



York House Gardens Management Plan

January 2024 – December 2025

York House Gardens Management Plan 2024-25: Foreword

York House Gardens are a vitally important asset for local people and visitors to the borough. Therefore, the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames will aspire to maintain and manage the Gardens to the highest standards.

This management plan is based on the use of an audit of the park following central government guidance known as PPG 17. This is explained within this document, but the approach is based on common sense. We believe that it is important to get the simple things right. Is the green space clean and tidy? Is the grass cut? Are the trees and shrubs well maintained? Is any graffiti removed effectively and quickly?

Working with local communities to deliver the highest quality of service is top priority and it is hoped that this document will provide a framework for continuing and improving dialogue. The site will be maintained appropriately, and the local community will be consulted on any proposed changes or improvements to facilities. In particular, the borough works closely with local friends' group 'The York House Society'. We actively encourage suggestions about all aspects of the park.

While the Council is open to the changing needs of the local community with regards to facilities within any of the borough's parks, the gardens are long established and are well maintained. Major changes to the Gardens or its facilities are not envisaged. The action plan at the end of this document reflects this perspective.

Parks Officers, working closely with colleagues in Continental Landscapes and using a partnership approach regularly monitor York House Gardens. Members of the local community are also encouraged to let us know their impressions about the level of maintenance as well as their ideas for improving the facilities. It is hoped that the resulting observations and ideas will result in continually improving management and maintenance practices.

The current financial situation will inevitably have a detrimental effect on the resources available to improve and maintain the borough's parks and open spaces. The borough will continue to work closely with its partners, in this case Continental Landscapes and the York House Society, to maintain standards. In addition, we will need to look for additional ways of funding to maintain and improve the boroughs parks, one of our most valuable assets.

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1. Introduction

1.1 This Management Plan for York House Gardens provides guidance for the management and any relevant development of the Gardens. It utilises the methodology outlined in the Government’s Planning Policy Guidance note 17 (PPG 17) in order to audit the state of provision of features and facilities in the Gardens.

The Plan includes an Action Plan, which we aim to achieve within the remit of current budgets. The Plan has been drafted for a broad audience interested in the development of the Gardens namely:

- The York House Society and borough residents;
- The Parks and Open Spaces Service;
- Other services and departments within the London Borough of Richmond;
- Elected members, ward councillors and portfolio holders;
- National agencies;
- Local businesses; and
- Partners and contractors.

1.2 The Plan will run from January 2024 to December 2025. An interim progress update will be undertaken in January 2025.

2. National Context

2.1 Parks are managed areas of the green environment which provide opportunities for a range of formal and informal leisure, passive and active sport, recreation and play.

2.2 The significance of parks, open space and countryside provision is clear:

- There are an estimated 27,000 public parks in Britain, visited an estimated 2.6bn times each year (Common Select Committee, 2016).
- There is an estimated 85,847 hectares of Publicly accessible green space in Great Britain, 73,400 in England. (*Natural capital accounts containing information about green spaces in urban areas*, Office for National Statistics, August 2019)
- 18.13 % of Greater London is designated Public Open Space; with 3.5% Local Parks and Open Spaces & 5.2% Metropolitan Parks (Greenspace Information for Greater London CIC, 2023).

2.3 It is widely recognised that the provision of high quality ‘public realm’ facilities such as parks can assist in making an area as an attractive place to live and work and can result in a number of benefits in terms of economic development and regeneration. A local park can also play a part in promoting healthy living as a place for people to exercise.

2.4 The benefits of safe and accessible parks and open spaces can be summarised as follows:

Social

- providing safe outdoor areas that are available to all the local population
- providing opportunities for community events, voluntary activities and charitable fund raising
- providing easily accessible recreation as an alternative to other more chargeable leisure pursuits
- providing opportunities to improve health and take part in a range of outdoor sports and activities
- providing an educational resource or outdoor classroom

Economic

- adding value to surrounding property, both commercial and residential, thus increasing local tax revenues for public services
- contributing to attracting visitors, including using parks as venues for events
- encouraging tourism into the area
- helping to create an attractive local image
- helping to reduce social exclusion and its associated costs to society

Environmental

- providing habitats for wildlife as an aid to local biodiversity
- helping to stabilise urban temperatures and humidity
- absorbing pollutants in the air and ground water
- providing opportunities for the recycling of organic materials
- providing opportunities to reduce transport use through the provision of local facilities, and by providing walking and cycling routes through urban areas

3. Relationship to Council’s Aims and Objectives

The Council recognises that its parks and open spaces and management of these contribute to the:

- overall vision and priorities of the Council
- quality of life of local people
- physical, social and economic regeneration of the borough
- greening, attractiveness and increasing biodiversity and quality of green space in the area
- tackling the climate emergency; improving air quality and minimising green house gas emissions
- minimising flood risk and sustainable drainage

Accordingly, this Management Plan and the Parks and Open Spaces Service are guided by and are in agreement with the aims, objectives and principles of the Councils’ plans and strategies. These can be found on the webpages below:

[Council policies and plans - London Borough of Richmond upon Thames](#)

[Draft Local Plan: Submission - London Borough of Richmond upon Thames](#)

[Parks and open spaces policies and plans - London Borough of Richmond upon Thames](#)

[Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Assessment 2023 & Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy 2023](#)

