-value park amenities such as playgrounds. With reference to parks visited by the sub-group, this report recommends installation of additional CCTV as following:
 - o To ensure maximum CCTV coverage of St. Cuthberts Park.
 - o To monitor the playground and immediate surrounding area at Griffeen Valley Park;
 - o To monitor Waterstown Park below Riversdale estate.
- The sub-group recommends enhanced sharing of CCTV footage collected by both Gardaí and private monitoring firms to assist SDCC litter wardens to identify and pursue persons involved in illegal dumping in our parks.

3.5 Strengthening the parks bye-laws

The sub-group notes that the use of scrambler bikes & quads poses a serious threat to many of our parks. Scrambler bikes are responsible for tearing up grass and playing surfaces as well as leading to a noise nuisance and intimidation of park-users. The sub-group is also gravely concerned at reports of scrambler bikes playing “chicken” with SDCC staff engaged in grass-cutting thus posing a serious health and safety risk. The sub-group notes reports that the problems arising from scrambler bikes nearly always worsen after the Christmas period as children & teenagers are presented with new quads and scrambler bikes as presents;

In response to this threat Gardaí have been using their own scrambler bikes and mounted units, often guided from above by helicopter surveillance to police and pursue scramble bikes.

The sub-group note that Gardaí in Clondalkin have had some success in seizing motorbikes in the St. Cuthberts Park/ Kilmahuddrick area. However in the majority of cases motorbikes are returned to the owner in accordance with the Regulations governing the detention, storage and return of vehicles detained under Section 41 of the Road Traffic Act 1994. Under the regulations vehicles are returned when the owner, proves ownership of the vehicle and pays the initial cost of impounding the vehicle and the daily storage cost of storage of the vehicle. While an owner will not be allowed to drive an untaxed or uninsured vehicle away from a storage depot, the sub-group notes that there is no obligation to check for tax or insurance cover if the vehicles are taken away on a tow trailer.

Under Section 41 of the Roads Traffic Act 1994 Gardaí to are empowered to seize a mechanically propelled vehicle found in a public place as defined in the Road Traffic Act 1961, when

- the driver of an may refuses or fails to produce a valid driving licence on demand and the Garda is of the opinion that the person by reason of age is ineligible to hold a driving licence;
- the vehicle is uninsured;
- the vehicle has been untaxed for a period of at least 2 months;
- the vehicle does not have a current NCT certificate.

A ‘public place’ is defined under the Road Traffic Act 1961 as public place means:

- (a) any public road, and;
- (b) any street, road or other place to which the public have access with vehicle whether as of right or by permission and whether subject to or free of charge.

A ‘public road’ means a road the responsibility for the maintenance of which lies on a road authority.

In essence, this means that the Gardaí cannot seize a mechanically propelled vehicle under Section 41 of the Road Traffic Act 1961 if the vehicle is being used in a place which is not a public place as defined in the Road Traffic Act 1961.

It is the view of the sub-group that public parks that are enclosed and to which there is no access with vehicles do not come within the definition, thus reducing the powers of the Gardaí to seize vehicles used in the parks.

The sub-group also notes a serious re-emergence of problems relating to illegal horses on open spaces.

The sub-group feels that these matters must also be addressed in a review of SDCC Parks Bye-laws to ensure that they are up-to-date and reflective of the issues that now face our parks, such as scrambler bike usage and horse activity; and that particular focus be given to the need to strengthen and coordinate the enforcement powers available to both Council staff and An Garda Síochána

The sub-group also noted that Waterways Ireland has commenced the first phase of a public consultation programme on proposed new bye-laws for all seven waterways under its remit including the Grand Canal. The sub-group feels that every effort should be made to ensure consistency between these bye-laws and SDCC bye-laws.

The sub-group welcome the decision by the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government to make directions under the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) (Control of Recreational Activities) Regulations 2010 to prohibit the use of recreational vehicles, including quad bikes and scramblers in fourteen Natura 2000 sites across the State, including Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas.

The sub-group feels that it may be that there is a need to cater for the 'sport' of scrambler and quad biking and it warrants some investigation at least. The idea of providing an area for the use of such equipment was made forcefully by one participant at the Killinarden residents meeting and who works with young people. The investigation would have to focus on the level of activity, the age groups involved, insurance and licensing implications particularly for younger drivers. It should also include visits to such facilities in the UK and mainland Europe. This is a national problem and the solution will also be national.

Recommendations:

- The sub-group recommends that South Dublin County Council's 1996 Park Bye-laws be updated to ensure that they are up-to-date and reflective of the issues that now face our parks, such as scrambler bike usage and illegal horse activity; and that particular focus be given to the need to strengthen and coordinate the enforcement powers available to both Council staff and An Garda Síochána.. In this regard the following matter would need to be addressed in any updated bye laws:
 - o Granting Gardai power of seizure and arrest;
 - o Clear provision relating to the retention and release of seized vehicles, e.g. where seized vehicles can be brought, time period of retention of seized vehicles , condition applying to release of seized vehicles;
 - o Tougher fixed penalties;
 - o In drafting new bye-laws a it is important that Garda representatives be involved.
- The sub-group alternatively recommends that the Minister for Transport introduce legislation to update the Road Traffic Act 1961 (as amended) in order to strengthen the power of An Garda Síochána to seize and hold motorbikes and quads from persons using them in an unauthorised manner in public parks and open spaces maintained by local authorities.
- The sub-group recommends, subject to finance and environmental considerations, that a dedicated area for scrambler-bikes be established in the county but only following research into the feasibility of such a facility as well as the legislative and other considerations.
- The sub-group recommends that the Joint Policing Committee make a submission to Waterways Ireland on the review of their bye-laws with respect to addressing anti-social behaviour and scrambler bike usage along the Grand Canal and other waterways and ensuring consistency with SDCC bye-laws.
- The sub-group recommends that SDCC, in conjunction with other Dublin local authorities continue efforts to regulate and restrict the number of illegal horses in the Dublin City Region through ensuring full enforcement of the Control of Horses Act 1996. The sub-group further recommends that designated inspectors from DSPCA be nominated as authorised officers under the Act and that efforts be pursued to restrict the supply of horses through stricter regulation of Smithfield Market.



Burnt-out motorbike

4. Managing our Parks

Under this theme the sub-group considered how we can better reduce opportunities for anti-social behaviour in parks and how best to respond to the affects of anti-social behaviour by the small minority so as not to take from the experience of our parks for the majority.

4.1 Staffing our Parks

The sub-group is aware of the widely-held view among the residents of our county that a more constant and 'visible' staff presence is needed in our parks. This view was further articulated during meetings with residents. It is considered that a visible staff presence acts as a deterrent to anti-social behaviour and to the general flouting of park bye-laws such as dogs being left off leashes. Residents also felt that the lack of staff meant our parks were not getting enough attention in terms of maintenance and cleansing.

The sub-group notes the findings of the 2010 report of the 'Local Government Efficiency Review Group' stating that South Dublin County Council as well as having the second-lowest net budgeted expenditure per head of population of any county or city Council in 2009 also has the lowest staffing level per 1,000 population of any urban-area local authority.

The sub-group therefore accepts that South Dublin County is likely to have less of a staff presence in our parks than in parks under other local authorities. While the matter of increasing the staff visibility is one which ultimately requires identification and commitment of additional financial resources, this is also a matter which also requires a review of operational policies such as the location of park depots and working hours of Park Rangers staff.

The sub-group in its site visits noted that there was no permanent staff presence in either St. Cuthbert's Park or Killinarden Park. The maintenance of these parks is undertaken from the Grange Depot at Lynch's Lane and the Rathcoole Depot at Mill Road, respectively. Maintenance staff engaged in grass cutting, litter collection or landscape development work in these parks are also engaged in work in the wider district.

The Park Rangers operate via a motorised service and visit the parks and open spaces on a 7 day week rota starting at 10am in the morning and terminating at park closing hours which vary depending on the time of the year as follows:

November, December and January	5.00pm
February and March	6.00pm
April and October	7.00pm
May and September	8.00pm
June, July and August	9.00pm

Periodic inspections of both parks by the Park Ranger Service are undertaken on an unscheduled basis in order to avoid the creation of a routine that would allow those engaged in anti social activity to read the routine.

The Rangers also respond on an emergency basis when required and they liaise closely with the Gardaí. Proposals regarding the formal establishment of Park Safety Team have already been addressed in section 3.2.

