

4. Potential audiences and activities

4.1 Introduction

This section looks at population data in our catchment area, which will help us to identify where there are specific gaps in our audiences. It also looks at the propensity for people to enjoy heritage and conversely the perceived and actual barriers that prevent people from using the parks. We also provide a summary of how we have consulted with users and non-users to help understand the activities that people would like to see in the future. We finish the section with a description of the activities and events that have been carried out during the development phase of the project to help inform our future activity programme.

3 mile catchment area



4.2 Market analysis of catchment areas

We know from our 2013 visitor survey that parks visitors travel from the immediate vicinity of the parks, as well as East Kent (Dover, Canterbury, Thanet and Shepway districts) and beyond. We have carried out market analyses of both the immediate 3-mile catchment area and the wider East Kent catchment areas to better understand and assess potential audiences (the number and proportion of visitors from beyond East Kent is sufficiently limited to justify not including them in our analysis at this stage). The maps below show the 3-mile and East Kent catchment (covering Dover, Thanet, Canterbury and Shepway districts).

Data sources used for this analysis have included Audience Agency Area Profile Reports (3 mile radius and East Kent), ONS Neighbourhood Statistics 2013, ONS Census 2011, State of the District report covering Place, People and Work (2014-2015), English Indices of Deprivation (2015), Kearsney Parks Visitor Survey (August – October 2013), Kearsney Parks Observational Surveys (April, May, August, November 2015), and data from development phase events and consultations (2014-2015).

East Kent catchment area



Demographics

Over 40% of Dover District residents live within 3 miles of the parks and over half a million people live within the parks' East Kent catchment area, showing the significant number of potential audiences. The proportion of young children in the immediate catchment and people over 65 in the district is higher than average. The proportion of residents in the catchment areas from Black and Minority Ethnic communities is low at between 3% and 5%. The proportion of disabled people is comparable to the national average.

Data	3 mile catchment	Dover district	East Kent	England
Population	46,000	112,200	513,148	
Age				
0-15	21%	18%	19%	19%
16-24	11%	10%	11%	12%
25-64	52%	51%	51%	52%
65+	16%	22%	18%	17%
Ethnicity				
White	95%	97%	95%	85%
Asian/Asian British	3%	2%	3%	8%
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups	1%	1%	1%	2%
Black/African/Caribbean Black British	1%	0.4%	1%	4%
Other	0%	0.3%	0%	1%
Disability and long term health issues				
Day to day activities limited a lot	9%	10%	10%	8%
Day to day activities limited a little	11%	11%	11%	9%
Education				
Primary schools	17	41	142	
Secondary schools	6	9	33	
Special schools	1	2	10	
Total	24	52	185	

Employment and Education

DDC's State of the District report examines a wide range of statistics about the district, as well as significant issues facing its residents. When compared to the Kent average:

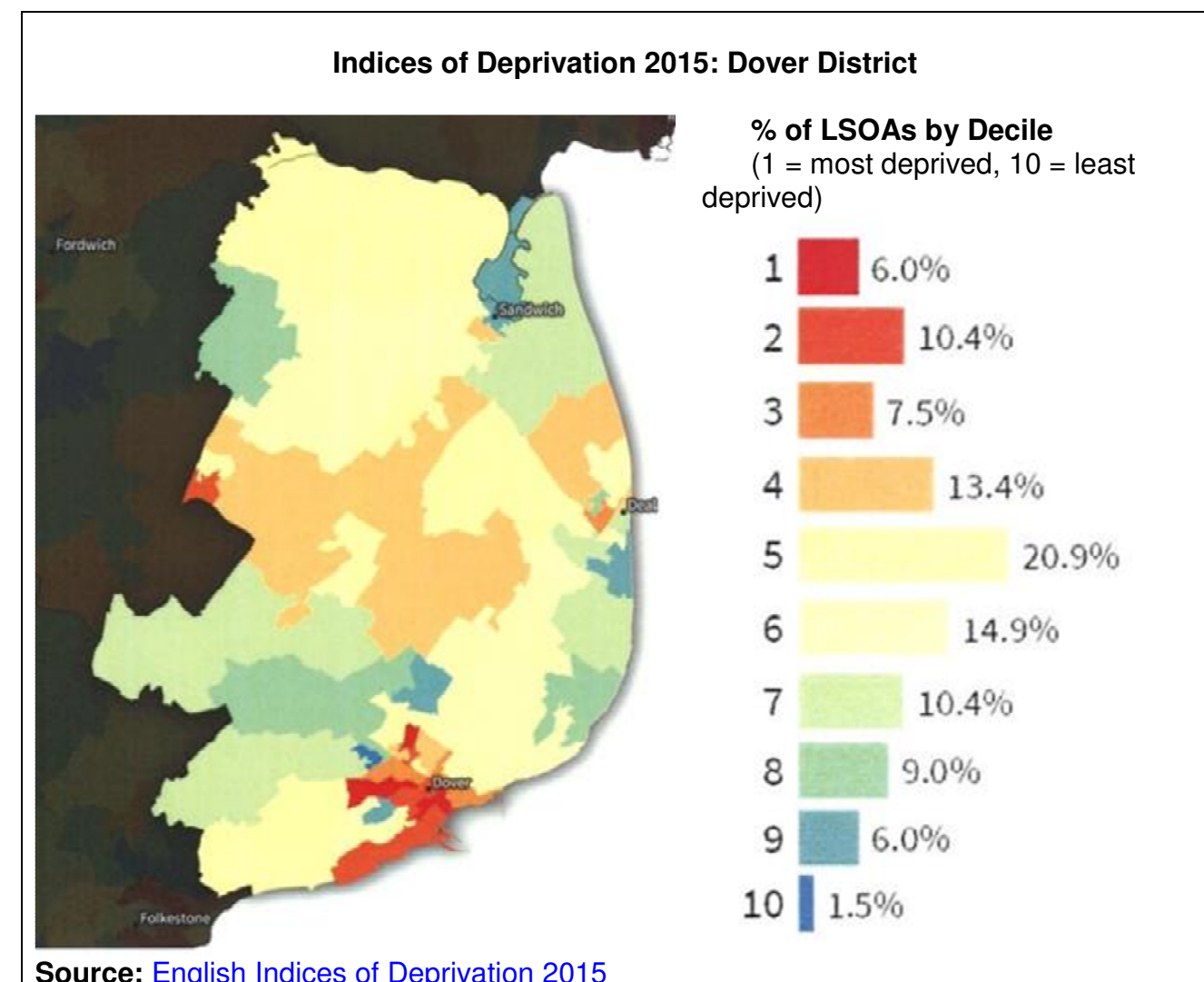
- Youth unemployment (18-24) remains relatively high
- The number of 16-18 years olds classed as NEET is higher and increasing
- The percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more grades A-C at GCSE is relatively low
- Referrals to Young Healthy Minds is the highest in Kent

Of the 204 young people aged 16-18 who are not in education, employment or training and are available to the labour market, 184 are seeking employment, education or training and 6 are working not for reward.