3.1` Parks and Open Spaces Strategy

Our borough has the largest area of public open space per head of population of any London borough. We have a local and national reputation for quality and leadership in the delivery of excellent parks. To ensure the quality of our parks and open spaces remains at a high level, following public consultation, we developed a series of strategic principles by which parks will be managed:

The strategic principles are as follows:

1. Parks and Open Spaces will be a sustainable legacy for future generations.
2. Parks and Open Spaces will continue to define our borough.
3. Parks and Opens Spaces will enrich the life, health and wellbeing of residents and visitors.
4. The Council will lead in the delivery of excellent Parks and Open Spaces services.
5. Parks and Open Spaces will offer positive experiences to all visitors.
6. Through innovation, the future development of Parks and Open Spaces services will be ensured.
7. Increased community participation in Parks and Open Spaces will be encouraged and supported.
8. Parks and Open Spaces will be celebrated as centres of excellence.

The current strategic principles are being reviewed and will be consulted on and updated in spring 2024.

3.2 Local Biodiversity Action Plan for Richmond

The main aims of the plan are:

- To conserve and enhance the variety of habitats and species in the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames, in particular those which are of

international or national importance, are in decline locally, are characteristic to the borough and/or have particular public appeal, which can raise the profile of biodiversity.

- To ensure that Richmond upon Thames’ residents become aware of, and are given the opportunity to become involved in, conserving and enhancing the biodiversity around them.
- To raise awareness and increase stakeholder involvement in maintaining and, where possible, enhancing species and habitats of importance.

The Local Biodiversity Action Plan can be found online here: [Richmond upon Thames \(habitatsandheritage.org.uk\)](http://Richmond upon Thames (habitatsandheritage.org.uk))

3.4 Parks Improvements

The Council have a commitment to continued improvement in our Parks and Open Spaces by improving existing infrastructure and developing and installing new facilities. The Council continues to have a cyclical investment programme to ensure that parks and playgrounds are up to standards, this includes £300k a year for park improvements and £150k for play. One aim of the management plan is to maintain the gains that we have achieved in previous years.

The Council list all major improvement projects on our webpage, which can be found here:

[Latest parks updates - London Borough of Richmond upon Thames](#)

4. Site Description

4.1 Outline History of York House Gardens

York House was built in the mid-seventeenth century and a plan showing the present extent of the Gardens was drawn in 1784. The riverside gardens were commissioned by Sir Ratan Tata, a Parsee from Bombay who bought the house from the Duc d’Orleans in 1906. Tata, whose family continues to run one of the largest industrial companies in India, had the Gardens re-designed and installed the Italian marble statues from Lea Park (aka Witley Park) near Godalming. After Tata’s death York House was sold to the Council and used for offices. In addition to the marble statuary many features of the grounds remain today from Tata’s ownership of the House and Gardens. These include the Japanese Garden and the sunken lawn. Of note is the Victorian cast iron pissoir/urinal – a very rare and decorative example of functional ironwork still in use today.

4.2 General Information

4.2.1 Land Tenure

The site is owned by the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames and is managed by the Parks and Open Spaces Service.

Enabling Acts:

- Local Government Act 1963

- Parks and Open Spaces Order 1971
- Open Spaces Act 1906
- Town and Country Planning Act (S. 32)
- Commons Registration Act

4.2.2 Location

York House and Gardens are located close to the centre of Twickenham, set back from Richmond Road (or A305), the main road from Twickenham to Richmond. The main area of the Gardens surrounds York House but another section, containing the cascade and bordering the river is situated on the other side of Riverside Road. This is reached via a stone bridge that crosses the road from behind the House in the area of the sunken lawn. Access is also possible from Champions Wharf/Sculpture Park situated on the riverside.

4.2.3 Access

As a free and open facility York House Gardens has the potential to provide fully inclusive access to local residents and visitors to the area. Pedestrians and those arriving by train and bus and car can currently access the site.

4.2.4 Local Transport

Train: Twickenham Station is situated within ten minutes walk of the Gardens. Trains for this station run into central London (Waterloo Station via Clapham junction) and west with trains running to Reading and Windsor and all stations in between.

Bus: The centre of Twickenham is well served by buses, with routes to all areas of the borough, neighbouring boroughs and the centre of town.

The Gardens are served by the following bus routes:
R70, R68, 490, 33, 281 and 111.

4.2.5 Landscape & Topography

The Gardens are laid out in a formal manner in roughly rectangular areas to the south and east of the House. The area is generally flat although it contains a sunken lawn area immediately behind the House. This is divided by a wall (to the east of the sunken lawn) from another formal area that contains a number of mature trees of different varieties. The area to the east of the House contains tennis courts.

To the south of the sunken lawn a stone bridge leads over the Riverside Road into another rectangular area that borders the riverside walk. This area contains lawns (surrounded by mature yew hedging), rose beds, mature trees, a small pond and a larger water feature surrounding the statuary installed by Ratan Tata.

The Gardens have a range of horticultural features including - herbaceous borders, seasonal bedding, historic trees, ornamental shrubs and roses, woodland

Gardens, water Gardens, and Cascades. There is a five-year improvement plan in operation to upgrade and enhance these areas.

Herbaceous borders

Bordering the rear lawns this varied range of mixed perennials acts as a colourful backdrop all the year round to both civic and private events such as weddings.