Of the other parks visited there was a staff presence as follows:

Griffeen Valley Park

Although there is no depot in the park itself the parks depot is situated 600m from the perimeter of the park at Esker Lane, Lucan. The Park is reasonably well maintained but there is a distinct impression that the lack of an on-site presence contributes to the negative events that take place. There is a pride in the park amongst the parks staff that we met but a feeling that a more on-site presence would increase the presentation and security of the park.

Rathcoole Park

Depot in the park. The staff look after the park and the surrounding area as far as West Tallaght. This park is very well maintained and this is attributable to a number of factors, including the presence of staff as well as the population demographics in the area. There is a distinct pride in the park amongst the Parks staff that we met.

Seán Walsh Park

Depot in the park. There is also a house let on a caretaker's agreement to a member of staff. This member of staff is effectively the eyes and ears of the Council in the park. Both the depot and the caretaker living on-site contribute to a park that is well maintained even allowing for its situation in an interface between two divided communities. There is a distinct pride in the park amongst the Parks staff that we met.

Waterstown Park, Liffey Valley

Temporary Works compound in the park to complete the construction and landscape work in the park. The staff in this compound originally worked from the Esker Lane depot in Lucan. The general feeling locally is that the security situation and the maintenance in the park have improved since the new compound was installed. The local staff are equally enthusiastic about the future of the park.

Recommendations:

- The sub-group recognises the need for a permanent staff presence in parks, particularly those that are located in socially disadvantaged areas. Both St. Cuthbert's Park and Killinarden Park are located in such areas. A staff presence, working from a park depot, provides a sense of security for the local population, the vast majority of whom wish to lead ordinary lives but for whom life is often made a misery by a small but powerful minority engaged in vandalism, littering and often criminal activity. A staff presence also provides valuable local contact and is in essence delivering Customer Care in a very real and local sense. The model in the parks where depots are provided is that the depot also provides maintenance to the wider area as well as the park itself. The sub-group is also of the view that, subject to recovering public finances, the overall number of parks staff in particular Park Rangers staff be increased and that more flexible working hours be introduced appropriate to the needs of each park or neighbourhood. However, the sub group is cognizant of the constrained budgetary resources of the Council at this time and therefore recommends that SDCC undertake a review of staff resources in the context of the Public Realm as a whole including a review of working hours and arrangement, inter-departmental coordination and the location of depots.

4.2 Establishment of a community-employment and training scheme

During our site visit to Killinarden Park, Council parks staff recounted how a previous social employment scheme in the park was utilised to engage long-term unemployed to cut grass, pick litter and undertake park improvement works as well as providing a 'visible' staff presence in the park. The discontinuance of this scheme in 2002 resulted in additional work falling on SDCC staff. This matter has been the subject of motions at South Dublin County Council meeting submitted by Cllr. William Lavelle, chair of the sub-group.

In the case of St. Cuthbert's Park there is an opportunity for a scheme relating to the conservation of St. Cuthbert's Church and graveyard which could integrate training and experience for unemployed Archaeologists, Horticulturists, Landscape Architects, Stonemasons, Conservation Architects, Historians and general operatives amongst others that could be drawn from both the local Deansrath area but also the wider Clondalkin and Lucan area where there are likely to be unemployed personnel with the above backgrounds. This matter is further addressed in section 4.9.

Recommendations:

- The sub-group supports proposals for the establishment of appropriate work-placement and training programme, to gainfully engage unemployed persons to augment the existing capacity of park department staff in the maintenance and improvement of our parks and to provide a 'visible' staff presence in the park. Such schemes could also be used to provide apprentices with opportunity to complete their training. Programmes should ensure that participants, while getting a range of practical skills, achieve recognised certification in the field of horticulture/landscaping etc. and that resources are allocated to support them through this process.
- The sub-group calls on central government to review matters in relation to funding and the public service recruitment embargo, which may be acting as blockages to the establishment of work-placement and training schemes by local authorities.
- The sub-group recommends that a pilot training scheme in the area of landscape management and horticulture be pursued in the St. Cuthberts Park area in conjunction with the Dolcain Project, South Dublin County Council and CPLN Area Partnership.

4.3 Public meetings on park management

The establishment of Local Policing Fora under the direct auspices of the Joint Policy Committee in North Clondalkin, Clondalkin Village Area, Southwest Clondalkin and West Tallaght has led to the commencement of public meetings to improve consultation between the community and Gardaí. Certain other areas of the county outside the remit of Local Policing Fora, such as Lucan, have also benefited from the community policing meetings introduced by local Gardaí.

However the sub-group notes that these recently commenced Local Policing Fora meetings are not regularly attended by SDCC Park Department representatives. Meetings with residents groups have raised the need for opportunities for more direct consultation between residents and SDCC Parks and Landscape Services Department.

Recently a number of public meetings have been arranged by Palmerstown Community Council in response to concerns over anti-social behaviour in Glenaulin Park. These meetings have been attended by both senior Gardaí led by the local Superintendent and by SDCC Parks and Landscape Services Department staff led by the Senior Parks Superintendent. These meetings have proved very successful in allowing for identification and implementation of actions to improve the policing and maintenance of Glenaulin Park.

Recommendations:

- The sub-group recommends that Park Safety Teams (involving SDCC Parks and Landscape Services Department and Community Gardaí) should facilitate greater co-ordination and consultation with elected Councillors and local residents on matters pertaining to the policing and maintenance of our parks.
- With respect to areas already under the remit of Local Policing Fora, this report recommends that local parks staff including the responsible Senior Executive Parks Superintendent and District Parks Supervisor should be invited to attend public meetings organised by the Local Policing Forum.
- Furthermore it is recommended that an additional County Manager's representative be appointed to the LPF steering committee representing the Parks and Landscape Services Department.
- With respect to areas outside the remit of Local Policing Fora, this report recommends that a new model of public meeting be established under the direct auspice of the Joint Policing Committee on the theme of policing and maintenance of local parks. Meetings could be held in specific geographic area of the county every 6 months on a rolling basis. Meetings would be open to all local residents and would be attended by Park Safety Team including the responsible Senior Executive Parks Superintendent and District Parks Supervisor and district Garda Superintendent and by local elected Councillors. The SDCC housing department should also attend in areas with substantial levels of council housing. The sub-group recognises the model used by Palmerstown Community Council as an exemplar for how to proceed.
- In certain areas, or for certain individual parks, the public meeting model could be replaced or complimented by establishment a formal 'Park Users Group' consisting of voluntary representatives of residents associations, community facilities and schools adjacent to the Park, representatives of clubs and other organisations using the Park and the Park Safety Team.

4.4 Park furniture

One of the most visually-lasting negative results of anti-social behaviour is the vandalism and graffiti of park furniture i.e. benches, bins, signage and information boards. However these items of park furniture are in many cases essential to make our parks attractive and user-friendly

In order to make parks attractive for walking and visiting it is vital that park benches are provided at regular intervals. However, the sub-group notes that benches often become the focus for late-night anti-social behaviour. On site visits it was noted that the areas in front of benches were one of the most popular locations for bonfires and the burning of wheelie-bins. The benches themselves have become damaged and burnt as a result of vandalism.

The sub-group noted that the signage in a number of parks visited were either vandalized or non-existent. This is particularly disappointing in the case of St. Cuthbert's Park since there is no information provided to inform the local population about the history of their area prior to the construction of the housing they now live in.

It is vitally important that main, well-used entrances to our parks contain signage notifying users of the parks byelaws, including in particular that dogs must be kept on leashes or that cycling is only allowed on designated paths.

The Council's position on litter and dog waste in parks is that people should be encouraged to take their litter/dog waste home with them on the basis that our parks do not contain generators of litter such as shops, for example. There is also the issue of servicing the bins frequently without which their provision would be pointless. It is not currently possible to provide bins in parks other than those that have a constant staff presence. Therefore the Council has to date limited the installation of bins in parks which do not have a continuous staff presence. Bins in parks have also become a target for vandalism, graffiti and burning. The sub-group generally accepts this policy although we do note that litter problems commonly occur along busy pedestrian 'through routes' e.g. routes through parks linking residential estate to nearby schools and public transport stops. In these cases the litter problems could be partly addressed through provision of litter bins along these routes.

