

Press release

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31 London parks receive safety awards from Mayor

The Mayor of London, Boris Johnson today revealed the 31 parks across the capital chosen to receive a Safer Park Award for their hard work to combat crime and improve green spaces.

London boasts thousands of beautiful parks, however some can attract anti-social behaviour including gangs, vandalism, drug taking and dangerous dogs.

The Mayor's Safer Parks Award is a new and exciting way to celebrate our best social spaces.

The awards are being presented to Friends of Parks groups who have worked in partnership with councils and the police to target anti-social behaviour and revitalise local parks.

This morning the Mayor visited Montefiore Gardens Park in Wandsworth, winner of a Bronze award, to see the positive changes the community has implemented.

The Mayor, Boris Johnson said: "London boasts some of the most sublime green spaces in the country, and everyone deserves to enjoy their local parks without fear of crime. The scheme recognises the tireless work many unsung local heroes put into making green spaces more pleasant for everyone. I congratulate all 31 parks for their outstanding efforts. I hope this inspires others to get involved to deliver real change to run-down areas. Each one has found its own way to turnaround the often low level crime and antisocial behavior that scares people away."

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A few years ago Montefiore Park was a hot spot for anti-social behaviour, with youths breaking into the park at night, damaging the playground and disturbing residents with threatening behaviour and loud noise. This led to its temporary closure in spring 2009. But, thanks to the hard work of the Friends of Montefiore Park Group in collaboration with the council and the safer neighbourhood team, the park has now re-opened and has been regenerated with new facilities for families to use.

Terry Morgan from Friends of Montefiore Park Group said: “The park was a real eye sore before, and every day there seemed to be more damage to the gates, locks and kids’ swings. We decided something needed to be done and managed to secure charitable funding to make some great changes. I’m proud to say it is now cleaner and I feel much safer.”

The Queenstown Safer Neighbourhood Team constantly monitored activities in the area and combined regular patrols and a mosquito (noise) system to detract youths from entering the park during its closure.

Inspector Pete McGarry said: “The problems surrounding Montefiore Park in the past have been reduced as a result of good communication and commitment between the relevant agencies. This could not have been achieved without the support and drive of the local community. This is a classic example of problem solving at its best.”

The parks have received three different standards of excellence gold, silver and bronze and winners. Plumstead Common in Greenwich, has topped the list with a Gold award in recognition of the hard work of the Plumstead Common Environment Group in tackling graffiti, litter and anti-social behaviour across a substantial green space. The group has recently focused on the further development of a nature reserve they had created that was suffering from anti-social behaviour. After working with their local police and council’s parks department they have re-built a sense of pride and ownership of the park.

Nick Day, Chairman of Plumstead Common Environment Group said: “So many of us here have long cherished our park but unfortunately it has, over the years, been targeted by people who cannot respect the value of green spaces like ours. The Green Pennant Award winning Slade Ponds and the Plumstead Common Nature Reserve have suffered abuse and we permanently battle with vandalism, graffiti and litter. Our group wants to attract people

who will use the common for pleasure, so we concentrate on removing graffiti, painting the railings, replacing the fences and installing interpretation boards. This area unfortunately suffers from some social deprivation and we recognise that green spaces like this contribute massively to people's sense of well-being. I'm enormously pleased we're receiving this award."

Working with boroughs, the Mayor's Safer Parks Award scheme provides opportunities to revitalise public space, making a big difference to London's quality of life and helping create a safer city.

Ends

Notes to editors

1, The winning parks are:

Barking Park	Barking and Dagenham	Silver
Danson Park	Bexley	Gold
Spikesbridge Park	Ealing	Silver
Bury Lodge Park	Enfield	Gold
Bush Hill Park	Enfield	Silver
Plumstead Common	Greenwich	Gold
Bishops Park	Hammersmith and Fulham	Silver
South Park	Hammersmith and Fulham	Silver
Albert Road Rec.	Haringey	Gold
Markfield Park	Haringey	Bronze
Canons Park	Harrow	Gold
Harrow Recreation Ground	Harrow	Gold
Roxeth Recreation Ground	Harrow	Gold
Beaversfield Park	Hounslow	Bronze
Chiswick House Gardens	Hounslow	Gold
Dukes Meadows	Hounslow	Gold
Elthorne Park	Islington	Gold
St Lukes Gardens	Kensington and Chelsea	Silver
Manor House Gardens	Lewisham	Gold
South Park Gardens	Merton	Silver
Elmhurst Gardens	Redbridge	Bronze
Ilford War Memorial Gdns	Redbridge	Bronze
South Park	Redbridge	Bronze
Valentines Park	Redbridge	Silver
Canbury Gardens	Kingston upon Thames	Silver
Victoria Recreation Ground	Kingston upon Thames	Bronze
Burgess Park	Southwark	Bronze
Russia Dock Woodland	Southwark	Silver
The Grove Park	Sutton	Silver
Montefiore Gardens	Wandsworth	Bronze
Hyde Park	Westminster	Gold

- The Mayor's Safer Parks Award is designed to ensure that Londoners can be proud of their local parks, participate in their development and feel confident to suggest improvements that increase safety in London's public realm. For more information visit <http://www.london.gov.uk/priorities/priorities/crime-community-safety/mayors-safer-parks-award>

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