Seasonal Bedding

Spring and summer formal bedding schemes are displayed around the south side of York House. The planting schemes have been chosen for their appeal to both aesthetic and invertebrate appeal.

Shrub beds

Mixed shrub beds can be found throughout the gardens. In some instances, they are themed as per location, e.g. Japanese Garden, Woodland Garden. Work is ongoing to rejuvenate and replant these areas. Shrubs have been chosen to provide food and shelter for the many birds and mammals that inhabit the site.

Rockery/Bulb Garden

The rockery has been planted to include alpine plants. Different species of bulbs are planted at this location with a backdrop of Camellia varieties.

Water Features/ Cascades

Planting has taken place which is more fitting to the location and creates a more impressive backdrop to the statues. The water features provide a home to lots of frogs, toad and smooth newts, which come back every year to breed.

Historic Trees/Woodland

The Gardens have many fine tree specimens which the Council's Tree section has surveyed and installed species labels on trees of interest.

Champions Wharf

The The garden was re-designed post 2015 and now reflects the proximity of Alexander Pope's villa, with a recreation of Pope's Urn and inscriptions with his quotations on benches. Adjacent to the garden is Champions Wharf Play Beach, laid out in 2013 with play features including a Viking Boat, a Wherry or Victorian Water Taxi and archaeological dig items from Twickenham Museum.





4.2.6 Listed Historic Buildings

York House is a Grade II* listed building, with part of the house scheduled as an ancient monument. The iron pissoir is reputed to be the oldest in the country.

4.2.7 Ecology

Despite being a premier ornamental garden, York House Gardens has a number of ecological strengths with the potential for more. These are listed below:

- The shrub beds and hedges that run in corridors along the site enable the easy movement of wildlife from one area to another;
- There are many mature trees which have natural cavities. These are ideal for nesting and feeding opportunities;
- The mixed planting helps to make a very diverse site that caters for both invertebrate and vertebrate species;
- There are several dead wood loggeries situated at various spots through the garden, which provide excellent habitats for saprophytic invertebrates and fungi, which then support the higher levels of the food chain;
- The ponds provide an additional habitat type for wildlife to use and spawn in.

4.2.8 Facilities

York House Gardens contain the following facilities:

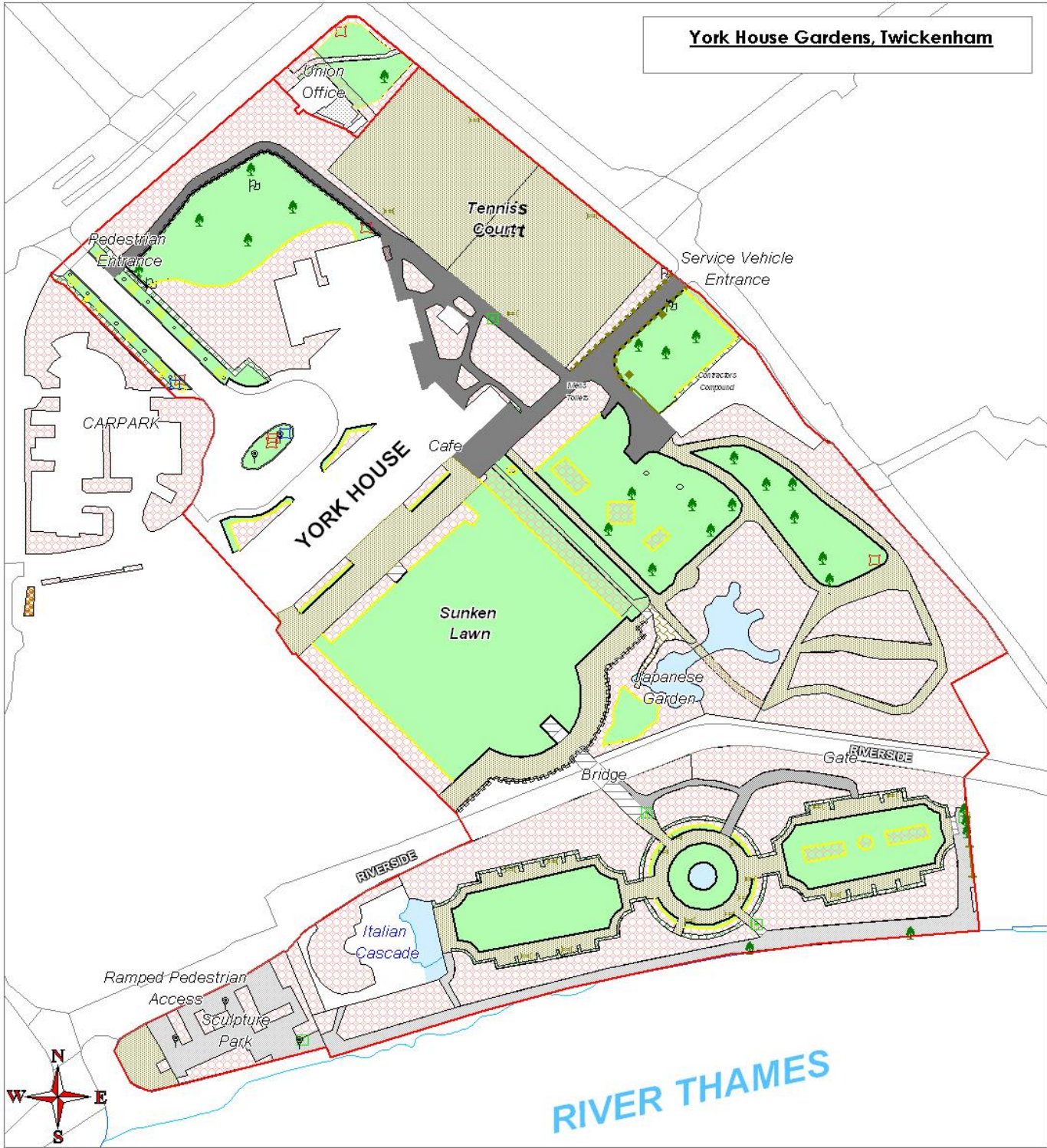
- Public toilets in York House
- Pissoir in Gardens
- Tennis Courts (<https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/YorkHouseGardens>)
- A large number of benches
- Riverside terrace walk
- Japanese Pond
- Round Pond
- Naked Lady Water Fountain