Recommendations:

- The sub-group recommends that all park benches should be of robust construction and form, e.g. constructed of stone or concrete.
- The sub-group recommends that a review be conducted of the design, manufacture and provision of park signage boards. Simple signs with simple bold text on robust, easily cleaned materials should be favoured. Overly ornate information boards should be eliminated. It is recommended that a corporate signage strategy be developed for the Parks and Landscape Services Department that is clear, distinct and robust and that reflects the existing Council corporate imagery.
- The sub-group recommends that litterbins in parks should be limited initially to busy and heavily littered pedestrian through-routes and that when resources are available to do so that the service should be gradually expanded to include all Regional Parks, in particular those with a permanent staff presence, and ultimately all Neighbourhood Parks also.

4.5 Management of landscaped areas

The sub-group on its site visit to Seán Walsh Park noted that the woodland planting had recently been substantially thinned out. This was also observed around the perimeter fencing of the playground at Griffeen Valley Park. This was done for a number of reasons including:

- Proper woodland management
- Biodiversity enhancement
- Security enhancement.

In relation to security it has been noted that in talking with the Parks and Landscape Services staff that areas that are densely planted or overgrown and adjacent to public paths present a danger – real or imagined – to the general public and particularly to female park users. It is therefore good practice to remove this planted area either as part of landscape management operations or preferably at the design stage.

Recommendations:

- The sub-group recommends that the landscape planting in all parks and open spaces be assessed for the prevention of dangers to the public i.e.:
 - o Reduce opportunities for covert and concealed public drinking and anti-social behaviour;
 - o Improve through-visibility;
 - o Reduce opportunities for escape from Gardaí.

4.6 Controlling access to parks

During our site visit to St. Cuthbert's Park the sub-group was advised of proposals to raise an existing 370mm low concrete wall at Lealand Road and Lindisfarne Grove to prevent cars from entering the park (by use of planks to get over wall). Joy-riding has caused significant damage to our parks, in particular to grassed playing surfaces. The sub-group was advised that 25 cars were burnt out in St. Cuthberts Park in 2009.

The sub-group is also aware of requests made by residents in various parts of the county to provide lockable gates at the entrances to parks that are fully railed off. This stems from reported problems of anti-social activities spilling over from parks into adjoining residential areas. Residents living along routes to parks have reported damage to home and vehicles such as empty bottles being thrown at houses and cars and often intimidation of residents.

The provision of lockable gates at the entrances to parks can have a significant negative impact on the dedicated cycle and pedestrian routes linking to public transport stops, schools etc. and would impact on regular users of this route, in particular in the early morning and evenings as well as at weekends.

The other significant issue to be resolved would be in relation to the staff resources required to open and lock gates. For gates in parks without a permanent staff presence to be opened and closed at the official times, the gates would have to be opened/closed up to one hour in advance of official park hours to allow time for staff to travel from the depot to park. During the months of November – January this could result in park gates being opened as late as 11.00am and closed as early as 4.00pm with a consequential impact on local users.

It is noted that experience elsewhere in the county has proven that the locking of pedestrian access points, on well used pedestrian routes through local parks, can become very divisive and the subject of considerable local controversy.

The sub-group is however encouraged that SDCC Parks and Landscape Services Department is experimenting with a new automatic timer-controlled locking system on a pilot-basis on two park-gates in Rathfarnham Castle Park.

Recommendations:

- The sub-group recommends that SDCC Parks and Landscape Services Department and Landscape Services Department conduct a review of boundary treatments to all parks to identify measure necessary to prevent unauthorised vehicles accessing the park.
- The sub-group recommends that works be carried out to modify the existing wall at Lealand Road/ Lindisfarne Grove to prevent unauthorised vehicles accessing the park.
- The sub-group recommends that if the Rathfarnham Castle Park pilot on automatic locking gates is successful that it be assessed for possible use in other similar situations in the county.

4.7 Targeting illegal dumping

During site visits to numerous parks, including in particular to St. Cuthberts and Killinarden Parks, the sub-group became aware that serious littering, illegal dumping and the burning of domestic refuse were among the most common and damaging forms of anti-social behaviour affecting our parks. Dumping and littering of watercourses proved a particularly sensitive and damaging problem.

During a visit to Rathcoole depot, the sub-group was advised that staff filled 10 no. 20 cub.m skips with rubbish collected in one week alone from four parks i.e. Killinarden, Kiltalown, Fettercairn and Jobstown.

While much litter in our parks is left by passers-by using busy through-routes or comes in the form of alcohol containers left over late-night drinking parties, it is also clear that illegal dumping and the burning of domestic refuse by residents of adjacent estates was one of the most destructive sources of litter and dumping.

During our meeting with residents of Southwest Clondalkin the sub-group was advised that there is a demoralising aspect to this in that many residents do care and do make an effort to clean up their own areas but dumping then takes place soon after with seemingly no consequences for the offenders. Residents also mentioned the issue of dumping by troublesome families residing in private rental accommodation and the seeming inability of anyone to be able to deal with them in an effective manner.

As part of its work programme the sub-group convened a joint session with SDCC Parks and Landscape Services, Environmental Services and Housing Departments to allow for discussion of these problems.

Recommendations:

- The sub-group recommends that the SDCC Parks and Landscape Services Department and Environmental Services Departments implement regular joint high-profile enforcement and cleaning blitzes as pilot-projects in both Killinarden and South West Clondalkin areas with specific focus on the parks immediately adjacent to residential areas. The purpose of the blitz would be to tidy-up the park while taking firm perceptible action against illegal dumpers; and that these efforts should be highlighted locally through local media and newsletter drops. This initiative should be carried out in close conjunction with local community development organisations including Killinarden Community Centre and Residents Association and the South West Clondalkin Community Safety Forum.
- The sub-group recommends that SDCC housing and estate management staff take a more pro-active role in seeking-out 'soft' information on illegal dumping by Council tenants. This information will then better allow the litter wardens to identify and prosecute offenders.
- The sub-group recommends that the SDCC Parks and Landscape Services Department conducts a review of current cleansing arrangements with a view to implementing more regular cleansing of watercourses in our parks.



Dumping at kissing gate

4.8 Managing Bonfires

A total of 523 illegal bonfires were identified throughout the County in 2009 representing an overall site clearance cost of €101,525

Halloween remains the busiest time for unauthorised bonfires. However evidence in 2009 showed that while the overall numbers had reduced there was still an unacceptable level of illegal bonfires throughout the county. There were 21 Halloween bonfires recorded in Killinarden Park alone. The two official community bonfires at Fettercairn in West Tallaght and Neilstown in North Clondalkin proved to be very successful and were well attended by the local communities. The sub-group is aware of complaints in some areas regarding the lengthy delays in cleaning up bonfires after the 2009 Halloween.

There is a time period of almost two months (one month before the bonfire and one month after) for dealing with bonfires and the waste material that is generated both before and after the Halloween event. This two month period of lost time for a large proportion of Parks staff in particular, is time that cannot be spent or is effectively reduced for tree pruning or other parks maintenance duties. This is the time of the year that work time should be prioritised for tree pruning and tree planting. In other words the bonfire activities impinge of normal maintenance work and reduce the Council's focus on Customer Care.

Recommendations:

- The sub-group recommends extensions of Halloween festivals and supervised bonfires to both Killinarden Park and St. Cuthberts Park.
- The sub-group recommends that SDCC implement a policy of seeking to clean-up bonfires immediately it is safe to do so.

4.9 Preserving St. Cuthbert's Church and associated graveyard

St. Cuthbert's Park has within it St. Cuthbert's Church and associated graveyard which are listed as Recorded Monument DU017-038 which refers to Kilmahuddrick Church, graveyard and possible moated site. The Council has endeavoured to protect this monument but such work has not been successful although the level of vandalism to the structures has reduced considerably. During our site visit to St. Cuthberts Park, the sub-group noted that both the church and graveyard have been severely vandalized with nearly all gravestones now knocked over and/or severely damaged. It was also noted that the security fencing that had been erected some years previously to protect the ruins had to be removed as it actually added to the security issues since both drinkers and drug users were able to prize apart the fencing pales to gain access to the site. Another issue in relation to this monument is the fact that whilst the feature is located in the park it is (nominally at least) under the control of the Environmental Services Department.

The site has never had an archaeology dig and working on it would potentially act as a catalyst for the future rejuvenation of the area. As discussed in section 4.2 there is an opportunity for a scheme that could integrate training and experience for unemployed Archaeologists, Horticulturists, Landscape Architects, Stonemasons, Conservation Architects, Historians and general operatives amongst others that could be drawn from both the local Deansrath area but also the wider Clondalkin and Lucan area where there are likely to be unemployed personnel with the above backgrounds.