Deprivation

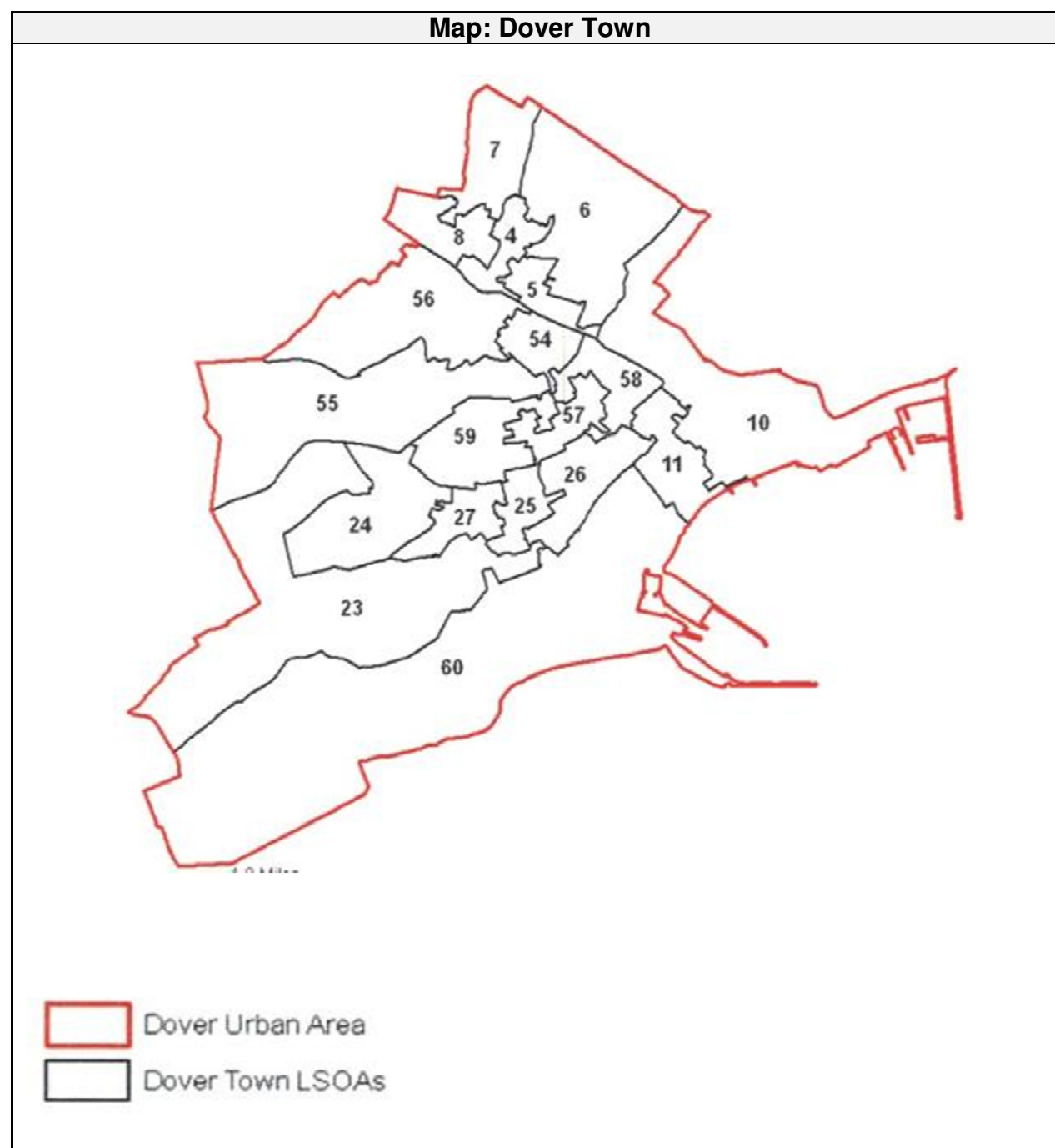
The 2015 English Indices of Deprivation provide a stark insight into the issues facing people and communities close to the parks. Within the 3 mile catchment area there is one lower super output area in the top 5% most deprived in England and a further 3 in the top 10%. Around 6,050 residents live in the areas, including 1,350 children and 1,160 older people.

The most prevalent form of deprivation is Employment Deprivation, with the district ranked 89th out of 326 English local authority districts. This is followed by the Education, Skills and Training domain (94th out of 326).



Helping to address the employment, education, skills and training issues will need to be a key aim of the project. Our outreach work and promotion will need to focus on the four areas particularly affected and shown in the following table and plan (the post codes covering these areas are listed in appendix 2).

LSOA Code	LSOA name	Ward this area falls within	DDC Rank	Dover Town map number
E01024240	Dover 011F	St. Radigunds	1	55
E01033211	Dover 012F	Castle	2	11
E01024215	Dover 013B	Maxton, Elms Vale and Priory	3	26
E01024196	Dover 011D	Buckland	4	7



Source: 2011 Census, Office for National Statistics (ONS).

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Schools

There are 41 Primary Schools in the district with 8,343 pupils enrolled. There are nine Secondary Schools in the district, with 7,658 pupils enrolled. 156 children attend one of the two Special Schools in the district.

Building relationships with schools has proved to be a very positive experience and the level of interest has exceeded our expectations. We have been liaising with the local schools, particularly Temple Ewell Primary, River Primary and St Edmunds Secondary School to determine their current use of the parks and their future requirements. We have been working closely with teachers and school staff to keep them informed of project developments and progress, as well as keeping them involved and engaged. Some schools outside of the catchment area also travel to use the parks, including Folkestone Academy.

Further and Higher Education

East Kent College (EKC) has centres in Dover, Broadstairs, Folkestone and Discovery Parks, Sandwich. They deliver a broad range of programmes, apprenticeships, workplace training and short courses designed to meet educational needs and interests as well as local economic needs. In Dover, tourism, logistics and transportation are a focus, recognising the international significance of the Port of Dover. East Kent College, Dover Campus currently has around 500 students enrolled. We have worked closely with EKC recently to deliver a Skills Fair and will maintain contacts during the project to ensure the training and skills element of our project reach the right audiences.