4.2.9 Maps and plans

On the following pages, please find:

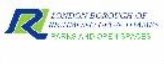
- Location map of York House Gardens within the borough
- Plan map of York House Gardens
- Aerial photo of York House Gardens

York House Gardens, Twickenham



Graphic Key and Quantity

	Site Boundary	26,590m ²		Concrete/ Tarmac	1548m ²		Wooden Bollards	27		Wooden Knee Rail	66m
	Shrubs	7536m ²		Breedon Gravel	1499m ²		Man Hole/ Water Point	6		Metal Fencing	70m
	Hedge	1759m ²		Painted Tarmac (Tennis Courts)	2108m ²		Litter Bin	5		Sign Post	4
	Grass	6275m ²		Vertical Edging	82m		Lamp Post	7		Bench	18
	Water Features			Hard Edging	900m		Tree	25			
				Soft	539m						



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York House Gardens aerial photograph



5. Audit of facilities

5.1 The main reasons for undertaking a Local Assessment are:

- to plan positively, creatively and effectively in identifying priority areas for improvement and to ensure, as much as possible, that there are appropriate types of parks and open spaces required;
- to work towards ensuring an adequate provision of high quality, accessible green space to meet the needs of community;
- to identify the gap between current and desired levels of need and demand, quality and quantity of provision;
- to assist in achieving and maintaining standards such as the Green Flag Award

5.2. Desirable Outcomes of the Local Assessment

A local assessment of green space will enable planning to be effective and achieve key outcomes required by the National Planning Policy Framework.

These are:

- provision of accessible, high quality park space for sport and recreation that meet the identified needs of residents and visitors;
- provision of a park that is ‘fit for purpose’: the right type in the right place;
- to provide an appropriate balance between new provision and enhancement of existing provision;
- setting locally derived provision standards.

5.2.1 It is intended that this management plan helps to achieve these outcomes in terms of providing an analysis of existing provision and a plan to effectively maintain and, where appropriate, develop the facilities and infrastructure of the Gardens.

5.2.2 In addition, it produces a series of actions which will help to achieve the standards laid down for Green Flag Award parks:

- A welcoming place;
- Healthy, safe and secure;
- Clean and well-maintained;
- Environmental Management;
- Landscape and heritage;
- Community involvement;
- Marketing and communication
- Overall Management.

5.3 Methodology

The methodology used was prescribed in the Government’s Planning Policy Guideline note 17 (PPG17) for the provision of public open space. This consisted of a review of the following key areas of provision:

- Main entrance;
- Boundaries;
- Roads, paths, cycleways and access;
- Parking;
- Information available;
- Planted areas;
- Grass areas;
- Cleanliness;
- Provision of litter bins;
- Seating;
- Children’s play space;
- Sports and recreation;
- Buildings including toilets;
- Health and safety;
- Nature conservation value; and
- Access for people with disabilities.

5.3.1 Main Entrance

Although there are several entrances, there are two main entrance points into York House Gardens. One of these, situated on Sion Lane allows access for vehicles. This is limited to contractor’s vehicles and delivery for events being held in the Gardens or in York House. The other main entrance for pedestrians is situated on Twickenham Riverside through Champions Wharf. Both entrances are welcoming and well maintained with appropriate signage.

5.3.2 Boundaries

The boundary of York House Gardens is marked in sections by a historic wall, except along the riverside which is marked by a balustrade. The walls are in good condition and are kept free of graffiti.

5.3.3 Roads, Paths, Cycle ways and Access

The pathways, some tarmac and some of compacted hoggin, are in good condition. They are even and do not present any trip hazards. The edges are well defined.

5.3.4 Parking

There is no public parking within the Gardens. The nearest public car park is situated outside the borough’s Civic Centre within two minutes walk of the gardens. There is a larger public car park situated in Arragon Road within ten minutes walk of the Gardens.

5.3.5 Gate Locking

The park is locked during the hours of darkness and details are displayed on site via posters. There is further information on our [website](#).

5.3.6 Information

Information relating to York House Gardens is available on the parks section of the council’s website www.richmond.gov.uk. The parks signage is attractive and durable giving appropriate contact details. It uses easily understandable symbols to deter users from inappropriate and anti-social behaviour. In addition, there is an attractive interpretive sign by the Naked Lady Water Fountain. This gives some interesting historical information about the Fountain and its statuary.