Recommendations:

- The sub-group recommends that the Council prioritise efforts to preserve St. Cuthbert's Church and associated graveyard as a pilot-project from which lessons may be learned with respect to the preservation of heritage features in other parks in our county. In particular with respect to St. Cuthbert's Church and associated graveyard this report recommends:
 - i) Responsibility as well as budgetary provision for the maintenance of the Recorded Monument should be formally devolved to the Parks and Landscape Department;
 - ii) An assessment of the church and graveyard should be carried out to advise preparation of proposed programme of works and to provide the necessary information to the National Monuments section so that we can obtain their permission to carry out works to the Recorded Monument;
 - iii) The vegetation should be cut back thereby offering the site passive surveillance from the adjacent houses;
 - iv) Broken gravestones should be removed, catalogued and stored;
 - v) Pilot-project could involve a community-employment or training scheme.
- The sub-group recommends that the Heritage Council be invited to support and part-fund a pilot-project to assess and preserve St. Cuthbert's Church and associated graveyard.

5. Activating our Parks

Under this theme the sub-group considered how we can better increase positive usage of our parks.

5.1 Promoting our parks

Critical to reclaiming our parks is developing the attractiveness of our parks. This will require developing and promoting new activities and events in our parks and to enhance the promotion and publicity of our county's parks and their attractions,

South Dublin County also has a number of a larger and very attractive regional parks including Rathfarnham Castle Park, Waterstown Park in the beautifully-scenic setting of Liffey Valley, Corkagh Park with its fishing lakes, animal farm, Tymon Park, Dodder Valley and Griffeen Valley Park in Lucan. There is the potential to increase the usage of our parks and with it the security of them by the provision of more facilities. As well as increasing the security of our parks this would also increase the number of visitors to our parks and add to our Tourism infrastructure.

Recommendations:

- The sub-group recommends that the Council work on a programme to be developed over a number of years of utilising development levies for the improvement and addition of park facilities. The Council should also seek to organise or support outside organisations to organise more events in our parks such as family days, markets, concerts, including in particular self-financing events.
- The sub-group recommends that SDCC examine ways of improving the promotion and publicity of our county's parks and their attractions, through enhanced use of the website, media etc so as to increase park-usage by residents of the county including visits to the larger regional parks outside their immediate neighbourhood.
- The sub-group recommends that SDCC continue the development of the county's 'Green Routes' Network, in particular the development of strategic 'green routes' through and linking parks so as to encourage more visitors to our park.

5.2 Improved urban design of building fronting onto parks

Urban design plays an important role in the design and maintenance of attractive and safe parks and open spaces.

During site-visits to St. Cuthbert's Park, Killinarden Park and Griffeen Valley Park (at Arthur Griffith estate) the sub-group noted that where adjoining houses back or side onto the park and present rear garden walls or blank side gable walls then this lack of overlooking has contributed to anti-social behaviour in the immediate adjoining area. The sub-group notes that the problems of anti-social behaviour at Glenaulin Park have been accentuated by the long runs of rear garden walls fronting the park and the subsequent lack of passive surveillance.

Urban design should require the provision of strong built edges overlooking parks and open spaces to provide passive surveillance. Rear garden walls and blank elevations should not be permitted fronting into parks and open spaces. The sub-group however is concerned that some newer developments next to parks still eschew these principles.

However in considering other urban design matters (such as the question of railings and boundary treatment and the depth of intermediary zones (including access roads, etc) between parks and new buildings), the sub-group came to the conclusion that more considered research into best practice would be required which could further guide future design and planning guidelines.

Recommendations:

- The sub-group recommends that SDCC take a stricter approach to assessing planning applications for new developments fronting onto parks and open space. New development immediately adjoining parks should in particular include strong overlooking built edge to provide passive surveillance while rear garden walls and blank elevations should not be permitted. These principles should also strictly apply to all development by the Council itself including Part 8 proposals.
- The sub-group recommends that in the case of planning applications received in areas identified by the council as anti-social behaviour hot-spots (using it's GIS mapping system) that the Garda Crime Prevention Officer be notified and requested to make a report as part of the planning authority's assessment of the application.
- The sub-group recommends that SDCC Park & Landscape Services Department in conjunction with the Architects & Roads Department and Garda Crime Prevention Office initiate a research project on 'park boundary treatments of the interface between parks and new buildings'. This project could involve Schools of Architecture and Landscape Design in Dublin City Region.
- The sub-group recommends that the proposed research project on 'park boundary treatments of the interface between parks and new buildings' could be progressed under the 'Government Policy on Architecture 2009 – 2015' and as such could be supported and part-funded by the Department the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. The findings of such a study could also guide preparation of Ministerial Planning Guidelines on park design and planning.

5.3 Building for Parks – sports, schools and community

Over the course of numerous site-visits the sub-group came to realise the need for a more joined up approach to the provision of facilities in and next to parks and the planning of schools and community facilities. Put another way, we should seek out common solutions to providing for the following needs:

- Schools need open-space.
- Sports clubs need changing and storage facilities.
- Communities need centres to meet in and base services in.
- Parks need changing room facilities for sports users and clubs.

During various site-visits, the sub-group noted that there are often schools and community centres located adjacent to or nearby to parks. It would seem logical that facilities in schools, community facilities and parks would be shared, e.g. dressing room accommodation, playing pitches, security and so on. In other words there could be a synergy between the parks and schools/community facilities that would be beneficial to both. The sub group also notes that the guidelines for the provision of schools alludes to this but that the provision of open space and active recreation in schools would appear to be deficient.

In the case of St. Cuthbert's Park there were at one time two soccer pitches and one GAA pitch located in the park and the local soccer and boxing clubs had a small temporary dressing room and meeting room accommodation located in the park also. These were burned out some years ago. Due to intimidation neither a local football club nor its predecessors could use the park until recently and instead located in the Phoenix Park or in Corkagh Park. The GAA pitch was removed some years ago after a year long occupation by an unauthorised encampment. The area was subsequently used to create a viewing area within the park.

The sub-group also notes that containers are regularly used by sports clubs as dressing rooms and for storage. However containers nearly always become the focus for anti-social behaviour in particular bonfires and graffiti and as such become a eye-sore in the park.

The sub-group therefore considers that the planning of new schools, community facilities and parks, particularly in the urban context, should be integrated, including where possible as part of an area-based masterplan.

There is a precedent for the development of models of integrating community and sports facilities with schools. Co. Dublin VEC has already developed successful models of providing community and sports halls on school campuses in our county at Killinarden, Collinstown and Palmerstown and in the case of Deansrath and Collinstown Community Colleges all weather pitches have been provided that are used by both the school communities as well as park users in St. Cuthbert's and Collinstown Parks. Fingal County Council have also separately adopted a policy seeking the provision of community centres as part of new school developments.

The sub-group further considers that both St. Cuthbert and Killinarden Park could benefit from the provision of new community buildings.

In the case of St. Cuthbert's Park the local community made the sub-group aware of the proposals by the Dolcain project, supported by SDCC, to locate community support facilities in the park, adjacent to Deansrath Community College and that could also include facilities for sports clubs as well as a local parks depot and caretaker's accommodation. The view of the sub-group is that such a project should be supported by the Council as well as central government. As part of the discussions on the new South Dublin County Development Plan 2010-2016, the elected members adopted a motion proposed by Cllr. William Lavelle of behalf of the Dolcain project, to add a new Specific Local Objective to: *"actively seek the provision of a Community Centre in St. Cuthbert's Park to serve the local needs of the community in Deansrath area"*.

In the case of Killinarden Park, a proposed community/housing infill scheme between Donomore Green and Knockmore Avenue is currently on hold .Development of this site would be difficult due to change in levels while development could also further cut –off the parks from the surrounding area in particular from local schools. Any proposals for future development on this site should include a green route linking the schools to the park.



Fire damage to container

Recommendations:

- The sub-group recommends that the planning of new schools, community facilities and parks, particularly in the urban context, should be integrated, including where possible as part of an area-based masterplan. Such integration would allow schools to utilise parks as part of their open space requirements while also providing changing facilities for sports clubs using the park. Integrated projects could also include community halls and park depots.
- The sub-group recommends that the Department of Education & Skills revise its planning guidelines in relation to school-planning to allow for integration with parks.
- The sub-group recommends that SDCC seek to progressively remove all containers from parks by maximising the number of playing fields located next or near to changing room facilities, be they purpose-built clubhouses and pavilions or ideally provided as part of schools or community facilities.
- The sub-group recommends implementation of the new Specific Local Objective in the new South Dublin County Development Plan 2010–2016 to: “actively seek the provision of a Community Centre in St. Cuthbert’s Park to serve the local needs of the community in Deansrath area”. To progress this objective the sub-group recommends that the existing St. Cuthbert’s Park Development Group, set up by Dolcain Project and including several SDCC representatives and community representatives, be recognised and supported as lead implementation group.

