

Applicant Guidance 2020-2021

About Keep Scotland Beautiful

We are the charity that campaigns, acts and educates on a range of local, national and global issues to change behaviour and improve the quality of people's lives and the places they care for.

We are leading the way on improving Scotland's environment, tackling a wide range of environmental issues, from reducing the amount of litter on our streets to cutting the carbon emissions that threaten our planet.

Having been part of the environmental landscape for over 50 years, we draw together government, local authorities, businesses, community groups and individuals in this common cause. We are present in every village, town, and city in Scotland, and our activities are estimated to make a difference to 1 in 5 people living in Scotland.

Through our work we aim to help people to change the way they think about the environment and encourage them to take action to improve and protect it. Our goal is to make Scotland a cleaner, greener and more sustainable place to live, work and visit.

In order to achieve the change we need, the whole country needs to work together. As a key partner for individuals and communities, local and central government, third sector organisations and private sector businesses, we are at the heart of that effort.

Our vision: A clean, green sustainable Scotland where people are engaged positively and empowered to take action on local, national and global sustainability issues in order to achieve positive change in behaviour and improve quality of life.

Our mission: Keep Scotland Beautiful is the charity that campaigns, educates and acts on a range of local, national and global sustainability issues. We work collaboratively to achieve positive change; improving people's quality of life and environment.

We provide environmental campaigns, services and practical initiatives that help Scotland with its environmental ambitions and problems. Our unique spectrum of activities focuses on four main areas: Sustainable Development Education, Local Environmental Quality, Sustainability and Climate Change, and Environmental Services.

We campaign, act and educate towards environmental improvements in all of Scotland's 32 local authority areas. From awards and accreditations to local environmental quality monitoring; from campaigning to training and audits; from clean-ups to celebrating environmental achievement; and from environmental education in schools to supporting public sector action on climate change.

Through these activities we work to support and encourage individuals, communities, organisations and businesses across Scotland, enabling and inspiring them to improve their environment and the quality of all our lives.

Keep Scotland Beautiful and Green Flag Award

In Scotland, Keep Scotland Beautiful manage the Green Flag Award, working in partnership with Keep Britain Tidy, Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful and Keep Wales Tidy to provide a UK benchmark standard for parks and green spaces.

The Green Flag Award recognises our best parks and green spaces across Scotland. It is awarded to parks and green spaces who can demonstrate excellent management and environmental standards. Awards are given and renewed on an annual basis.

The Green Flag Award aims

- To ensure that everybody has access to quality green and other open spaces, irrespective of where they live.
- To ensure that these spaces are appropriately managed and meet the needs of the communities that they serve.
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- To establish standards of good management, and to promote and share best practice amongst the green space sector.
- To recognise and reward the hard work of managers, staff and volunteers.

The scheme was launched in 1996 with the first flags raised in 1997, and today the scheme continues to provide the benchmark against which our parks and green spaces are measured with more than 1800 winners across the UK. Keep Scotland Beautiful have managed the Green Flag Award in Scotland since 2013, growing the number of applicants by almost 40% by 2019.

The Award scheme is now internationally renowned with parks as far reaching as Finland, United Arab Emirates and now United States of America also having achieved Green Flag status.

Keep Scotland Beautiful offer three levels of Green Flag Award:

- the Green Flag Award for parks and green spaces managed by local authorities/duty bodies;
- the Green Flag Community Award for quality green spaces managed by voluntary and community groups; and
- The Green Heritage Site Accreditation for parks and green spaces with Green Flag Award status who are also promoting local or national heritage at their site.

Important Information

Entrant Fees

Application fees are calculated to cover the cost of administering the Green Flag Award Scheme. As an entrant you will receive:

- Promotional material - a flag and certificate;
- A visit from a trained Judge;
- Annual park managers network meeting;
- Annual park report;

- Officer support;
- Web and press promotion; and
- Access to reports and campaigns where relevant.