5.3.7 Cleanliness

The Common is kept free of litter, fouling and graffiti by the Councils Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing Contractor, Continental Landscapes. Bins are emptied daily, and the site is litter picked at the same time.

5.3.8 Planted Areas

All the planted areas are attractive, in good condition and are well maintained. Of particular note are the replanted herbaceous borders on either side of the sunken lawn area. These are particularly striking, and it is nice to see an area of horticulture that has all but disappeared from public parks. These are also very valuable food sources for insects and butterflies.

5.3.9 Scenic Quality

York House Gardens has great scenic value. As mentioned above the Gardens are divided up into several areas; these are separated either by a wall (in the case of the sunken lawn) area or by the historic footbridge that, spanning the road, leads from the sunken lawn into the rose garden and cascade area. The cascade statues in the gardens beside the river, also known locally as the Naked Ladies, are extremely popular. Made of Carrara marble, they were purchased by Sir Ratan Tata in 1906 from the estate of disgraced financier Whittaker Wright and installed in the gardens.

The scenic value is enhanced by the way the gardens are divided and the variety of planting and the mature trees that grow within them. This is not to forget the scenic value of York House itself.

5.3.10 Grass Areas

The amenity turf throughout the Gardens appears appropriately cut and maintained. The edges are well defined.

5.3.11 Provision of Litter Bins

There are enough litter bins throughout the Gardens, and these are generally in a good condition.

5.3.12 Seating

There is no shortage of seating in the gardens. Benches are in a good condition and are spaced throughout the area offering many peaceful and scenic spots for people to rest a while.

5.3.13 Children’s Play Space

There is currently no traditional children’s playground in the Gardens, but a Play Beach was constructed in 2014 after trialling the concept on a temporary basis over two summers. The nearest playground at Diamond Jubilee Gardens is within five minutes walk and is situated on the Twickenham Riverside. For more information please visit: www.richmond.gov.uk

5.3.14 Buildings, including toilets

Within the Gardens themselves the iron ‘pissoir’ situated close to the tennis courts is in good condition. As mentioned above, it is reputed to be the oldest in the country. In the works yard there is a mess room. This is not the most attractive building but being tucked away it does not intrude in an ugly way on the gardens. The dilapidated green house was removed and, in its place, some raised planters which are used as a community garden through work by the charity Dose of Nature and the York House Society. The shelter opposite the tennis courts is in a reasonable condition.

5.3.15 Health and Safety

There are no obvious dangers to health and safety in the gardens. The paths are in very good condition and present no trip hazards. The historic footbridge has been extensively renovated and is as safe as anything of its nature can be.

5.3.16 Nature Conservation Value

The shrub beds and hedges that run-in corridors along the site enable the easy movement of wildlife from one area to another. In addition, there are many mature trees that as well as providing habitats for insects and birds also have natural cavities which provide valuable nesting and feeding opportunities in an urban setting. The mixed planting makes a very diverse site for both invertebrate and vertebrate species providing food sources all year round. The three pond areas within the gardens provide spawning areas for frogs and smooth newts and during this time the parks attendants keep a close watch on the ponds.

5.3.17 Access for people with disabilities

This factor has been included not only to ensure maximum accessibility for those in wheelchairs and for the elderly and the less able-bodied, but also to ensure compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act.

Access for people with disabilities is good on either side of the gardens around a pathway system that is even and in good condition. On the York House side this includes a wooden bridge that cross the pond in the Japanese Garden area and also by steps that lead into the southern end of the sunken lawn area.

Access from one side of the Gardens to the other is not possible in a wheelchair. This is because the stepped historic bridge is the only way that the two sides of the garden are linked.

6. Vision and Objectives for the Gardens

6.1 The overall vision for the Gardens:

In line with the wishes of the local community, the future vision for the Gardens is to preserve the heritage, maintain the aesthetics and interpret the history of this valuable formal garden area in the centre of Twickenham. The Gardens are a valuable part of the area’s heritage and an integral part of the delightful riverside area of today’s Twickenham. The Council is committed to maintaining and improving the Gardens to a high standard and in a sympathetic manner.

6.2 Aims and Objectives for the Management of the Gardens

- To identify and cherish the special character of the Gardens
- To ensure that the management of the Gardens protects and enhances the biodiversity of the site
- To ensure that the management of the landscape maintains the predominantly formal character of the Gardens with the current mixture of formal beds, trees and grassed areas
- To ensure that all landscape improvement works are supported by a commitment to maintenance of the same
- To ensure that the Gardens are managed in order to provide a high quality service.
- To meet the demands and expectations of the local community primarily as a place of quiet enjoyment
- To encourage and promote community involvement in the implementation of the proposals and in the on-going management of the Gardens

7. Management of York House Gardens

7.1 Introduction

This section sets out guidelines and general principles to be followed in delivering the vision and objectives outlined above.

7.1.1 Parks Service

The Parks Service is overseen by the Head of Culture, assisted by the Parks Service Manager. It is made up of two teams, the Parks Service also use consultants when needed.