5.4 Living in the Park

During our site visit to Seán Walsh Park, the sub-group noted that in addition to the park Depot in the park there was also a house let on a caretaker’s agreement to a member of staff. This operates on the basis of a legally binding agreement being put in place by the Council with the tenant (including the family or partner) who is obliged to perform duties in return for the accommodation. In essence, a caretaker accommodation provides an “eye and ear” to the park. Such agreements are also in place in Grange Park (south end of proposed Griffeen Valley Park extension); Tymon Park; Old Bawn Park and in the Esker depot.

Recommendations:

- The sub-group recommends that on-site caretaker accommodation should be extended, where possible, to other parks as this is a positive contribution to the maintenance of order and security in our parks.

5.5 Sports as an alternative to anti-social behaviour

The sub-group supports the view that providing opportunities for pro-social behaviour, such as sports, is the most constructive approach to tackling anti-social behaviour.

In April and May 2010 the initial Clondalkin late night soccer league was organised by SDCC, Community Gardaí and the FAI. The league ran for 4 nights between 8 p.m. and 10.15 p.m. It was attended very well with between 5 and 6 teams each evening involving approximately 50 to 60 players together friends resulting in approximately 80 teenagers attending each evening.

While Gardaí could not with confidence say that any reduction in public order was totally related to this league, there was anecdotal evidence from residents in the St. Cuthbert’s Park area that there was.

While the event was very positive the costs involved, in particular relating to hire of flood-lit pitches were unsustainable.

Recommendations:

- The sub-group recommends that subject to securing improved cost efficiencies, the late-night soccer league initiative should be extended to other anti-social behaviour hot-spots on a repeating rota and that this recommendation should be explored with the FAI & Sports Officer.

5.6 Safe routes through parks

Current Council policy is that public lighting in parks and open spaces has only been provided where there are short links between residential areas. It has not been considered safe to provide lighting in large parks since persons could find themselves in a secluded area of a park and vulnerable to anti social elements who would be attracted by the public lighting. The provision of lights in our parks could also in certain instances have a detrimental impact on the biodiversity of the area.

The sub-group however takes the view that public lighting should be provided in parks and open spaces along strategic pedestrian routes linking residential areas, public transport stops, key community facilities and schools. This will increase usage of the parks and be more sustainable by encouraging walking therefore reducing car-usage, traffic congestion and carbon emissions.

During the site visit to St. Cuthbert's Park and in meeting with residents of Southwest Clondalkin and young people from the SWIFT programme, the subgroup noted the ongoing local campaigns for lighting around and through the parks. This matter has been the subject to numerous motions at Council and area committee meetings over the past year and progress is being made with respect to the lighting of certain routes around the park.

There is also a strong view that lighting should be provided along the route across the park linking Deansrath Community College to Melrose Estate so as to improve safety for school children crossing the park on darker winter evenings.

Recommendations:

- The sub-group recommends that the necessity for the provision of public lighting in parks and open spaces should be actively examined, particularly along strategic pedestrian routes linking residential areas, public transport stops, key community facilities and schools.
- The sub-group recommends that SDCC Public Lighting Section, continue working with the Lighting sub-group of the Southwest Clondalkin Safety forum on matter relating to improving lighting through and around St. Cuthberts Park.
- The sub-group recommends that lighting should be provided along the route across the park linking Deansrath Community College to Melrose Estate so as to improve safety for school children crossing the park on darker winter evenings.
- The sub-group recommends that new lighting in parks should be eco-friendly, low-usage lighting and should be designed to minimise impact on local biodiversity.

6. Implementation and Monitoring

The terms of Priority Area 3 of the South Dublin County Joint Policing Committee of the Annual Work Programme 2009 required the subgroup *“to identify causes/ problems associated with anti-social ‘hot spots’ in public parks and open spaces and to identify solutions”* and *“to report back to JPC with its findings and recommendations.”*

This report contains numerous recommendations to reduce incidents of anti-social behaviour through improved management of our parks, enhanced policing of your parks and efforts to increase positive activity in our parks. Some of these recommendations are long-term, subject to recovering public finances while some can be more short-term. Some recommendations can form the basis for pilot projects in St. Cuthberts and/or Killinarden Park.

This report though is only a stepping stone, a road-map to reclaiming our parks. It is critical that recommendations are implemented where possible and that regular reports are brought back to the JPC.

Recommendations:

- The sub-group recommends that the Joint Policing Committee appoint an Implementation Group to include both a lead-staff member nominated by SDCC Parks and Landscape Services Department and a Garda representative to oversee implementation of the recommendations of this report and that an implementation report be brought before the JPC at least every 6 months for discussion and review. The Implementation Group should undertake a costing study to guide preparation of an implementation plans.
- The sub-group recommends that the relevant recommendations in this report should be considered as national pilot-projects and that the responsible Minister and state bodies should be invited to support and fund.

Appendix A

List of Recommendations

Recommendation contained in this report are summarised here in four categories relating to the responsible body:

- Recommendations relating to South Dublin County Council
- Recommendations relating to SDCC & Gardaí jointly
- Recommendations relating to Gardaí
- Recommendations relating to Ministers & State bodies
- Recommendations relating to the Joint Policing Committee

Recommendations relating to South Dublin County Council

- The sub-group recommends that South Dublin County Council's 1996 Park Bye-laws be updated to ensure that they are up-to-date and reflective of the issues that now face our parks, such as scrambler bike usage and horse activity; and that particular focus be given to the need to strengthen and coordinate the enforcement powers available to both Council staff and An Garda Síochána. In this regard the following matter would need to be addressed in any updated bye laws:
 - o Granting Gardaí power of seizure and arrest
 - o Clear provision relating to the retention and release of seized vehicles, e.g. where seized vehicles can be brought, time period of retention of seized vehicles , condition applying to release of seized vehicles
 - o Tougher fixed penalties.
 - o In drafting new bye-laws it is important that Garda representatives be involved.
- The sub-group recommends, subject to finance and environmental considerations, that a dedicated area for scrambler-bikes be established in the county but only following research into the feasibility of such a facility as well as the legislative and other considerations.
- The sub-group recommends that SDCC, in conjunction with other Dublin local authorities continue efforts to regulate and restrict the number of illegal horses in the Dublin City Region through ensuring full enforcement of the Control of Horses Act 1966. The sub-group further recommends that designated inspectors from DSPCA be nominated as authorised officer under the Act and that efforts be pursued to restrict the supply of horses through stricter regulation of Smithfield Market.
- The sub-group recognises the need for a permanent staff presence in parks, particularly those that are located in socially disadvantaged areas. Both St. Cuthbert's Park and Killinarden Park are located in such areas. A staff presence, working from a park depot, provides a sense of security for the local population, the vast majority of whom wish to lead ordinary lives but for whom life is often made a misery by a small but powerful minority engaged in vandalism, littering and often criminal activity. A staff presence also provides valuable local contact and is in essence delivering Customer Care in a very real and local sense. The model in the parks where depots are provided is that the depot also provides maintenance to the wider area as well as the park itself. The sub-group is also of the view that, subject to recovering public finances, the overall number of parks staff in particular Park Rangers staff be increased and that more flexible working hours be introduced appropriate to the needs of each park or neighbourhood. However, the sub group is cognizant of the constrained budgetary resources of the Council at this time and therefore recommends that SDCC undertake a review of staff resources in the context of the Public Realm as a whole including a review of working hours and arrangement, inter-departmental coordination and the location of depots,