Hadlow College, one of the country's leading land-based colleges, is developing plans for further and higher education at the Betteshanger Sustainable Education and Business Incubation Centre, although plans are at an early stage of development.

There are around 40,000 higher education students across a number of universities in our wider catchment area. Canterbury Christchurch University have been particularly interested in engaging with the project, both as an opportunity for academic staff and students to make use of the parks. Their cartography, geography and tourism departments are particularly interested in the opportunities that the project and restored and improved parks could offer students and staff.

Skills for the Future

The Council has been working with employers to upgrade training facilities and develop new courses matched to the needs of the local economy. This has led to multi-million pound investments on new training facilities including a £2.9 million investment by East Kent College and a £6.5m Maritime Skills Academy. The Council, in partnership with East Kent College, Hadlow College, Canterbury Christ Church University, and the University of Kent has also recently launched a new website www.skills4dover.co.uk and delivered a skills fair to provide clear pathways into vocational training, apprenticeships, and further and higher education. The aim is to ensure that local people benefit from the wave of inward investments by providing opportunities to gain new skills, or to re-train, so that they can take advantage of the jobs on offer. Our project will generate opportunities for young people to develop skills for the future, including those in heritage, landscape, horticulture and parks management.

Heritage and Tourism

The Dover district is one of the most historic areas of the UK, with 50 scheduled ancient monuments, 2,800 listed buildings, 57 conservation areas and 9 historic parks and gardens. The district features archaeological finds and historic features that are important nationally and internationally.

The tourism industry in the district benefits from a combination of these heritage assets, from the famous White Cliffs, Dover Castle and scenic countryside to historic parks!

The council manages the tourism and visitor marketing element for the district under the established brand of White Cliffs Country. It produces a successful annual tourism guide and website and associated marketing campaign. The tourism website www.whitecliffscountry.org.uk is the main resource for people interested in visiting the district. The website is also the main way to find all event information about the district for visitors and residents alike.

According to recent tourism research, commissioned by Visit Kent, the total economic impact of tourism in the Dover District in 2013 was £248m (an increase of £4m from 2011). Although the number of staying trips fell by 29,000 to 385,000 in 2013, the number of tourism day trips rose by 184,000 to 3.6m. The total number of jobs supported rose by 581 to 5,140. The most popular tourist attractions in the district in 2014/15 were Dover Castle (348,698 visits per year) and the White Cliffs (approximately 260,000 visits).

Summary

Our market analysis has helped us to understand key aspects of the parks' catchment area and populations. Over 40% of Dover District residents live within 3 miles of the parks and there are half a million people in the wider catchment area. There are also specific areas where communities are affected by significant deprivation that our project could help to tackle. The 2015 Indices of Deprivation and State of the District report shows that employment, training and skills are key issues, particularly among young people. There are a number of schools nearby who are enthusiastic about the potential of the parks. We also better understand the significant potential of the parks to contribute to the wider heritage and tourism offer in and around Dover.



4.3 Propensity to visit and enjoy heritage

As well as the data obtained from population demographics and the results from the visitor survey, events and recent consultations, we obtained geo-demographic profiles from the Audience Agency. These profiles classify people into 'types' depending on where they live and they can be used to understand more about the lifestyles and motivations of a group of users. We asked the Audience Agency to provide data on the population both within a 3 mile radius of the parks, covering Dover town and its outskirts, as well as data for East Kent. All data is comparable to the base area which is the South East.

Mosaic typologies provide a useful tool for understanding and categorising populations, whereby households are assigned to a group. A summary of the significant findings and how they impact this activity programme are below.

For the 3-mile catchment area we found that significant groups were:

- Family basics - 15% - budget conscious families
- Transient renters - 14% - likely to use the parks and engage with activities relatively infrequently
- Modest traditions - 12% - likely to be interested in history and heritage and value for money activities
- Vintage value- 8% - elderly people that live very locally, make use of the parks as a free facility but varying levels of independence may make access difficult
- Senior security - 8% - often retired and financially secure

For the East Kent catchment area we found that the most significant groups were:

- Senior security - 14% - often retired and financially secure, grew up appreciating the parks and their heritage
- Aspiring Homemakers - 10% - young families in affordable housing, lifestyle to meet their budget
- Rental Hubs - 10% - young people in their 20s and 30s pursuing studies or their career
- Rural Reality – 9% - village communities that work locally and support the local economy
- Transient renters - 8% - likely to use the parks and engage with activities relatively infrequently

With the knowledge of the types of households we have within our catchment areas, we can design an activity programme that attracts a wider range of audiences. If we charge for activities, the price and value for money will be key considerations for many people in our catchment area. The parks information and any interpretation schemes need to work for infrequent or single trip visitors without much local knowledge. There is likely to be plenty of interest in local history and heritage activities, however current knowledge is minimal. There is a relatively small pool of potential volunteers in the general population and those that are interested in volunteering schemes may already be involved in existing local voluntary opportunities (for example Parish Council, Crabble Corn Mill, Scouts, Kent Greeters, Dour Partnership, White Cliffs Countryside Partnership, National Trust, Kent Wildlife Trust).

Audience spectrum reports provide profiles of the population, particularly adults who live within a defined area and their likelihood to visit museums, heritage sites and other cultural venues. They can be used to categorise and understand a population's engagement with art, heritage and culture as well as preferences in arts, museums and heritage organisations. The population can be split into different categories based on their attendance at, and participation and engagement with the arts, culture and heritage. These categories are broken down into 3 segments; high engagement, medium engagement and lower engagement (with 1 being very high engagement and 10 being very low engagement).