- The Operations team is responsible for liaising with contractors and monitoring the parks. The team includes a Parks Operations Manager, two Parks Officers, an Ecology Policy and Planning Manager, an Ecology Policy and Planning Officer, Allotment Officer and a Parks Support Officer.
- The Arboricultural team is responsible for all street trees and arboricultural work in council-managed parks and open spaces, as well as assisting with planning issues. The team consists of a manager, seven tree officers and a technical support officer.

We value diversity and are committed to delivering a service that puts equality of opportunity as a priority.

Management of the park needs to deliver high standards of maintenance of all aspects of the soft and hard landscaping of the park within existing revenue budgets. Developments have been funded by major borough-wide capital investment Parks Improvement Programmes between 2005 and 2010 and 2012 and 2017. In 2022 Public Realm funding allow improvements in all wards covering – Sports pitches, Outdoor gyms, Playgrounds and pathway access.

7.1.2 Delivery partners

The Council works closely with the York House Society which assists in working in harmony with users’ and residents’ views. Continued working with the Society has a very high priority in relation to the continued management of the park.

For parks maintenance, a new approach was introduced from April 2013, with services split into eleven separate lots and being delivered through a framework contract. In broad terms maintenance will be carried out by the contractors’ operatives who have the necessary skills to achieve high and consistent standards. As a framework, the contracts will also be available for other authorities and organisations in London and the south-east of England.

Parks Framework contract: February 2018 – February 2021 (renewed March 2021 – 2025)	
Following an open and thorough procurement process that began in spring 2017, contractors were appointed to seven service areas to start 36 month contracts in February 2018 (now renewed to 2025). Evaluation was on an 80% cost and 20% quality basis.	
1 Amenity Landscape Management	5 Parks Patrol
2 Arboriculture Management	6 Events Management

3 Oak Processionary Moth management

7 External Planting

4 Play Inspection & Maintenance

Procurement was written in an output style with built-in quality measures and performance indicators and asking qualifying contractors to design excellent services using their knowledge and experience.

Relevant to York House Gardens

Continental Landscapes are the main grounds contractor, undertaking amenity management (grass cutting, shrubs, hedges, sports bookings and pitch maintenance), small works (hard landscaping, infrastructure and furniture installation, etc.) gate locking operations, plus undertaking play inspection and maintenance. They also undertake parks cleansing alongside existing street cleansing and graffiti removal to create a joined-up operation.

KPS are the arboricultural contractor, working closely with the Council’s tree team who undertake inspections and specify works, with Bartlett Tree Experts undertaking Oak Processionary Moth management.

Events in parks are managed by The Event Umbrella, a company who specialise in managing outdoor events in the public sector.

Park patrols are undertaken by Parkguard, a company specialising in education, support services and enforcement in parks and open spaces.

Our contractors take appropriate actions to ensure their health and safety of their staff and a safe working environment through proper training, risk assessments and inspections. These may vary depending on the contractor, further details of these can be made available upon request.

7.2 A Welcoming Place

The following management regimes all play a part in ensuring that York House Gardens continues to be a welcoming area.

7.2.1 Graffiti removal

As a part of our aim to make the Borough safe, green and clean we are committed to reducing and removing graffiti. The site will be inspected daily for any evidence of graffiti. The full details of the borough’s commitment to the prompt removal of graffiti can be viewed at www.richmond.gov.uk

There is an agreement with the Council’s Street Scene Contractor Continental Landscapes to manage the removal of all graffiti within five working days. Where the graffiti is racist or offensive it will be removed within one working day of notification.

7.2.2 Signage

Signage will be kept clean and will be regularly inspected. Any necessary repairs will be carried out promptly.

7.2.3 Pathways

All paths will be inspected annually with regular monitoring throughout the year. Any necessary repairs will be carried out as promptly as possible.

7.3 Healthy, Safe and Secure

The following management regimes all play a part in ensuring that York House Gardens continues to be a healthy, safe and secure place.

York House Gardens are designated in the Bye-laws and Public Space Protection Orders as a site where dogs must be kept on a lead.

7.3.1 Community Safety

York House Gardens has two site-based members of staff whose shift patterns are organised so as to maximise staff presence on the site. There is usually a staff member on duty during recognised parks opening hours (8am – 4pm). It is believed and generally accepted that the presence of recognisable site-based staff helps to allay peoples' fear of crime.

All operatives working at York House Gardens undertake an important role in terms of a visible staff presence in the Gardens and structure their maintenance work accordingly. All staff are uniformed and wear highly visible clothing.

The site is regularly patrolled by our Parks Enforcement Contractor, to deter and enforce against our Public Space Protection Orders.

In addition, as part of the Twickenham Safer Neighbourhood initiative, the Police Neighbourhood team regularly patrol the Gardens on foot.

7.3.2 Dog fouling

The Council and their contractors make efforts to educate dog owners to be responsible for their dog's waste as the dangers of humans coming into contact with dog faeces are well known.

Signage clearly indicates that dog mess should be picked up and disposed of by those walking their pets.

All general waste bins can be used to dispose of dog waste.

The Council has adopted Public Space Protection Orders relating to Dog Control. These have been renewed in 2023 for a further 3 years. They can be found online here: [Dog Control PSPO \(richmond.gov.uk\)](https://www.richmond.gov.uk/dog-control-pspo)

7.4 Clean and Well Maintained

The following regimes are designed to ensure that the Gardens are clean and well maintained.