- The sub-group supports proposals for the establishment of appropriate work-placement and training programme, to gainfully engage unemployed persons to augment the existing capacity of park department staff in the maintenance and improvement of our parks and to provide a 'visible' staff presence in the park. Such schemes could also be used to provide apprentices with opportunity to complete their training. Programmes should ensure that participants while getting a range of practical skills achieve recognised certification in the field of horticulture/landscaping etc. and that resources are allocated to support them through this process.
- The sub-group recommends that a pilot training scheme in the area of landscape management and horticulture be pursued in the St. Cuthberts Park area in conjunction with the Dolcain Project, South Dublin County Council and CPLN Area Partnership.
- The sub-group recommends that all park benches should be of robust construction and form, e.g. constructed of stone or concrete.
- The sub-group recommends that a review be conducted of the design, manufacture and provision of park signage boards. Simple signs with simple bold text on robust, easily cleaned materials should be favoured. Overly ornate information boards should be eliminated. It is recommended that a corporate signage strategy be developed for the Parks and Landscape Services Department that is clear, distinct and robust and that reflects the existing Council corporate imagery.
- The sub-group recommends that litterbins in parks should be limited initially to busy and heavily littered pedestrian through-routes and that when resources are available to do so that the service should be gradually expanded to include all Regional Parks, in particular those with a permanent staff presence, and ultimately all Neighbourhood Parks also.
- The sub-group recommends that the landscape planting in all parks and open spaces be assessed for the prevention of dangers to the public i.e.:
 - o Reduce opportunities for covert and concealed public drinking and anti-social behaviour;
 - o Improve through-visibility;
 - o Reduce opportunities for escape from Gardaí.
- The sub-group recommends that SDCC Parks and Landscape Services Department and Landscape Services Department conduct a review of boundary treatments to all parks to identify measure necessary to prevent unauthorised vehicles accessing the park.
- The sub-group recommends that works be carried out to modify the existing wall at Lealand Road/Lindisfarne Grove to prevent unauthorised vehicles accessing the park.
- The sub-group recommends that if the Rathfarnham Castle Park pilot on automatic locking gates is successful that it be assessed for possible use in other similar situations in the county.
- The sub-group recommends that the SDCC Parks and Landscape Services Department and Environmental Services Departments. Implement regular joint high-profile enforcement and cleaning blitzes as pilot-projects in both Killinarden and South West Clondalkin areas with specific focus on the parks immediately adjacent to residential areas. The purpose of the blitz would be to tidy-up the park while taking firm perceptible action against illegal dumpers; and that these efforts should be highlighted locally through local media and newsletter drops. This initiative should be carried out in close conjunction with local community development organisations including Killinarden Community Centre and Residents Association and the South West Clondalkin Community Safety Forum.
- The sub-group recommends that SDCC housing and estate management staff take a more pro-active role in seeking-out 'soft' information on illegal dumping by Council tenants. This information will then better allow the litter wardens to identify and prosecute offenders.

- The sub-group recommends that the SDCC Parks and Landscape Services Department conducts a review of current cleansing arrangements with a view to implementing more regular cleansing of watercourses in our parks.
- The sub-group recommends extensions of Halloween festivals and supervised bonfires to both Killinarden Park and St. Cuthberts Park.
- The sub-group recommends that SDCC implement a policy of seeking to clean-up bonfires immediately it is safe to do so.
- The sub-group recommends that the Council prioritise efforts to preserve St. Cuthbert's Church and associated graveyard as a pilot-project from which lessons may be learned with respect to the preservation of heritage features in other parks in our county. In particular with respect to St. Cuthbert's Church and associated graveyard this report recommends:
 - i) Responsibility as well as budgetary provision for the maintenance of the Recorded Monument should be formally devolved to the Parks and Landscape Department;
 - ii) An assessment of the church and graveyard should be carried out to advise preparation of proposed programme of works and to provide the necessary information to the National Monuments section so that we can obtain their permission to carry out works to the Recorded Monument;
 - vi) The vegetation should be cut back thereby offering the site passive surveillance from the adjacent houses;
 - vii) Broken gravestones should be removed, catalogued and stored;
 - viii) Pilot-project could involve a community-employment or training scheme.
- The sub-group recommends that the Council work on a programme to be developed over a number of years of utilising development levies for the improvement and addition of park facilities. The Council should also seek to organise or support outside organisations to organise more events in our parks such as family days, markets, concerts, including in particular self-financing events.
- The sub-group recommends that SDCC examine ways of improving the promotion and publicity of our county's parks and their attractions, through enhanced use of the website, media etc so as to increase park-usage by residents of the county including visits to the larger regional parks outside their immediate neighbourhood.
- The sub-group recommends that SDCC continue the development of the county's 'Green Routes' Network, in particular the development of strategic 'green routes' through and linking parks so as to encourage more visitors to our park.
- The sub-group recommends that SDCC take a stricter approach to assessing planning applications for new developments fronting onto parks and open space. New development immediately adjoining parks should in particular include strong overlooking built edge to provide passive surveillance while rear garden walls and blank elevations should not be permitted. These principles should also strictly apply to all development by the Council itself including Part 8 proposals.
- The sub-group recommends that in the case of planning applications received in areas identified by the council as anti-social behaviour hot-spots (using its GIS mapping system) that the Garda Crime Prevention Officer be notified and requested to make a report as part of the planning authority's assessment of the application.
- The sub-group recommends that SDCC Park & Landscape Services Department in conjunction with the Architects & Roads Department and Garda Crime Prevention Office initiate a research project on 'park boundary treatments of the interface between parks and new buildings'. This project could involve Schools of Architecture and Landscape Design in Dublin City Region.
- The sub-group recommends that the planning of new schools, community facilities and parks, particularly in the urban context, should be integrated, including where possible as part of an area-based masterplan. Such integration would allow schools to utilise parks as part of their open space requirements while also providing changing facilities for sports clubs using the park. Integrated projects could also include community halls and park depots.

-
- The sub-group also recommends that the Department of Education revises its guidelines in relation to school-planning accordingly.
 - The sub-group recommends that SDCC seek to progressively remove all containers from parks by maximising the number of playing fields located next or near to changing room facilities, be they purpose-built clubhouses and pavilions or ideally provided as part of schools or community facilities.
 - The sub-group recommends implementation of the new Specific Local Objective in the new South Dublin County Development Plan 2010-2016 to: "*actively seek the provision of a Community Centre in St. Cuthbert's Park to serve the local needs of the community in Deansrath area*". To progress this objective the sub-group recommends that the existing St. Cuthbert's Park Development Group, set up by Dolcain Project and including several SDCC representatives and community representatives, be recognised and supported as lead implementation group.
 - The sub-group recommends that on-site caretaker accommodation should be extended to other parks as this is a positive contribution to the maintenance of order and security in our parks. In essence, a caretaker accommodation provides an "eye and ear" to the park.
 - The sub-group recommends that subject to securing improved cost efficiencies, the late-night soccer league initiative should be extended to other anti-social behaviour hot-spots on a repeating rota and that this recommendation should be explored with the FAI & Sports Officer.
 - The sub-group recommends that the necessity for the provision of public lighting in parks and open spaces should be actively examined, particularly along strategic pedestrian routes linking residential areas, public transport stops, key community facilities and schools.
 - The sub-group recommends that SDCC Public Lighting Section, continue working with the Lighting sub-group of the Southwest Clondalkin Safety forum on matter relating to improving lighting through and around St. Cuthbert's Park.
 - The sub-group recommends that lighting should be provided along the route across the park linking Deansrath Community College to Melrose Estate so as to improve safety for school children crossing the park on darker winter evenings.
 - The sub-group recommends that new lighting in parks should be eco-friendly, low-usage lighting and should be designed to minimise impact on local biodiversity.

Recommendations relating to Gardaí

- The sub-group recommends that Gardaí implement a programme of enhanced policing of our parks to provide a perceptible deterrent to anti-social behaviour. This enhanced policing should include targeted policing operations on weekend nights in particular during summer months with a zero-tolerance approach to consumption and possession of alcohol in public areas and enforcement of South Dublin County Council bye laws. An internal Garda memo on the operational aspects of enhanced park policing will be prepared by a Garda member of the sub-group and circulated accordingly.