The cost of entry is based on the size of a site. The fee must be paid each year you wish to enter for the Award. **Please note that the fees may be subject to change.**

Area (Hectares)	Fee
0-19.99	£400 (plus VAT)
20+	£475 (plus VAT)

Calendar of Key Dates 2020-21

Month	Activity
January	Application deadline for current award holders
February	Application deadline for new applications
March	Allocation of judges to applicants
April-May	Judging begins
June	Judges submit final scores and reports.
July	Love Parks Week Announcement of winning sites
August	Applicants receive reports
September	Vote for the People's Choice Award opens
October	People's Choice Winner announced. Satisfaction Survey issued to applicants
November	Park Managers Forum hosted by Keep Scotland Beautiful.
December	Applications for 2021-22 open

Clean Up Scotland

The Green Flag Award is a celebration of Scotland's parks and green spaces. Many park managers and groups already register Clean Up events with Keep Scotland Beautiful and have organised spring clean events for years.

We would like all Green Flag Award entrants to register at least one clean up event a year with Keep Scotland Beautiful's Clean Up Scotland campaign – organised by the managing authority or by a local volunteer group. Clean Up events can be organised at any time during the year and Keep Scotland Beautiful will provide you with a free clean up kit and support materials. To register, please visit www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/register

Organising a Clean Up event in your park or green space is a great way to promote the hard work and commitment it takes to keep the space looking great and can help give the local community a sense of ownership. It may also lead to new volunteers!

There are lots of different ways to get involved in the campaign and we are expanding our resources to include suggestions on how to prevent littering and to add extra value to your Clean Ups. You could use the Clean Up as a way of inspiring the local community to think about other improvements they might like to see. For example, once an area is cleared of litter they might find that it is a suitable place for planting wildflowers, or realise that they could repaint some of the fences or furniture. Additionally, having regular visible Clean Ups can prevent litter from being dropped in the first place as cleaner sites attract less litter. Find out more at www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/cleanupscotland.

Applicant Process

Process

If you manage a green space and would like to see it recognised with a Green Flag Award, you need to:

- Check that the park meets the award criteria and that a management plan is in place, implemented and regularly reviewed*;
- Contact [Keep Scotland Beautiful](http://www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org) and we will discuss the process with you;
- Applications are made online at greenflagaward.org Contact Keep Scotland Beautiful to arrange login details;
- Once you have a login you will need to update the contact details for the application and further correspondence (typically the park manager), details of the site and where it is located and add three photographs for use on the website;
- There are then seven steps of the application process to complete on the 'Award Application' tab, which follows through each stage and allows you to attach relevant evidence such as management plans;
- Complete this form before the deadline and pay the application fee to Keep Scotland Beautiful.

Once the application deadline has passed, Keep Scotland Beautiful will arrange for our trained volunteer judges to assess each applicant. In the first year of entry, green spaces will be assessed by two judges at a time suitable to all parties.

Unannounced visits take place in the second year with a single judge visiting at a time suitable to them. These are also known as mystery shops. These visits are carried out to ensure that standards are being maintained between full visits every two years. Parks must reapply every year, however, once registered online most information will remain the same (but management plans should be regularly updated).

The Green Flag Award is presented annually, during Love Parks Week in July (TBC), and is valid year-round.

If a site fails to achieve an award in its first year of entry this does not mean it cannot reapply, however, a full assessment will be carried out again to ensure the recommendations have been carried out and the park has reached the required standard.

**Management plans must be no larger than 10MB, if your file is larger than this and you are unable to compress it using programmes such as Adobe please email us for further guidance.*

Community Applicants

The Green Flag Community Award is the benchmark for parks and green spaces which are managed by volunteers.

All community green spaces can apply, if they're freely accessible to all and unlocked as much as possible (although we understand this may not be every day and may be limited to regular, advertised open days). It is free to apply for the Green Flag Community Award.

Community applicants follow the same application process as Green Flag Award applicants but receive a site assessment only.

Once you register your park (following the process above), the following documents are required to support your application:

- Group Constitution
- Group Insurance
- Lease or agreement details for the land where the site is located
- Map of your site
- Photos of your site

Park Managers' Forum

Applicants to the Green Flag Award are invited to attend an annual forum for site managers (typically held in November). This gives site managers an opportunity to discuss any issues that have arisen through the last round of judging, share best practice, and to hear from a guest speaker.