7.4.1 Grass Maintenance

Grass surfaces within the Gardens are mainly classed as amenity grass. Amenity turf is those areas used for general recreation and formal and informal sports and can include wide-open spaces or those areas planted with trees and shrubs. The height of this grass is kept between 15 and 70mm throughout the year.

The level of maintenance will depend on the level of use, with increased repairs, fertilising, and scarifying of those areas subject to heavy wear. Most repair works to turf will be carried out in the autumn or spring, with areas either re-turfed or seeded.

Grass edges, whether they are against paths, fences or walls will be cut at the same time as the rest of the grass using strimmers in most areas.

7.4.2 Trees

Trees within parks are subject to inspection by suitably qualified and experienced Arboriculturalists, this is in order to identify and remedy any unacceptable risks to people using the sites, an example of this is the prophylactic treatment of oak processionary moth or the removal of trees that are extensively decayed compromising their structural integrity.

Tree pruning is only carried out where necessary for risk management purposes or where formative pruning is necessary; this approach allows Richmond’s parks to retain a natural landscape with well-formed specimens. Where there is a particular characteristic by way of species composition, size or natural distribution the Council seeks to maintain this through selecting appropriate replacement and new trees. All tree works are in accordance with our Tree Management Policy.

Richmond Council encourages friends’ groups and associations to consider the tree population within parks and to communicate with the parks and open spaces team in order to make improvements and ensure that there is continuity in the way that the trees are managed.

The trees on the site have been managed on a reactive basis since the Gardens was opened in the early 1920’s. They are a prominent feature in both the local and wider landscape and characterise the Gardens. Many of the trees within the grounds are particularly noted for their diversity and taxonomic interest, with many rare trees present of both native and exotic origin. New trees and shrubs have been planted on a regular basis over the years to continue to increase and diversify the magnificent tree stock.

7.4.3 Shrubs Beds

Shrub beds are managed to maintain healthy stocks of plants, pruning as necessary and as appropriate for the plant species to remove dead and damaged branches and to retain a natural shape. A count of dead plants is carried out each autumn and replacement plants are planted between November and March each year in order to maintain the character of the bed.

Replacement planting will use species with a form and flowering habit, which is appropriate for the plant’s position in the bed (lower growing at the front, taller in the middle) both to improve the appearance of the feature and minimise the need

for pruning to restrain unwanted growth. Drought tolerant species will be generally chosen and where possible those with a wildlife interest.

All beds will be kept weed free by hand weeding when required. A programme of mulching of the shrub beds will be instigated to improve the appearance of the beds, to maintain moisture levels in the soil and to discourage weed growth. The depth of the mulch will be checked annually in August and topped up during the winter if required using coarse grade bark mulch or woodchips produced in-house.

7.4.4 Cleansing

The collection of litter is extremely important in maintaining the appearance of the Park and in the consequent respect with which people will treat and use it. Litter is collected on a daily basis with a litter pick of the park being carried out at the same time.

Site based staff carry out litter picking, emptying of litterbins and the sweeping/blowing of paths. The zone applies to all surfaces: paths, lawns and beds.

To prevent bins over flowing on days when the park has high numbers of visitors, site-based staff will carry out additional emptying with the litter bags being collected and removed from the site on the same day. In addition, the bins are cleaned and disinfected quarterly to avoid an unsightly accumulation of dirt.

7.4.5 Park Furniture and Fittings

The site-based staff ensure that all park furniture is clean, and will check benches, notice boards and bins on a regular basis. Items will be cleaned when required. Repairs will be requested by contractors on a Defect Report and carried out promptly. Any single replacement or repair will match the existing furniture so that the style of the seat remains consistent.

7.4.6 Hard Surfaces

Hard surfaces will be kept clean, with litter swept from surfaces regularly by the site-based staff.

Paths will be kept in a good state of repair; all paths being inspected annually, and any repairs carried out as promptly as possible.

Drains and gulleys will be inspected regularly by site-based staff.

7.4.7 Sports Facility Maintenance

The only sports facilities within the Gardens are the tennis courts.

Tennis Courts

The courts are jet washed annually to remove moss and debris from the playing surface. Nets are replaced when required.

7.5 Environmental Sustainability

The following regimes are designed to ensure that the Gardens are managed in a sustainable way.

7.5.1 **Recycling**

At present we do not have recycling facilities available in this park. However, residents can recycle at some of our other parks and open spaces as well as the cafes situated within them.

7.5.2 **Recycling green waste**

The Council's ground maintenance contractor takes all green waste to Townsmead recycling centre and KPS the Council's tree management contractor recycles woodchip where appropriate.

7.5.3 **Pesticides**

Pesticides are used as and when necessary in parks however this is kept to an absolute minimum.

To control weeds and increase moisture retention a thick layer of mulch is spread over the shrub beds. When available this is re-cycled woodchip. However, on more formal areas, quality grade ornamental bark mulch is used. Weeds are removed by cultural methods such as hoeing and hand weeding. Water weed problems in the ponds and cascades are resolved by hand removal and by improving water circulation.

The use of pesticides in the Gardens will be minimised as much as possible in the interests of nature conservation and ecology. An exception to this is the annual spraying of the [oak processionary moth](#).