For the 3-mile radius catchment area we found that over 80% of the population falls into five typologies:

- Dormitory Dependables - 17% - interested in heritage, mainstream arts and occasionally attends cultural events as a sociable outing (Engagement Rank 4 – medium)
- Trips and Treats - 21% - interested in heritage, mainstream arts and often sport. Leisure activities often geared around children. Normally able to pay to participate in activities (Engagement Rank 5 – medium)
- Home and Heritage -11% - typically National Trust members, often keen on day time activities including crafts, classical music, amateur dramatics, engage with culture in their local area (Engagement Rank 6 – medium)
- Up Our Street - 17% - occasionally engage with arts, value for money and low risk are key considerations for this group (Engagement Rank 7 – low)
- Facebook Families - 18% - place little value on arts and culture. Leisure activities might include going to the cinema, listening to music and eating out (Engagement Rank 8 – low)

For the East Kent catchment area we found that 68% of the population falls into four typologies:

- Dormitory Dependables - 17% - interested in heritage, mainstream arts and occasionally attends cultural events as a sociable outing (Engagement Rank 4 – medium)
- Trips and Treats - 20% - interested in heritage, mainstream arts and often sport. Leisure activities often geared around children. Normally able to pay to participate in activities (Engagement Rank 5 – medium)
- Home and Heritage -18% - typically National Trust members, often keen on for day time activities including crafts, classical music, amateur dramatics, engage with culture in their local area (Engagement Rank 6 – medium)
- Up Our Street - 13% - occasionally engage with arts, value for money and low risk are key considerations for this group (Engagement Rank 7 – low)

This data tells us that the population within our 3 mile radius of the parks is representative of the population in East Kent, as the same four categories appear as significant in both. There are mixed responses to heritage, arts and culture, with engagement ranging from medium to low on the spectrum (rank score range 4 – 8), although, promisingly, nearly 50% of the catchment area population – or a quarter of a million people across East Kent - are likely to have a reasonable level of engagement with arts, culture and heritage.

The information about the population's propensity for visiting and appreciating heritage also provides an insight into the activities we should offer as part of this project. For instance, any

cultural offer probably needs to be relatively main stream both in its format and content, if it is to attract and sustain visitors. There is likely to be some enthusiasm for heritage days out both locally and across East Kent, however activities for children should be included as this may help to engage a wider audience with the heritage of the parks. Activities should offer value for money but we may be able to make a small charge for some.

The Audience Agency data also suggests that engagement with the arts, museum, heritage and cinema is below average in our catchment area. It is not clear from the data the reason for this, but we suspect that for the Dover town area this may be because there is a relatively limited arts, museum and cinema offer. Although there is a more obvious and significant heritage offer, the cost of accessing it may limit widespread engagement. However, the figures for the population of people within a 3 mile radius of the parks engaging with arts, museums and heritage are representative of East Kent and the South East.

Summary

Overall this information suggests that potential audiences that we are likely to engage with heritage and cultural activities could include:

- Low income families looking for a day out that includes activities for children
- Budget conscious adults looking for a value for money heritage day out

As a result of this information, our project activities need to:

- Be value for money and relatively low cost
- Enable families to spend the day in the parks
- Help people to understand and engage with heritage, probably using fairly traditional formats
- Be culturally mainstream while also improving the local arts and heritage offer
- Offer sociable, popular cultural events



4.4 Consultation and development phase activities

We have put significant effort into involving people in the development phase of our project. We have talked to and worked with various groups of people, including key stakeholders, partners, community groups, local schools and the public. A summary of the findings are outlined below.

Stakeholder workshop

We held a workshop with key local groups and individuals to find out what they thought about some of the key issues facing the parks. Fourteen people attended a workshop including representatives from River Parish Council, the Dover Society, Kearsney Court Management Company, Dover Model Boat Association, River Dour Partnership, as well as local residents, parks users and volunteers. The results of the workshop have helped to inform proposals for parks improvements and management arrangements. A summary of the discussions, ideas and suggestions are below:

How can we manage peak time travel and parking?

Increase parking capacity

Improve and extend existing car parks / buy more land for overflow parking / formalise 'overflow' parking near playground / use land near Scout hut / could other local organisations provide parking (bowls club, nursing home, etc.) / limit café car parks to disabled people, families and access for boat club / need coach drop off/parking space especially for short visits to gardens / don't detract from key views too much

Management

Don't charge / don't add double yellow lines on Alkham Road / don't introduce a controlled parking zone / the parking issue generally manages itself even on busy days / events can be managed separately / see how it goes over time / donation rather than charge for parking / need a parking strategy

Public transport, cycling and walking

Improve access from station / promotion / peak time park and ride service / hop-on-hop-off shuttle around town / subsidized bus tickets and/or rewards for using public transport to travel to the parks / cycle access and parking / pedestrian route to town

How can we make the parks more financially sustainable?

Mixed views – some felt the café, parks and events should be mainly for community benefit, others suggested events like weddings and private use could happen but should be 'out of the way', off peak and income would need to be reinvested in the parks

Cultural events like Dover Music Festival, open air theatre and cinema /would need parks and ride / try it and see if it works / café open in evening / not appropriate for weddings / Russell Gardens as venue for weddings using temporary marquees / River Parish Council may be interested in helping to manage some events

Comments about the café and extension

Catering offer

Existing operator provides a good service, pricing, value, menu choice /could open in the evening and provide more outside space / could be licenced / could provide soup and roll at end of guided tours

Building

Support for continued use of billiard room as café space / needs to welcome dog walkers / could be similar to National Trust café on the White Cliffs / needs to be flexible for schools, scouts, workshops, volunteers / design needs to be in keeping with the landscape, robust, not too grand / open-sided structure could work but may attract vandalism / need for CCTV?

Where should the balance lie between authentic historical restoration and the requirements of today's parks users?

Historical restoration

Focus on Russell Gardens (be brave and purist, with more sensitive play provision) / be more pragmatic about Kearsney Abbey / some apprehension about tree removals although removals at Dover Castle were successful / maintain privacy and security of Kearsney Court residents / gazebo and play provision in Russell Gardens not in keeping but does attract users

Ecological restoration

Chalk grassland is valued but needs to be accessible, understandable and managed

Russell Gardens

Needs toilets and kiosk to attract visitors and cater to likely increased use. Tennis courts – mixed views, some saying they should stay and be better maintained, other questioned whether cost of maintenance was worth benefits to a limited number of users. Need more information about heritage, access, ecology / trails and QR codes

Is there appetite for community involvement in the management of the parks?

DDC should continue to lead, although there is an appetite for community involvement in the project, events and volunteering. It needs a clear plan so people understand roles and responsibilities. Routine maintenance and quality horticulture needs paid professionals. Volunteers likely to help with light gardening and 'added extras' like events, guided tours – there is interest in a regular Kearsney Parks forum or similar

White Cliffs Countryside Partnership (WCCP)

WCCP works to conserve and enhance the special coast and countryside of Dover and Shepway districts, and make it accessible to all. It is a partnership between Dover District Council, Shepway District Council, Kent County Council, Eurotunnel, Natural England and many other local organisations with financial contributions from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

We spoke with the team from White Cliffs Countryside Partnership to gain knowledge and learn about their experiences, particularly around staffing, volunteering, training and activities they deliver. The key points are listed below:

- Running activities takes up the majority of the team and most of their time. Team are currently at full capacity. If the Mills to Mawson project were to work with WCCP, an additional full time member of staff would be required to deliver the activities
- A reliable volunteering system is in place and a varied selection of tasks are delivered to keep them interested
- WCCP would be interested in using new facilities (i.e. the café extension) to deliver some of their existing activities and events
- Have an interpretation plan, audio trails work well
- Try to attract disability groups – these are the least engaged
- School groups work well with WCCP – tasks such as den building, cooking, campfires are popular
- Curriculum focussed activities can be incorporated in the activity plan
- WCCP encourage NEETs to volunteer
- Apprenticeships have been successful in the main part as the students learn new skills, get experience, participate in a skills for work programme (learn about health and safety, risk assessments)



Up on the Downs Landscape Partnership Scheme

The Up on the Downs Landscape Partnership Scheme works with local communities, schools, organisations and landowners so they can better understand, conserve and engage with the unique landscapes in the Dover and Shepway districts. The scheme is hosted by Dover District Council.