Preparing for a Full Assessment Visit

Preparing for a full assessment visit can be intimidating, particularly if this is your first time applying for a Green Flag Award. The assessment visit should be an enjoyable experience for everyone involved. Remember, the judges and Keep Scotland Beautiful are here to support you, so please keep in touch with any questions you have.

A wide range of parks and green spaces take part in the Green Flag Award so it can be difficult to demonstrate an itinerary that suits all occasions. Instead, we would recommend that you keep the following points in mind when designing the route that the judges will take during their visit:

Early planning

- Read the Raising the Standard manual carefully to ensure you cover as many points as you can while on your tour.
- Think carefully about what you want to show the judges during the field assessment, to demonstrate the work done throughout the year.
- Identify a meeting point and who will be accompanying the judges on their tour. This must be forwarded to your judges in advance of the judging date.
- Draw up a list of focal points you will visit and potential people you could meet when taking the judges round your site, relative to the size of the site.
- Identify a place where you can sit down with the judges for the question and answer section of the field assessment, and where the judges can have privacy to discuss their scores e.g. a local office, or town hall.

Route development

- Concentrate on showing the judges things that have been a result of your activities, or that have been developed by the local community.
- When the judges make contact, create an itinerary (example included below) and ensure you let the judges know how long the field assessment tour will take.
- If transport is required, make the necessary arrangements well in advance. Make sure you know who will travel with whom and whether more than one vehicle will be needed.
- Be realistic with your timings - judges may ask questions, take photos, there may be traffic jams, all of which could take you over your planned times. Don't try and squeeze too much in.

Practice timing

- Make sure that all arrangements are confirmed.
- Carry out a full rehearsal if possible.
- Ensure that your supporting members of the community realise that their time may be cut short and not to be offended if this happens.

Assessment preparation

- It is recommended that you start the tour with a short introduction to the background of the green space.
- It is vital that you have the judges' mobile numbers and they have yours in case of any issues in the run up to or on the day.

Meet people on route

- Judges will expect to be accompanied throughout the tour by a maximum of four people, each of whom should be competent to answer questions.
- Remember you can alternate people in order to include particular experts at certain points.
- Be sure to highlight the involvement of the community at all times. Don't just show the judges your wildflower meadow – invite some of the people who helped to sow or plant it.
- Judges are very happy to meet with members of the community, particularly young people, who have been involved in working on the projects they see. However, please make sure that everyone knows that the time is strictly limited and they should not delay the judges beyond their allocated time.

On the day

- Organise for a few people to check there is no litter on site before the judges arrive.
- Remember to offer your judges a comfort break before the assessment begins – they may have been travelling for several hours or come straight from judging another entry.
- Make it absolutely clear where the boundary of the site is, so that the judges are aware of exactly what they are assessing.
- Please remember that the judges who visit your site are volunteers and are giving their time and expertise to support you and your community. The visit should be an enjoyable experience for all involved.
- Please make allowance for the weather on the day of the judges' visit.
- Please note that some entrants like to provide refreshments for the judges, particularly if they will be spending a few hours, visiting the site and then discussing scores.

Judging

To protect the integrity of the Green Flag Award it is important that all entrants are aware that the judges will take a **negative view if any of the following occur**, and marks will be adjusted accordingly:

- There is evidence that material has been brought in solely for the judging day and is not provided for the whole season; or
- The judges are offered gifts or other inducements aimed at affecting the judging process.

Example Itinerary

Name of site	Smith Park
Name of Managing organisation	Smith Council
Names of Judges	John Smith and Jane Smyth

Activity	Time
Judges arrive at site (please ensure any documents requested are available).	09:30
Management Plan Q&A	10:00
Site visit	10:30
Meeting community representatives	11:30
Lunch	12:30
Judges deliberate	13:00
Final Q&A session (with informal feedback where appropriate)	14:30
Judges depart	15:00

Please note that this itinerary form is an example only and times will vary depending on the size of the site. Discussion between the site manager and judges will give an indication of estimate times.

Promoting your Application

Keep Scotland Beautiful has produced a sample media release and a photo call announcement template which you are welcome to fill in and use to publicise your assessment visit (see below). We also regularly promote Green Flag Award activity on social media. Follow us on [Twitter](#) and like us on [Facebook](#).