The Council have an integrated Pest Management Policy which can be found online at:
https://www.richmond.gov.uk/media/25346/integrated_pest_management_policy.pdf

7.6 **Community Involvement**

Engagement with the local community is carried out by working together with the long-established York House Society. There are regular meeting with members of this group to discuss their concerns and to consult with them on maintenance issues and improvement projects. The views of this group are given serious consideration in the planning of maintenance and improvements.

7.6.1 **Parks Events**

The Council's policy in relation to York House Gardens is to encourage the hire of parts of the Gardens to appropriate organisations or groups. The layout and location of the Gardens obviously dictates the kind of events that would be suitable.

Weddings and receptions are held throughout the year in York House and the Gardens provide an attractive backdrop for these occasions. The main event in the Gardens is held annually in the Fountain Garden area by the Richmond

Shakespeare Society who put on performances over a two-week period during the summer. A different play is performed each year.

An evaluation process is held during / after each event.

Local ward councillors are consulted before permission is granted for any new event. An evaluation process is held after each event.

Events are held in accordance with the Parks and Open Spaces Events Policy which can be found at www.richmond.gov.uk.

7.7 Marketing

Promotion and marketing of York House Gardens is carried out using a range of measures, including the Council’s website, publicity literature and the noticeboard, to ensure that local people and visitors to the borough are aware of the facility.

7.7.1 Entrance Signage

A corporate style of signage for Richmond’s parks and open spaces was launched in 2007. York House Gardens had these attractive and informative signs installed at the end of 2007.

7.7.2 Internet

York House Gardens features on the council’s website and can be accessed from the Parks and Open Spaces link www.richmond.gov.uk

Information on the York House Society can be found at: www.yorkhousesociety.org.uk

Information on York House and the Gardens can also be viewed on www.twickenham-museum.org.uk

7.7.3 General Promotion

In order to create community awareness for all of its facilities, the Parks Service regularly and systematically produces articles and press releases about activities and facility development.

8. Achievements and Action Plan

8.1 Achievements

Changes and improvements made to York House Gardens during 2022-23 are listed below:

- Continued close working with the York Society
- Replacement of tree stock where required.
- Continued upgrade of seating as part of the memorial bench programme
- Ongoing maintenance of the ‘Naked Lady’ statues and fountain

- Replanting of the herbaceous borders at the bottom on the sunken lawn

8.2 Action Plan

The following action plan is divided into three sections:

Item of work and location	Year		Timing	Resources
	2024	2025		
Maintain regular meetings with Friends group	Y	Y	Ongoing	Parks Team, Continental Landscapes & York House Society
Fountain maintenance – cleaning and weeding	Y	Y	Ongoing	Facilities Management
Manage and maintain tree stock in accordance with Council policy	Y	Y	Ongoing	Parks Team & Continental Landscapes
Upgrade of signage at the ‘Leaders Grove’	Y		Spring 2024	Parks Tree Team
Repairs to the Japanese Pond with replanting to follow	Y		Autumn 2024	Parks Team & Facilities Management
Introduction of loggeries and insect hotels	Y		Autumn 2024	Parks Team & Continental Landscapes & KPS

8.2.1 Development and renewal

York House Gardens is a site of great heritage value. The major challenge is to maintain high standards of maintenance and to plan for effective repair and renewal of the major elements of a park’s hard landscaping or infrastructure e.g. path system.

8.2.2 Community Engagement

The Parks team intends to continue to work with the York House Society. We are committed to being receptive to concerns and suggestions voiced individually or through community groups.

8.3 Operational Commitments

This is presented in tabular form and includes the most important elements of the day to day maintenance of the Gardens, grass cutting, trees and shrubs, litter collection and maintenance of parks furniture. Monitoring and inspection duties are included. Biodiversity management and initiatives are also included in this section.

Element	Action	Frequency
Grass Maintenance	Kept to a height of between 15mm & 50mm	Cut approximately every 10 days during the growing season
Tree maintenance	Inspection Replacing and expanding variety and stock	4 yearly As required
Shrub Maintenance	Kept weed free Mulching Pruning	As required As required As required, dependent on species
Annual bedding	Annual bedding replaced twice a year Beds weeded and watered as necessary	Twice annually Ongoing
Hedge cutting	Hedges cut twice a year outside bird nesting season	Twice annually
Woodland areas	Paths are kept clear by hand weeding and topping up with woodchip	Ongoing
Cascade statues	Water features are maintained by the Facilities Management Team.	As required
Litter collection	Litter picking Emptying of bins	Daily Daily
Graffiti	Removal of obscene/offensive Removal of other	Within 24 hours Within 5 working days
Parks furniture	Clean and paint	As required

	Repair/replace	As required
Monitoring of contract	Monitoring	Quarterly inspection with contractors
Infrastructure inspection	Inspection	Annual
Biodiversity opportunities and actions	Woodland Management Retain standing deadwood where possible Introduction of loggeries	Ongoing We will work to the guidelines as set out in our Nature Conservation Policy Statement.

8.4 Conclusion

This Management Plan is not ‘set in stone’. It provides a framework and guidelines that enable the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames to manage the site to a high standard in a sustainable way. The Council is open to the changing needs of local communities and will continue to work closely with the York House Society. The Plan will run from January 2024 to December 2025. An interim progress update will be undertaken in January 2025.