



NEWS RELEASE

For immediate use

Scotland's parks celebrate soaring success

Quality Green Flag Award parks are good for people and place

Environmental charity, Keep Scotland Beautiful, has announced that a record breaking 73 parks from across Scotland have been presented with a Green Flag Award this year in recognition of their high standards and provision of quality outdoor space - an increase of three over last year.

The Green Flag Award, administered in Scotland by Keep Scotland Beautiful is a benchmark for green space. The award recognises that well maintained parks build healthy and stable communities alongside the health benefits that quality outdoor space provides, including enabling and encouraging exercise, improving mental well being, and encouraging critical play for child development.

Scotland's winning parks are run by local authorities, universities and community groups. Amongst the 2017 award winners, first time awards were received by Johnston Gardens in Aberdeen, Silver Sands & Hawkraig Point in Fife, Haugh Park in Fife and Dundee Law. A full list of award winners can be found [here](#).

Derek Robertson, Chief Executive of Keep Scotland Beautiful, commented:

"I would like to congratulate all 73 parks from across Scotland for achieving this prestigious benchmark. It is pleasing to see the number of Green Flag Awards in Scotland increasing year on year.

"Good quality green open spaces are vital to the health and wellbeing of local communities, families and individuals. Parks and open spaces are a fantastic asset - they are free to use and provide opportunities to exercise and socialise.

“With more Scottish parks flying the Green Flag Award than ever before, this record breaking number is a testament to the determination of park managers, local authorities and volunteers - whose hard work in turn brings about a raft of wider impacts on the community as a whole.”

Matt Lowther, Head of Place and Equity at NHS Health Scotland, said:

“It is important that the places and spaces in which we live, work and play are designed to promote good health and reduce health inequalities. Having access to good quality greenspace is an essential part of this.

“It means people are more likely to be physically active and socially connected. In many cases, the health-promoting effect is even greater for those on lower incomes. Good quality parks can help to reduce health inequalities and so if we want a fairer, healthier Scotland, we need good quality parks.

“Evidence shows that if people think a park is well maintained and easy to reach, they will use it. A good park is all of these things and the Green Flag Award recognises that. That is why, as the national health board responsible for improving health and reducing health inequalities, we are delighted that more parks than ever before in Scotland are achieving Green Flag status. We look forward to working with Keep Scotland Beautiful and others to help more and more parks in Scotland win the award too”.

Julie Procter, Chief Executive, greenspace scotland said: “With parks and park budgets under pressure, it’s impressive to see more Scottish parks achieving the Green Flag Award. This is tangible evidence of the hard work and commitment of park managers, Friends and community groups.

“Quality parks and greenspaces make a big difference to our quality of life. They really are our natural health service, our children’s outdoor classrooms and our town’s green lungs. So, get out and enjoy a Green Flag Award Park near you.”

All parks are assessed by volunteer judges with a background in parks management, conservation or ecology. Applicants are judged against demanding criteria which include assessing whether the park or green space is welcoming and well-maintained.

To be considered for the awards, the park managing authority must apply. Further information on how to see your local park involved in the Green Flag Awards can be found at: www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/parks

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Notes to Editors

1. **Keep Scotland Beautiful** is the charity that campaigns, acts and educates on a range of local, national and global environmental issues to change behaviour and improve the quality of people's lives and the places they care for. We are committed to making Scotland clean, green and more sustainable. Further details at www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org
2. Keep Scotland Beautiful supports the ambitions of the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#).
3. The **Green Flag Award** is the benchmark of a quality park or green space and is applicable for a variety of managed green spaces including town parks and play spaces, country parks and cemeteries.
4. Keep Scotland Beautiful delivers the Green Flag Award scheme in Scotland, and has done since 2013. Working as part of a UK wide partnership, with Keep Britain Tidy, Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful and Keep Wales Tidy.
5. The full list of **2017 Green Flag Award winners** can be found [here](#).
6. **Media enquiries** to Kirsty Leiper 07908 781 331/kirsty@messagematters.co.uk