

St Ann's Wells Gardens in Hove practicing social distancing

A new guide to help park managers and local authorities in England reopen urban and country parks, gardens and wider green spaces is launched today.

The Managing public parks during COVID-19 guide brings together the latest advice available to help managers of green spaces safely reopen them to the public as lockdown eases.

The guide is produced with key input from:

- The National Lottery Heritage Fund
- Local Government Association
- the National Trust
- the Association for Public Service Excellence
- the Midlands Parks Forum
- parks practitioners

Drew Bennellick, Head of Land and Nature Policy at The National Lottery Heritage Fund, said: "Many gardens are reopening this week, and many parks have stayed partially open as vital places to take exercise and get fresh air close to home during lockdown.

> "As the day-to-day situation is changing so rapidly, it can be hard to keep up with official guidance and best practice on reopening safely. This guide brings it all together."
>
> *Drew Bennellick, Head of Land and Nature Policy at The National Lottery Heritage Fund*

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Getting the latest guidance

Managers of these spaces have to consider a wide range of challenges, including reopening facilities such as children's play areas, multi-use games areas, public toilets, cafes and tennis courts and car parks.

The new guide will include the latest guidance on managing site infrastructure, social distancing and visitor numbers. It will help park managers ensure that their teams, volunteers and visitors are safe and that government standards and customer expectations are met.

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>
> *Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson, Chair of the Local Government Association Culture, Tourism and Sport Board*

Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson, Chair of the Local Government Association Culture, Tourism and Sport Board, said: "Councils know that parks continue to be a lifeline for residents needing to get some exercise or fresh air during lockdown and are great for physical and mental wellbeing.



A bench at Brighton Marina closed during the pandemic

"Local parks teams are working hard to maintain and keep green spaces open for their communities throughout the year and have also been taking on additional responsibilities during this period. This guidance will assist them as they make decisions about how to help their communities enjoy their parks safely."

Sharing knowledge

Although the situation in England is different from Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, it is hoped that the experiences of English local authority parks managers, where lockdown has been released first, will help their colleagues in the future.

The guide can be found on the CFP website.



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How green spaces can improve our wellbeing