Example Media Release / Photocall

<<Insert date>>

Green Flag Award judging begins

<<Insert name of park / green space>> is preparing for its visit from Green Flag Award judges.

The Green Flag Award, administered in Scotland by Keep Scotland Beautiful, the independent environmental charity, is the benchmark for a quality green space. The award strives to ensure that everyone has access to a safe, clean and pleasant space where they can relax, meet, play or exercise.

A team of highly experienced judges will be travelling the length and breadth of the country, this summer, to discover which sites have been successful in achieving the prestigious award.

Entrants are assessed on eight criteria, including whether the park is welcoming, healthy, safe, clean and well-maintained. Successful parks also have to be sustainable, manage conservation and heritage, have community involvement, market themselves and have good management.

Winning parks will be announced at the end of July, during Love Parks Week, the national celebration of the UK's green spaces.

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

“Scotland has a wealth of parks and green spaces, vital to the physical and emotional well-being of our local communities. The Green Flag Award helps to provide a framework for partnerships between communities, local authorities, land managers and businesses to develop and to manage our parks and open spaces in a more sustainable way.

“All over Scotland people are caring for their towns, cities and green spaces. Whether it's through Green Flag or our other programmes such as Clean Up Scotland and Beautiful Scotland, local people are raising the bar and making their communities great places to live in.”

<<Insert local quotes>>

Ends

Note to the Editors

1. Keep Scotland Beautiful is Scotland's leading force acting, campaigning and training others to clean up local

environments and to change the behaviour which blights our urban and rural landscape; it is part of its work to help make Scotland clean and green, today and tomorrow. Further details at www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org

2. The Green Flag Awards are run by Keep Britain Tidy, under licence from the Department for Communities and Local Government, in partnership with Keep Scotland Beautiful, Keep Wales Tidy and Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens and the National Housing Federation. www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/parks

3. <<Insert name of site and background information e.g. who is the managing authority, how long it has been in existence, major achievements etc. >>

4. Media enquiries to <<insert contact details for the managing authority of the site>>

Media Photo-call

<<Insert date>>

<< Insert Title >>

Insert intro text (Identify the unique selling points of your picture opportunity / story. Is there a human interest angle, a hooking fact or figure that people can relate to or a celebrity involved?)

Date: *(insert day and date)*

Time: *(insert time – use 24hour clock to reduce confusion)*

Where: *(clearly highlight a meeting place, and where the photo will be taken, for example, meet at the gate of a park if a photo is to be taken at a location in the park which is difficult to find).*

What: *(explain what the photo will be of, for example, judges about to begin their tour of the site)*

Why: *(stress why the photo highlighting the event/work carried out is important to the entrant and to the community).*

For photo call enquiries on the day please contact <<insert main group contact and mobile number>>

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Celebrating Success

Love Parks Week

Love Parks Week (July TBC), is a celebration of our beautiful parks and green spaces across the UK. This annual campaign, is managed by Keep Britain Tidy and supported, in Scotland, by Keep Scotland Beautiful. The aim of Love Parks Week has always been to raise awareness of the importance of parks and green spaces, showcasing the benefits they bring and highlighting the need for continual investment and engagement.

During Love Parks Week, Keep Scotland Beautiful will announce the winners, in Scotland, of the Green Flag Award. In 2019, the Green Flag Award announcement took place at the newly renovated Saughton Park, City of Edinburgh, celebrating the 71 parks and green spaces which received the prestigious award, in Scotland.

For more information on Love Parks Week, visit loveparks.org

People's Choice Award

The annual People's Choice Award gives the public the power to decide which of the year's Green Flag Award sites should be named in the top ten in the UK. The top scoring parks in Scotland are also announced with Strathaven Park in South Lanarkshire, Rouken Glen in East Renfrewshire and Starbank Park in Edinburgh all featuring in high positions in recent years. The voting takes place every year throughout the month of September, with the winners announced in October.

You can find out more at keepsotlandbeautiful.org/parks

Contact Us

For further information about the Green Flag Award please contact the Communities and Place Team. You can email parks@keepscotlandbeautiful.org or phone 01786 477168.