Recommendations relating to SDCC & Gardaí jointly

- The sub-group recommends, notwithstanding the existing liaison with Gardaí, that the arrangements for cooperation between Park Rangers and Gardaí be enhanced through establishment of Park Safety Teams. Park Safety Teams should be established on an area basis involving community Gardaí from the local station and park staff from the local depot. Park Safety Teams should meet regularly to plan for particular situations and to share information. Countywide meetings of all Park Safety Teams should also take place to review and share experiences across all areas and to advise county-level strategic planning. Reports from these countywide meetings should feed back to the Joint Policing Committee.
- The sub-group recommends increased use of both Garda CCTV monitoring and remote CCTV monitoring with live voice warnings as used in Seán Walsh Park. Given the costs involved, additional CCTV monitoring should be focused on anti-social behaviour hot-spots and areas with high-value park amenities such as playgrounds. With reference to parks visited by the sub-group, this report recommends installation of additional CCTV as following:
 - o To ensure maximum CCTV coverage of St. Cuthberts Park;
 - o To monitor the playground and immediate surrounding area at Griffeen Valley Park;
 - o To monitor Waterstown Park below Riversdale estate.
- The sub-group recommends enhanced sharing of CCTV footage collected by both Gardaí and private monitoring firms to assist SDCC litter wardens to identify and pursue persons involved in illegal dumping in our parks.
- The sub-group recommends that Park Safety Teams (involving SDCC Parks and Landscape Services Department and Community Gardaí) should facilitate greater co-ordination and consultation with elected Councillors and local residents on matters pertaining to the policing and maintenance of our parks.

With respect to areas already under the remit of Local Policing Fora, this report recommends that local parks staff including the responsible Senior Executive Parks Superintendent and District Parks Supervisor should be invited to attend public meetings organised by the Local Policing Forum.

Furthermore it is recommended that an additional County Manager's representative be appointed to the LPF steering committee representing the Parks and Landscape Services Department.

With respect to areas outside the remit of Local Policing Fora, this report recommends that a new model of public meeting be established under the direct auspice of the Joint Policing Committee on the theme of policing and maintenance of local parks. Meetings could be held in specific geographic area of the county every 6 months on a rolling basis. Meetings would be open to all local residents and would be attended by Park Safety Team including the responsible Senior Executive Parks Superintendent and District Parks Supervisor and district Garda Superintendent and by local elected Councillors. the SDCC housing department should also attend in areas with substantial levels of council housing. The sub-group recognises the model used by Palmerstown Community Council as an exemplar for how to proceed.

In certain areas, or for certain individual parks, the public meeting model could be replaced or complimented by establishment a formal 'Park Users Group' consisting of voluntary representatives of residents associations, community facilities and schools adjacent to the Park, representatives of clubs and other organisations using the Park and the Park Safety Team.

Recommendations relating to Ministers & State bodies

- The sub-group calls on the Minister for Justice to ensure adequate funding is made available for new and replacement vehicles for local Gardaí.
- The sub-group recommends that the Minister for Justice introduce legislation to immediately prohibit all forms of distance sales of alcohol i.e. off-licence home-delivery service.
- The sub-group recommends that section 22(b) of the Intoxicating Liquor Act 2003 be commenced and that the Minister for Justice issue regulations to require off-licences to include their details on alcoholic products sold from that store. This provision still has not been implemented. The sub-group believes it should be implemented immediately applying to all cans and bottles of including those in multi-packs. This would assist the Gardaí programme of intelligence-led policing of the 'off-trade'.
- The sub-group recommends that the Ministers for Justice & Environment introduce a pilot-project imposing a refundable levy on drinks containers to be applied at purchase point. This levy could be redeemable on return of the drinks containers and would result in cleaner and safer parks.
- The sub-group recommends that the Minister for Transport introduce legislation to update the Roads Traffic Act 1994 to strengthen the power of An Garda Síochána to seize and hold motorbikes and quads from persons using them in an unauthorised manner in public parks and open spaces maintained by local authorities.
- The sub-group calls on central government to review matters in relation to funding and the public service recruitment embargo, which may be acting as blockages to the establishment of work-placement and training schemes by local authorities.
- The sub-group recommends that the Heritage Council be invited to support and part-fund a pilot-project to assess and preserve St. Cuthbert's Church and associated graveyard.
- The sub-group recommends that the proposed research project on 'park boundary treatments of the interface between parks and new buildings' could be progressed under the 'Government Policy on Architecture 2009 – 2015' and as such could be part-funded by the Department the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. The findings of such a study could also guide preparation of Ministerial Planning Guidelines on park design and planning.
- The sub-group recommends that the Department of Education & Skills revise it planning guidelines in relation to school-planning to allow for integration with parks.
- The sub-group recommends that the relevant recommendations in this report should be considered as national pilot-projects and that the responsible Minister and state bodies should be invited to support and fund.

Recommendations relating to the Joint Policing Committee

- The sub-group notes that the Joint Policing Committee make a submission Waterways Ireland on the review of their bye-laws with respect to addressing anti-social behaviour and scrambler bike usage along the Grand Canal and other waterways and ensuring consistency with SDCC bye-laws.
- The sub-group recommends that the Joint Policing Committee appoint an Implementation Group to include both a lead-staff member nominated by SDCC and a Garda representative to oversee implementation of the recommendations of this report and that an implementation report be brought before the JPC at least every 6 months for discussion and review. The Implementation Group should undertake a costing study to guide preparation of an implementation plans.

Appendix B

List of meetings and site-visits conducted by sub-group

As part of its work-programme, the sub-group arranged the following meeting and site-visits between November 2009 and June 2010:

- Sub-group meeting, 19th November 2009;
- Site visit to St. Cuthbert's Park, 2nd December 2009;
- Site visit to Killinarden Park, 18th January 2010;
- Sub-group meeting, 1st February 2010;
- Site visits to Waterstown, Griffeen Valley, Rathcoole and Seán Walsh Park; 12th February 2010;
- Facilitated meetings with young people from the SWIFT programme, Clondalkin, 16th February 2010;
- Sub-group meeting, 5th March 2010;
- Meeting with South-West Clondalkin residents, 22nd March 2010;
- Meeting with Killinarden residents, 19th April 2010;
- Joint session with SDCC Parks and Landscape Services Department, Environmental Services and Housing Department's regarding illegal dumping in and around parks, including in particular by Council tenants, 19th April 2010;
- Meeting with SDCC Sports Officers and County Sports Partnership, 26th May 2010.
- Meeting with SDCC spatial planning team to discuss GIS mapping of parks and bonfires, 26th May 2010;
- Sub-group meeting, 28th June 2010;
- Sub-group meeting, 30th August 2010;
- Sub-group meeting, 6th September 2010;

During the period of our work programme the sub-group also took note of other meetings and developments taking place across our county with regards tackling anti-social behaviour in parks including:

- The series of public meetings convened by Palmerstown Community Council regarding anti-social behaviour in Glenaulin Park;
- Meetings and efforts to improve public lighting in St. Cuthbert's Park;
- A public meeting convened by Cllr. William Lavelle, chair of the sub-group regarding anti-social behaviour in parks in Lucan.

Appendix C

Bibliography

ESRI Working Paper 331, *A Hedonic Analysis of the Value of Parks and Green Spaces in the Dublin Area*, 2009

CABE Space (UK), *Urban parks: Do you know what you're getting for your money?* 2006

CABE Space (UK), *Decent parks? Decent behaviour? - The link between the quality of parks and user behaviour*, 2005

House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts (UK), *Enhancing urban green space*, 2006

House of Commons Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs Committee, *Town and Country Parks*, 1999

Mayor of London (UK), *London Strategic Parks Project Report*, 2006

DETR (UK), *Green Spaces, Better Places - Final Report of the Urban Green Spaces Taskforce*, 2002

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (UK), *Living Places - Cleaner, Safer, Greener*, 2002

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE ATHA CLIATH THEAS

SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL

BYE-LAWS

FOR

THE CONTROL AND REGULATION OF THE USE OF PARKS, OPEN SPACES AND RECREATIONAL PLAYING GROUNDS OWNED, CONTROLLED BY, OR IN THE CHARGE OF SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL.

BYE-LAWS UNDER PART VII OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1994 FOR THE CONTROL AND REGULATION OF THE USE OF PARKS, OPEN SPACES AND RECREATIONAL PLAYING GROUNDS OWNED, CONTROLLED BY, OR IN THE CHARGE OF SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL WHETHER OPEN OR ENCLOSED.

These Bye-Laws are in force to ensure that parks, open spaces, and recreational playing grounds and their facilities are used to the maximum extent, in safety and comfort and for the protection of parks, open spaces and recreational playing grounds which are provided as a public amenity and for respect and consideration for parks users to ensure as much enjoyment as is possible, of these amenities.