We talked to the project team to gather lessons learnt and hear about their community engagement, activities that have worked and apprenticeships. They also were happy to share some information from their consultations as they provide useful information about Kearsney Abbey. A summary of the relevant points are below.

Four hundred people took part in an Up on the Downs survey over the summer of 2011, in Dover, Shepway and online. This survey revealed that:

- 67% had visited Kearsney Abbey
- Walking, nature and wildlife were key reasons for visiting
- The proportion of disabled people was lower than other nearby sites
- Suggestions for improvements included:
 - Better access
 - More ways for children and young people to experience nature
 - Activities including conservation tasks, community events, heritage activities, archaeology, education, cultural events

One specific comment was particularly interesting:

“I think a circular walk or similar could be done in Kearsney Abbey, pointing out some of the historical features in both parks...So many features in the project area are almost a secret to anyone other than the local population. Ask a tourist and they all know about the castles, but not many will know about say the Western Heights, or other places...With a bit of imagination and scrub clearance, these places could attract visitors from all over Europe and beyond. Their attendance could bring in revenue which could pay to maintain and preserve these sites. Left as they are many of the interesting features in the project area will decay and be lost.”

Other Parks and Projects

We have visited and spoken with a range of other organisations who manage other parks and heritage sites who have received funding from HLF so that we could learn from their experiences. This included visiting and talking to staff at Mote Parks, Maidstone (HLF funding received 2007), Priory Parks, Reigate (HLF funding received 2008), and Walpole Parks, Ealing (HLF funding received 2014).

Specific topics were reviewed including learning programmes, activities and outreach, and parks operational practices. A summary of key lessons can be found below. A full description of the information obtained from these discussions can be found in appendix 7.

Activities

- Link with national events to generate more interest
- Have a varied programme of annual events – free family events are most popular

- Activities can be fairly simple in order to engage people e.g. bark rubbings, fairy doors in woodland
- Home school audiences are enthusiastic
- Profit share bouncy castle/outdoor cinema could help generate income
- Ensure equal opportunity for schools, community groups and stakeholders to utilise facilities
- Pop-up bins have been successful as events can cause a lot of litter

Engagement

- Ensure community engagement and involvement can be sustained after the project finishes
- A volunteer focused group may be more successful than a Friends group
- 'Informal' interpretation is effective way of reaching lots of people – parks leaflets are really popular
- Training teachers and community leaders is good way of building capacity for activities to be led by the community
- Develop partnerships with existing gatekeeper organisations to enable volunteering

Visitors

- Plan for more visitors than you initially expect once project is complete
- High visitor numbers quickly impacts on the infrastructure and its durability
- Visitors focus their time around the hub and facilities, it is hard to engage them with the rest of the parks

Management

- Café operator and offer is important, different options help to cope with demand i.e. takeaway
- Staff structure needs to be carefully considered – it is likely that roles will end up being combined so Parks Development Manager needs a good overall knowledge
- Ensure the parks and activities can be sustained once project finishes
- Develop business plan from the beginning
- Having a bookable space is a really good idea and a good source of income
- Horticulture management requires many staff and a dedicated team

Capital Works

- Ensure your buildings are practical and meet the requirements of key users e.g. schools like an undercover space
- No lighting in the parks has reduced anti-social behaviour
- Ensure opportunities to share heritage are not missed i.e. glass floor in café to show archaeology

Schools

Extensive consultation was carried out with schools in the district and in particular those that are very close to the parks. Schools were asked about their awareness of the parks and the Mills to Mawson project, whether there were any significant barriers to their use of the parks, what resources and activities would attract them more, whether they would be interested in volunteering and whether there were any specific activities we could offer that focussed on aims of the national curriculum. Some key findings are detailed below and full details can be found in appendix 8.

Awareness of Kearsney Parks and the project

- Pre-schools and primary schools use the parks fairly frequently in dry weather as they are so close to it (5-10 minute walk)
- Main reasons for visits are:
 - To conduct activities linked to the curriculum i.e. seasons, wildlife, plants and trees (pre-schools), geography, science (primary schools)
 - As a treat for the children (picnics, play area, woodland walk, get an ice-cream)
 - Pollution awareness and litter collection

Barriers to use

Schools in the local area see a number of barriers and concerns to using the parks; however the aims of the project and this activity programme will seek to address these concerns. The main concerns of schools and the reasons for infrequent use of the parks are listed below:

- Poor toilet/changing and hand washing facilities
- Play area is not suitable for different aged children
- Dogs off lead on south side of the lake poses a problem
- Logistics of enabling staff to support activities in the parks
- Costs of transport to and from the parks
- No coach drop off point
- There is no undercover space for picnics / classroom activities
- No secure storage area for equipment, school bags, event items
- Accessibility can be a problem
- Crossing the Alkham Road with groups of children is dangerous so it is avoided
- Time consuming to organise activities in the parks and complete all the necessary paperwork (i.e. risk assessments)

What facilities would attract you to the parks more?

- Undercover picnic area / classroom area for capacity of 30 children plus adults
- Education centre
- Better toilet facilities / changing facilities / hand washing facilities
- Secure storage area (equipment, school bags, event items)
- Seating and tables
- Waste disposal and recycling
- Electricity supply and teaching technology (internet, power sockets etc.)
- Internet access/whiteboard and projector facilities
- Accessible
- Transport for schools

What activities would attract you to the parks more?

