



**FRIENDS FORUM AGM  
IDVERDE SUMMARY REPORT**

## **1. 2020 Summary**

2020 was a year dominated by Covid 19 and its impact upon not only the operation but the very nature and usage of the green spaces maintained within the contract.

The year was epitomised by the necessity to ensure the continuity, adaptability and flexibility of the service but most importantly whilst ensuring the safe guarding and welfare of staff and members of the public.

To this end, business continuity plans, recovery plans, collaborative protocols, the issue of PPE, new H&S directives and the maintenance of robust cleansing and distancing regimes quickly became key priorities. Local teams worked closely with client officers to ensure actions on the ground were taken swiftly and effectively to facilitate the implementation of all central government issued restrictions and guidelines within green spaces. Much of this work centred on closing of facilities, temporary fencing and signage.

Another constant challenge was reduced headcount due to self-isolation and enforced shielding. The local management team ensured resources were directed to efficiently address prioritised tasks as agreed with council officers. Sadly, we experienced a slight increase in mortality rates adding some strain to the death management service. The whole of the idverde grounds maintenance workforce were trained to support the cemeteries team during the periods of increased activity. A business continuity plan was created which dictated the level of resources deployed within the cemeteries operation as and when needed.

Sporting activity, environmental education and volunteering were all impacted by Covid 19 restrictions.

Due to an immense increased footfall and poor user discipline litter and bin emptying became a key issue especially during the summer months. Additional resource was deployed and the hours of deployment each day extended to combat and control both increased litter volumes and the use of park bins.

Engagement with the third party partners such as the RSPB continued to be a key focus in 2020 with significant advances being made. After the conclusion of an existing Higher Level Stewardship Agreement a successful application was made for Countryside Stewardship for the next 5-10 years on SSSI sites & Scadbury Park. In spite of the pandemic an increase in the number of urban parks where biodiversity guidance, supported by RSPB, was delivered, including, but not exclusive to Winsford Gardens, Churchfield

Recreation Ground, Alexandra & Blake Recreation Ground. The refurbishment of ponds at Scadbury Park & High Elms Country Park was able to take place over winter 2020/21 and the installation of new ponds in Elmstead Woods to support local flood alleviation while providing biodiversity improvements has recently been completed.

The Brilliant Butterflies Project, in collaboration with London Wildlife Trust and Butterfly Conservation was initiated by idverde after previous collaboration between all three parties. The installation of chalk scrapes, banks, planting and a change in mowing regime at Coney Hall Recreation Ground, Green Street Green, Biggin Hill Recreation Ground and Leaves Green Common will contribute to a regional network of butterfly corridors.

In 2020 idverde supervised 5672 hours of volunteer activity in Bromley's Parks.

2020 was a challenging year for environmental education. However we provided support to Bromley's young people while in lockdown through free educational resources available via [www.Bromleyparks.co.uk](http://www.Bromleyparks.co.uk). A new suite of online delivery was successfully piloted which has led to an increase in online delivery of educational provision to all age groups, including adult specialist courses. In 2020, 2131 people participated idverde's environmental education provision, in spite of being closed for much of the year.

Another critical focus in 2020 was operational sustainability. To this end idverde continued to actively manage the workforce management system and constantly scrutinised routes thus optimising route planning and lowering emissions by reducing idling time and fuel usage. 2020 also saw idverde launch its first Sustainability Strategy setting out how it seeks to continually improve its sustainability performance.

Health & safety were a paramount focus in 2020 with continued site, plant and vehicle inspections and further delivery of Tool Box Talks. The implementation of rigorous cleansing, washing and distancing protocols became critical with a strict adherence to government policy being maintained in both our fleet and operational depots.

The net effect of all of these actions was the provision of a flexible, Covid compliant service supported by safeguarded employees during the pandemic.