Contents

1. Definitions
2. Opening and Closing

-
3. Traffic
 4. Animals
 5. General Regulations in Relation to Persons Using a Park
 - 5.1 Materials, Features, Fittings and Furniture
 - 5.2 Consideration for other park users
 - 5.3 Watercourses
 6. Regulated and Controlled Activities
 - 6.1 Trading
 - 6.2 Musical Performances and Dance
 - 6.3 Games, Athletics and Play Grounds
 7. Licences
 8. Prohibited Substances
 9. Enforcement
 10. Repeal
 11. Commencement date

1. Definitions:-

In these bye-laws

- 1.1 "Park" shall include parks, open spaces and recreational playing grounds, owned, controlled by or in the charge of South Dublin County Council whether open or enclosed.
- 1.2 "Council" means the Council of the County of South Dublin.

-
- 1.3 "Employee of the Council" shall include every Official, Park Ranger or other person employed by and duly authorised by the Council to administer and enforce these bye-laws.
 - 1.4 "Waters" shall include rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, both artificial and natural, reservoirs, canals, etc.
 - 1.5 "Enclosed Parks" are parks around which a boundary treatment has been provided and which are closed to the public at nightfall and which remain closed during the hours of darkness.

2. Opening and Closing of Enclosed Parks:-

- 2.1 Parks shall be open on such days and during such hours as may be fixed by the Council from time to time.
- 2.2 The opening and closing hours will be subject to variation by the Council as circumstances require.
- 2.3 No unauthorised person shall enter or remain in any part of a park when it is closed.
- 2.4 Access and Egress shall be gained to and from parks only through the official entrances and authorised access points.

3. Traffic:-

- 3.1 No person shall bring into a park, save with the permission of the Council and in such areas as may be designated, any bicycle, skateboard, roller-skates, roller-blades or other vehicle except a wheelchair, child's buggy or pram.
- 3.2 Where vehicles are permitted access to a park, no person shall leave any vehicle, bicycle or tricycle unattended in a park except in such places as may be set aside as standing or parking places.
- 3.3 The speed limit for all authorised vehicles in a park shall be ten miles per hour.

4. Animals:-

4.1 Dogs.

4.1.1 No person

(a) Shall take into or allow to remain in a park any dog unless it is on a leash.

(b) In charge of a dog in a park shall engage it in coursing or permit it to be engaged in coursing in a park.

4.1.2 Every person in charge of a dog in a park shall:

- (a) Take reasonable care to prevent it from causing annoyance to any person using the Park or worrying, chasing, injuring or disturbing any animals, birds or other creatures in the Park.
- (b) Be liable for any damage or injury which may be caused by the dog.
- (c) Remove it from the Park if so directed by an authorised employee of the Council.

4.2 Other Animals:-

Without the written permission of the Council and only then under certain conditions and in such areas or on such routes as may be designated by the Council for the purpose from time to time **no person shall**

- (a) Turn out to graze in a park or allow to stray or remain in a park, any cattle, sheep, horse, donkey, or other animal.
- (b) Lead, walk or ride a horse or donkey in a park.

5. General Regulations in Relation to Persons Using a Park:-

5.1 Materials, Features, Fittings and Furniture.

No person shall ...

- (a) **Climb** any vehicle, tree, shrub, seat, fence, railing or wall or walk upon any flower bed or through any shrubbery, enclosed plantation or other similarly planted area in a park.
- (b) **Damage or destroy** any tree, shrub or plant growing in a park or pluck, cut or remove any leaf, flower, blossom, fruit, or other part of any tree, shrub or plant.
- (c) **Damage, deface, disfigure, write graffiti on, mark or in any way interfere with** any seat, bench, sculpture, structure, notice or notice-board in a Park.
- (d) **Take or remove any soil, sand, gravel, stone or timber from a park**, save with the permission in writing of the Council.
- (e) **Take from a Park** or destroy or injure or otherwise interfere with any bird, bird's nest or bird's egg in a Park or ill-treat, worry or disturb any animal in a Park.
- (f) **Dump or dispose** of any bottle, glass, china, tin, container, litter or other refuse in a park except in receptacles provided for the purpose.

5.2 Consideration for other parks users:-

No person shall

- (a) **Molest, menace, threaten, annoy or otherwise interfere** with any person using or enjoying a park in a lawful manner.
- (b) **Beg, gamble, use obscene or profane language, behave indecently, importune or otherwise cause annoyance.**
- (c) **Hold or address a public meeting or religious service.**
- (d) **Resist, obstruct or interfere with any employee of the Council or other person in the exercise of his/her duty or disobey lawful directions.**
- (e) **Throw any object or missile to damage or endanger any other person.**
- (f) **Bring into a park or possess any firearm, air-gun, catapult or any other weapon save with the prior permission of the Council for an approved competition or for practice for an approved competition and subject to terms and conditions of such permission.**
- (g) **Make any bonfire, fire, barbecue, possess or light any firework save with the prior permission of the Council and subject to the terms and conditions of such permission.**

5.3 Watercourses.

No person shall

- (a) **Walk, swim, fish, or bathe**, in any of the waters in a park except in those areas which may be set aside for that purpose.
- (b) **Skate** on the frozen water of any lake, pond or watercourse nor foul or pollute any such watercourse.
- (c) **Boat on any watercourse nor operate model aircraft or boats** save with the prior written permission of the Council in designated areas and subject to the terms and conditions of such permission.

6. Regulated and Controlled Activities:-

6.1 Trading etc.

The following activities are **prohibited** in parks except in certain circumstances and in designated areas and with the permission in writing of the Council, and subject to the terms and conditions of such permission:

- (a) **Selling, offering, or exposing for sale** any commodity of any kind whatsoever, or **displaying** any sign, poster, handbill, or other notice, or engaging in **taking photographs for payment**.
- (b) **Levying any charge** for the participation in or viewing of any game, sport or exhibition.
- (c) **Placing or erecting** any chair or seat for hire.
- (d) **Erecting any tent or camp or placing or keeping any caravan or dormobile** in a park save with the permission in writing of the Council in designated areas and subject to the terms and conditions of such permission.

The following activities are **facilitated** in parks **only in designated areas and with the permission in writing of the Council** and subject to terms and conditions and as directed by an authorised employee of the Council. **In all other circumstances they are prohibited:-**

6.2 Musical Performances and Dances:

Musical performances (whether vocal or instrumental), dancing, concerts or other like entertainment, or the operation of any sound or video broadcasting or receiving apparatus, (radio, television, video, compact disc player, tape player or "Ghetto-blaster etc.).

6.3 Games, Athletics, Play Grounds:-

Participation in any aspect of practice or organised game of football, golf or any other game or athletics.

- (a) No person, club or organisation shall organise or take part in the game of football or any other game or athletics **when an authorised employee of the Council considers the ground to be unfit for such use.**
- (b) Any person, club or organisation who uses any non designated area for sports competition, practice or training or who contravenes any of the provisions of paragraph (a) of this section may be liable to have their playing facilities withdrawn.
- (c) No person shall act or behave in such a manner so as to prevent or disrupt the authorised playing of the game of football or any other game or athletics.

(d) No person above the age of 12 years shall use any of the equipment or playing appliances in any childrens' playground.

7. Licences:-

Every licence granted to any person, club or organisation for the exclusive occupation by such person, club or organisation of any portion of the park shall be in accordance with such conditions as shall be laid down by the Council from time to time provided always that the Council shall be entitled to add conditions to existing licences.

8. Prohibited Substances:-

8.1 Drugs

It is prohibited to possess, ingest, supply, or offer for sale, illegal drugs or other consciousness altering substances in a park.

8.2 Alcohol.

The possession, supply or consumption of alcohol in a park, save with the permission in writing of the Council and subject to such conditions as the Council may prescribe, is strictly prohibited.

9. Enforcement:-

9.1 The Garda Síochána shall have free and unencumbered access to parks at all times whether during or outside of the official opening times, in the normal exercise of their duty, and shall not require the prior permission of the Council to gain such access.

9.2 Any person who shall breach any of the foregoing Bye-Laws may be removed from the park by an employee of the Council, or by any member of the Garda Síochána and shall on summary conviction be liable to a penalty not exceeding _1,270.00.

10. Repeal:-

The Bye-Laws made by the Council of the County of Dublin on 16th July 1991 and confirmed by the Minister for the Environment on the 26th September, 1991 are hereby repealed without prejudice to any previous breach thereof.

11. Commencement:-

These Bye-Laws shall come into force on the **1st JUNE, 1996.**

Present when the Common Seal
of THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF
THE COUNTY OF SOUTH DUBLIN
was herunto affixed.

Cathaoirleach/Ball Ainmithe

County Manager

DATE