- Story chair
- Woodland and nature trails
- Pond dipping
- Area for children to grow things
- Outdoor theatre and cinema
- Activities to meet the national curriculum for pre-school, designed around key areas of learning: Playing and Exploring (engagement), Active Learning (motivation), Creating and thinking critically (thinking)
- Sporting activities
- Parks runs – great way to engage with the community and many students would like to get involved
- Gardening club – as students are genuinely interested in future careers in horticulture

General Feedback

- Educational/teaching space that is bookable in advance
- More interpretation around the parks, preferably interactive
- School packs and teaching resources
- Educational programme with risk assessments provided
- Happy to be involved in the project and any volunteering opportunities
- Interested in attending events/activities in the parks
- Good facilities are a key priority for schools



Young People

As part of developing the Up on the Downs project, young people were consulted about their thoughts on landscape and heritage in 2011. The project worked with 14 young people and found that Kearsney Abbey was frequently mentioned as somewhere that young people associated with heritage, landscape, countryside and nature. Together with other sites, it provided space for young people to think, explore their feelings, write songs, clear their head, hang out with friends, play, and experience nature. They felt the best way to do this was through existing groups, like schools, cadets, and scouts, and with adults they trust. They thought activities could include practical volunteering, orienteering, photography, large scale art, tours, and a big screen.

To build on the comments young people made, we contacted existing groups that young people access including ten secondary schools, as well as 5 colleges and universities and the local scout group. We found it difficult to access members of staff that were willing to engage with the project and so found it difficult to involve young people in this way. Having said that, we have been able to develop contacts with the St Edmund's Secondary School Gardening Club and the Folkestone Academy and both expressed an interest in getting involved in volunteering in the parks. We have also been able to include most of the activities they mentioned during the consultation in our action plan. To build on these fledging relationships, we plan to establish two forums to feed into the project and the parks. A school advisory panel will help to ensure that our offer to both primary and secondary schools is practical, useful and maximises the parks potential as an educational resource. Our Young People's Panel will provide an opportunity for young people specifically to contribute to both the project and the parks, like the Kearsney Parks Forum and Kearsney Parks Event Group will do for the wider community. It will form the basis of our continued efforts to involve young people in the project and ensure it meets their needs.

Dover District Disability Association

Improving access to the parks is an important aspect of our project and we wanted to understand what we could do to make the parks and their facilities more accessible to disabled people. An access audit commissioned during the development phase provided significant technical information. However talking to the Dover District Disability Association helped us to understand the experiences of local disabled people as well.

We attended an open Association meeting in Dover and subsequently met representatives in the parks. The meetings enabled us to fully understand the implications of design and event format as well as highlighting points that we should consider to ensure that the plans for improvements and activities are inclusive for those with disabilities. Some key points are listed below

General/Parks design

- Information is important – there is currently a lack of directional signage around site and there are no details relating to accessibility in the form of signage/maps/leaflets
- Interpretation needs to be in different formats
- Hand rails and other aids are sometimes obstructed by planters/benches etc.
- More benches around the site for those that cannot walk long distances without regular rest

- Correct markings around site for visually impaired/partially sighted people

Café Design

- Think of manoeuvrability – it is tricky for wheelchair users to get around a packed cafe
- Adequate access via ramps and doors that are easy to use (e.g. power assisted)
- Tables should be of a suitable height so that wheelchair users can get up close to the table
- Allow adequate distance between tables in the café so that wheelchair users can get around and to a table easily and without causing disruption to others

Toilets

- Baby change and disabled toilet should not be combined as disabled facilities can be misused
- An adequate, carefully thought out designed facility is important

Highways/Parking

- Controlled crossing to Russell Gardens – disabled people too scared to cross
- No disabled bays marked in car parks opposite Russell Gardens
- Educate people on disabled parking – people don't have an understanding of specialist spaces

Play Areas

- Currently play areas are inaccessible – wheelchair users cannot get through the gates

Activities/Events

- Activities nearer to the parking area, toilet facilities etc. make it easier for disabled people to attend
- Activities on ground level are good, but for floor activities, include tables as well for wheelchair users so they can feel involved
- Would like to see more plays/theatre performances/music performances in the parks
- Install a viewing platform for disabled people/wheelchair users and have this in a suitable place, properly managed and reserved for the users that need it

Black and Minority Ethnic Communities

During the development of the Up on the Downs project, we spoke to minority ethnic communities about their views of the countryside and landscape. Although the parks' catchment area is predominately white, we used local knowledge to identify the most significant minority groups as Nepali and eastern European. Nepalese elders in Folkestone said they visited the countryside to learn about what is there and how it had been created, see plants and what they are used for, as a good way for them to relax, to walk in the countryside to keep fit. They felt that some information in Nepalese would be useful, as well as activities with other ex-servicemen. No clear picture emerged from discussions with people with various Eastern European heritage. A wide range of nationalities (including Czech, Slovak, Ukrainian, Russian, Lithuanian, Latvian, and Polish) along with a small number of willing interviewees meant it was difficult to make generalisations. There are few gateway organisations and approaching Eastern European shops and cafes also generated a very limited response.

During the development phase of our project, we contacted representatives of the Nepalese community in Dover to better understand their knowledge of the parks and how we can facilitate greater use of the parks. We were able to have initial conversations about the project but a major earthquake in Nepal meant that we were not able to develop these further during the development phase of our project.

As part of our efforts to engage the Nepali community in the project we have secured £10k from the Military-Civilian Community Covenant. The funding will be used to deliver an event in June 2016 in Kearsney Abbey to introduce the military and veteran Nepali community and families to the parks and to begin to engage them with its heritage and associated opportunities.



Public Consultation and Activities

During the development phase, a series of events were held to involve, consult and inform the wider public about the project, as well as testing various activities and events across a period of time and in different parts of the parks – these are summarised below. Full details can be found in appendix 9.

Easter Activity Day

We wanted to find out what parks users love about the parks, why they visit and what activities they would like to see in the future. We held the Easter Activity Day in Kearsney Abbey and around 3000 people attended across the course of the day. It demonstrated that a few simple but free family activities can attract and entertain a crowd for the majority of the day and that working in partnership with local organisations on events can be highly effective.

Overall, the following themes came out of the consultation and this feedback has helped to inform and design the Action Plan presented in section 6.

People would like to:

- learn more about the heritage, wildlife, plants and trees in the parks
- see better interpretation – maps, leaflets, trails
- take part in activities that teach them new things
- see more play initiatives – forest school, events programme, activities for children
- stay healthy – self guided walks, circular routes around the parks
- develop new skills – artist workshops, theatre and heritage
- be more creative – photography workshops, music events, storytelling
- attend more events – outdoor cinema, open air theatre, family fun days
- volunteer in the parks
- see training and apprenticeship opportunities
- support and activities for schools

Conservation Week, River Primary School

White Cliffs Countryside Partnership attended River Primary School and presented a slide show on river pollution and how students could contribute to local conservation efforts. Following this the group visited Kearsney Abbey to conduct a litter pick in small groups. A member of the Kearsney Parks team attended this activity to see how a school group (around 60 students) used the parks, to understand the challenges schools face when organising trips and what is required in order for a successful trip to take place.