# ROADMAP TO RECOVERY

## PARKS & OPEN SPACES SERVICE

**2<sup>nd</sup> Dec 2020**

2<sup>nd</sup> Lockdown ends and the service works to open up facilities that were restricted during Lockdown

**6<sup>th</sup> Jan 2021**

3<sup>rd</sup> National Lockdown declared, staff focus on restrictions and running a typical service.



**5<sup>TH</sup> Nov 2020**

2<sup>nd</sup> National Lockdown called. The Service managed the closure of facilities, ensuring the public use of Parks was within required standards



**21 Dec 2020**

London goes into new 'Tier 4' Restrictions, the service closes outdoor gyms, and other outdoor facilities



**8<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

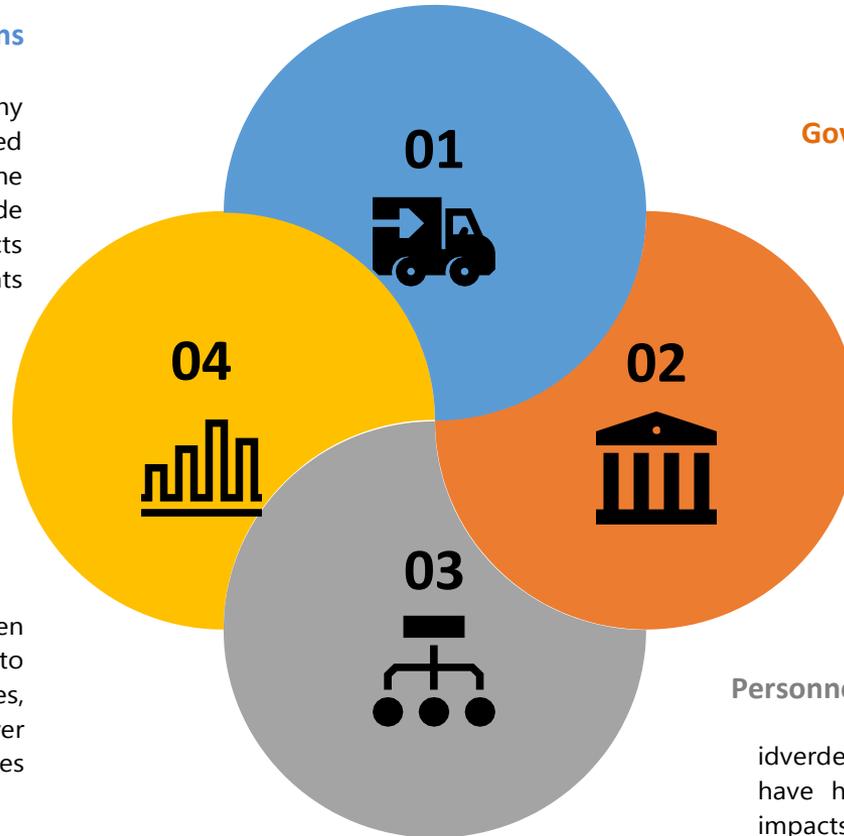
Roadmap out of Lockdown, the Government set-out a four-step programme, moving back into a normal life. Parks & Open Spaces opened up facilities from the 29<sup>th</sup> March and have cautiously developed a series of outdoor activities

# A Challenging Year

Business Continuity to Business Recovery

## Standard Operational Modifications

Due to COVID restrictions, many operational procedures have required modifications. This reduces the efficiency of deployed teams. idverde have worked to minimise the impacts that Social Distancing requirements have on the mobile teams.



## Government Guidance & Restrictions

As outlined, the various stages of lockdown and recovery have added significant additional work in managing closed facilities and signage over the past several months.

## Impacts to Overall Performance

The importance of well operated open spaces has never been so important to the well-being of our communities, idverde has been able to deliver consistent and full range of services since 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020.

## Personnel Impacts

idverde, as with all local businesses, have had to contend with negative impacts that COVID has had on staff welfare and availability, both in terms of direct sickness and shielding requirements

2020 Highlights	Year ahead Highlights
<p>Due to Covid 19 there was a heavy focus on the review of idverde's operational planning. Flexibility was needed to accommodate the fluidity in central government guidelines, predicted mortality rates for cemeteries services and running a Covid safe service protecting employees and members of the public.</p>	<p>Conclude the analysis of the Open Space Strategy consultation results and design a roadmap for the redrafting of the strategy.</p>
<p>Business Continuity Plans were triggered and further developed throughout the pandemic. An Early Recovery Plan was developed assisting a smooth transition to "business as usual".</p>	<p>idverde is supporting Chislehurst Conservators with a Countryside Stewardship application.</p>
<p>Facilities were closed as per central government guidelines and actively monitored throughout.</p>	<p>New process development to ensure safe return to supervised volunteering and further training to upskill volunteers &amp; Friends.</p>
<p>Volunteering stopped in line with government guidelines and when safe to do so, self-led activities were re-introduced.</p>	<p>Launch of a 5 year programme aimed at supporting Bromley allotments to improve biodiversity practice on site. The idverde "Biodiverse Allotments" programme includes training, a "Biodiversity Champion" scheme and citizen science projects</p>
<p>idverde and other service partners had to modify services to accommodate the significant increase in litter, fly-tipping and anti-social behaviour brought on by the increase in footfall to our parks.</p>	<p>Further develop naturalised grassland areas across the borough.</p>
<p>The draft Parks and Open Space Strategy went to consultation with noteworthy returns for consideration in the next edition of the strategy.</p>	<p>A new biodiversity Action Plan for Bromley Parks has been drafted and it is anticipated that it will launch in 2021.</p>
<p>Brilliant Butterflies Project led to installation of new habitat on 4 sites.</p>	<p>Additional Fundraiser successfully recruited to support heavy programme of projects.</p>
<p>Successful award of Countryside Stewardship for SSSI sites.</p>	<p>Deliver the new cycle track and Club at Hoblingwell Recreation Ground in partnership with Access Sport.</p>
<p>Successful implementation of webinar delivery to our environmental education programme.</p>	<p>Successfully secure funding from Historic England to enable delivery of urgent repair works to the moated manor at Scadbury Park, in partnership with ODAS.</p>

<p>The Fundraising Team continued business as usual to support existing and new demand for project approval and delivery. The Team have had to modify some funding applications as funders changed/closed their programmes during the pandemic, however, luckily for several of our larger projects this has not had an impact as funding was already secured/applications were already in progress. The Team are continuing to research new opportunities as funders 'open up' some of their programs again, some with an updated focus, and matching projects to the best available sources.</p>	<p>Tender for a Conservation Architect to inform works to the bandstand at Croydon Road Recreation Ground.</p>
<p>In partnership with the Friends of Kings Meadows, a 70k extended and updated playground was launched for older children with accessible play features, in part funded by the Big Lottery's Reaching Communities programme.</p>	<p>Further Friends Groups development expected at Palace Square Open Spaces and Churchfields Recreation Ground.</p>
<p>The cricket pitch at Farnborough Recreation Ground was improved through a £74k project funded by Locksbottom Cricket Club and Sport England.</p>	<p>Finalise the development of gardening projects for local SEN students.</p>
<p>One new Friends Group was fully created during 2020 and there was a widespread increase in interest in volunteering across the borough.</p>	<p>Working with Delegated Sports Managers on pitches and facilities improving initiatives to enhance the grass roots sports offering across the borough.</p>
<p>Although group volunteering was not possible many individuals continued enhancing their parks by volunteering individually.</p>	
<p>New orchard was successfully planted at Coney Hall Recreation Ground, this was achieved working in partnership with the Friends Group and the council's Tree Team.</p>	
<p>Four new Delegated Sports Manager were appointed at Queensmead Recreation and Biggin Hill Recreation Ground ensuring football is widely accessible across the borough.</p>	
<p>Operational restructure of the grounds maintenance team was completed. The restructure has increased operational efficiency, including improved pay awards.</p>	