Key points included:

- School groups love going to the parks and being outdoors
- It is very easy for the local primary school to get to the parks on foot
- Children were well behaved and respected the parks
- The children demonstrated an awareness of pollution and litter and made comments about wanting to protect the parks
- A good activity leader that can competently lead the group is vital as teachers need to hand over to this leader so that they can supervise
- Equipment and risk assessments need to be provided

Archaeological Dig

The Canterbury Archaeological Trust, along with volunteers from the Dover Archaeological Group and Folkestone Archaeological Group, conducted an archaeological dig in Kearsney Abbey over a weekend in June. The team spoke directly to well over 100 people of different ages and all were interested in what the team were doing and were also very supportive of it. We received no complaints about disruption to parking or other inconvenience. As well as being interested to see an archaeological dig going on, people were very interested to learn more of the story behind Kearsney Abbey, with many regular visitors to Kearsney Abbey saying they learnt new things about it from speaking with staff and volunteers. Future archaeological work and/or historical interpretation is likely to find a ready audience.

July public consultation

We held public consultation events from 1-13 July to share and discuss preliminary ideas about the conservation, restoration and improvement of the parks. We displayed six panels which provided an introduction to the project, information on the history of the parks and ideas for their restoration and improvement. We summarised the restoration and improvement ideas into 10 main themes and people were asked to help prioritise the ideas. They were given six tokens and asked to 'spend' them on the things that they felt were most important. People were also asked to identify any specific issues that were most important or least important to them.

The events and online survey were advertised on site, on our website, on twitter and through our email mailing list. Around 200 people attended the events and 47 people responded online.

In Russell Gardens the most important themes were:

- Re-introduce flowering plants and more staff to look after them
- Restore Thomas Mawson's original vision
- Better access and parks infrastructure like seats, bins and paths

People were less interested in improved play provision and more information and interpretation.

In Kearsney Abbey the most important themes were:

- Better visitor facilities like café, toilets and parking
- Restoring the historical landscape
- Repairs to rivers, lakes and listed structures

People were less interested in nature, conservation and education and improving play provision.

During the consultation period we installed a temporary historic photo trail so that people could see how the parks have changed. Trail maps were available at the event and in the café and it was well received and well used by a range of people.

Farm and Forest Day

We held this event in Russell Gardens to assess whether we could attract existing parks users and new audiences into an underused part of the parks. It was aimed at families where all activities were free. The activities on the day responded to the comments we received at the April event and included a local farmer and her sheep, forest school, model boating, bunting workshop, farmers market stalls, tractors from the local transport museum and a tree trail. There were also project staff available onsite to answer questions.

Around 3000 people attended this event across the course of the day and again activities were very successful. Positive feedback was received from visitors, stall holders and event staff including requests for the event to be repeated. This event demonstrated that events can be successfully held in Russell Gardens despite its somewhat tricky layout and the challenges around delivering and collecting from site. It brought many people to the site that would otherwise have probably attended Kearsney Abbey instead for the day.

October public consultation

We held public consultation events from 5-19 October to share more definitive plans for the restoration and improvement of Kearsney Parks, as well as our conservation plan and draft activity plan. All events were advertised on site, on our website, on twitter and through our email mailing list. The historic photo trail was installed again for this consultation. Around 150 people attended the events and 13 responded online, with predominantly positive comments.

Summary

The extensive consultation programme has improved our understanding of what other organisations are doing and the potential for us to work together. We have benefitted from knowing what worked well and what could be improved from other HLF projects and have a much better understanding of the issues and opportunities associated with schools using the parks more and improving their experience. We know more about how people could be engaged with volunteering opportunities. We have also been able to complement our access audit with first-hand experience of local disabled people and the barriers they face in using the parks. We also know that we need to continue efforts to engage BME communities.



4.5 Other development phase activities

Marketing and Promotion

During the development phase, we created a Kearsney Parks website, a Kearsney Parks Flickr account to store photographs, used social media, created posters and flyers for all of our events, activities, exhibitions and consultations using a consistent style. Our project email mailing list reaches over 500 people each month, we have over 300 followers on Twitter and our press releases have been well received by the local TV and print media. Our website hits have increased from just over 100 per month in late 2014 to well over 2000 per month in late 2015.

Working with local primary schools to put leaflets into book bags has been a particularly effective way to reach non-users of the parks. We also attended events and activities organised by local organisations based elsewhere in our catchment area, including the Dover Society, Dover Big Local, and Dover District Disability Association.

Regular and consistent communication have helped to maintain a sense of momentum and helped to make the project team seem more accessible to the public. In designing our publicity strategy for each event we have considered whether we are reaching the right people, with the right activity, in the right way to avoid wasting resources. As our understanding of and interaction with our target audiences develops, we can continue to develop our marketing and promotion methods.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Before we began developing our project, the only monitoring that took place was subjective and largely involved parks users contacting us to report issues. Our development phase grant has allowed us to begin collecting baseline data so that we can assess the impact of our project and better understand the needs and aspirations of existing and potential audiences.

We have carried out an observational study to gather largely quantitative data so that we better understand the number of visitors the parks receive, as well as an evidence-based profile of parks users. Our first annual visitor survey has captured more qualitative data on what users think about the parks, the impact on their quality of life and the impact on the local community.

A key observation from the baseline data was that the number of disabled people using the parks is lower than might be expected given the proportion of disabled people in the catchment area population. Our observation study showed that around 1% of visitors were disabled, compared with 10% of the wider population.

We have also collated quantitative data on the number of volunteers and people attending events and activities during the development phase, as well as anecdotal qualitative feedback from participants and volunteers. In the delivery phase of the project we will need to be more systematic in gathering both qualitative feedback from volunteers and quantitative measures from events and activities. We have set out how we plan to do this in section 5.7 and appendix 2.

4.6 Implications for activity planning

From our assessment of potential audiences and activities, it is clear that we can do more to improve the way the parks' heritage is managed and maintained, that interpretation can be better and more extensive, and that a wide range of people are keen to use the parks, volunteer their time, gain new skills and learn more about the parks' unique heritage.

The potential for the project to address these issues is significant – the local catchment area includes 40% of the district's residents and the wider catchment covers nearly half a million people. The area already has a number of heritage attractions and the potential for Kearsney Parks to be part of the wider heritage-tourism offer is significant. There are a number of schools very nearby but schools, colleges and universities across our catchment area are interested in the project and keen to get involved. There is momentum building in the district around helping people, especially young people, to develop employment-related skills and undertake training.

From an assessment of our catchment area populations, any activities need to:

- Be value for money and relatively low cost
- Enable families to spend the day in the parks
- Help people to understand and engage with heritage, probably using fairly traditional formats
- Be culturally mainstream while also improving the local arts and heritage offer
- Offer sociable, popular cultural events
- Be more accessible

It seems likely that our volunteers could be:

- Adults looking to contribute to their community
- Young people looking to gain work-related skills and experiences
- Families looking to take part in an activity together

The public and stakeholder consultation has shown that people are interested in:

- learning more about heritage (landscape, gardens, built, social, ecological, industrial)
- better interpretation – maps, leaflets, trails
- activities that teach them new things
- more play initiatives – forest school, events programme, activities for children
- staying healthy – self guided walks, circular routes around the parks
- developing new skills – artist workshops, theatre and heritage
- being more creative – photography workshops, music events, workshops
- attending more events – outdoor cinema, open air theatre, family fun days, archaeology
- volunteering, training and apprenticeship opportunities
- support and activities for schools

We have benefitted from knowing what worked well and what could be improved from other HLF projects and have a much better understanding of the issues and opportunities associated with schools using the parks more and improving their experience. We have also been able to complement our access audit with first-hand experience of local disabled people and the barriers they face in using the parks. We also know that we need to continue efforts to engage BME communities.

Barriers to engagement

Our market research, stakeholder and audience consultation have identified a number of key barriers that could prevent potential audiences from engaging with our project. The table below lists the potential barriers to engagement.

Organisational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of staff time and resources to uncover and share heritage • Limited commitment to volunteers • Low staff awareness of significance of heritage • Lack of time and skills to engage with schools and teachers • Condition of heritage features
Intellectual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of information and interpretation of parks unique heritage • Poor quality interpretation panel and lack of heritage activities • No education programme exists, making it hard for schools to maximise the potential of the parks • Teachers lack skills and confidence to hold classes in the parks • Little heritage information available online • Lack of information in alternative formats and languages
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage seen as uninteresting by many • No tradition of engaging with heritage of the parks • Traditional use of parks as arts and cultural venue has been lost
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception that local heritage days out are expensive • CPD training for teachers during the day as classes would need to be covered
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited and incorrect pre-information • Parts of the parks are physically inaccessible

It is clear that the parks have plenty of capacity to support a full programme of activities but that currently the parks are neither being used to their full potential nor engaging as many people as they could with the heritage of the parks. We recognise that to attract a wider range of audiences, we need a wider range of activities, which will allow people to engage with the heritage of the parks in both incidental and deliberate ways – some people will be interested in engaging with deliberately heritage-focused activities and events, while others will engage with heritage more incidentally.

For example, enabling more people to use Russell Gardens will increase incidental engagement with the parks heritage and specific activities will provide more deliberate and deeper engagement for people that are interested. Encouraging greater use of Russell Gardens will require capital work (restoration of heritage features, improved visitor facilities, safer road crossing), as well as improved interpretation and activities to draw people into this part of the parks and to share its unique landscape, built, ecological and social heritage.

5. Involving people in our project

5.1 Introduction

This section draws together all of our research and consultation information and explains the strategic decisions we have made about involving people in our project. It outlines our target audiences, provides an overview of the activity programme detailed in section 6 and describes our evaluation framework.

Our vision

Our overarching vision for the project is to work with the community to create high quality parks which meet the needs of existing and future park users by conserving and interpreting the significant heritage features, delivering high quality and accessible visitor facilities and activities, and managing them to high heritage, horticultural and environmental standards.

Aims of the activity programme

Our action plan has been divided into five key aims so that we can meet the needs of our existing audiences, match activities to our target audiences effectively and ensure that the project is meeting the Parks for People outcomes for Heritage, Community and People. These aims are:

1. improve existing and potential audiences' engagement and understanding of Kearsney Parks' unique heritage
2. recreate the parks' role as a cultural venue
3. maximise their potential as a venue for formal learning
4. enable young people to take part in vocational training and gain work-related skills and experiences
5. increase opportunities for meaningful community involvement and volunteering

5.2 Breaking down barriers for people

The table below recaps the barriers identified in section 4 and looks at ways in which the project might tackle and solve them.

Barriers	Opportunities
Financial <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception that local heritage days out are expensive • CPD training for teachers during the day as classes would need to be covered 	<p>Ensure activities and events are low cost and value for money</p> <p>Work closely with schools to tie into existing training schedules and staff development opportunities</p>
Physical <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited and incorrect pre-information • Parts of the parks are physically inaccessible 	<p>Ensure internal and external websites, leaflets and other publicity provide up to date and accurate information specifically around access</p> <p>Deliver capital works to improve accessibility and provide information so that people can decide which routes around the parks to use</p> <p>Deliver training for staff and volunteers so they can provide accessible activities, events and services</p>
Organisational <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of time and resources to uncover and share heritage • Limited commitment to volunteers • Low staff awareness of significance of heritage • Lack of time and skills to engage with schools and teachers 	<p>Appoint staff to work with volunteers to uncover heritage and work with professionals on interpretation and sharing</p> <p>Develop clear volunteering policies and opportunities, making commitment and training clear</p> <p>Deliver training for staff to increase understanding of conservation plan and Heritage Impact Assessments</p> <p>Create a Young People's Panel and School Advisory Panel to build on work to engage young people and ensure the project continue to meet their needs</p>

Breaking down barriers (continued)

Barriers	Opportunities
Intellectual <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of information and interpretation of parks unique heritage Poor quality of single interpretation panel and lack of heritage activities No education programme exists, making it hard for schools to maximise the potential of the parks Teachers lack skills and confidence to hold classes in the parks Little heritage information available online Lack of information in alternative formats and languages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and deliver interpretation – onsite, online and paper copies – along with heritage activities Ensure information is available in a variety of formats and languages if needed Develop formal education resource Engage with teachers to ensure we do everything we can to help them and provide formal CPD training Sort all sources of information about the parks and make it accessible to all online
Social <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heritage seen as uninteresting by many No tradition of engaging with the heritage of the parks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver activities that allow people to engage with heritage, without labelling them as heritage events Develop regular and long term programme of activities to help nurture engagement with the parks heritage

5.3 Target Audiences

Our research and consultation has shown that there are key audiences that we need to target to enable them to experience the benefits the parks offer, help them engage with heritage, and make the visitor profile more representative. We will build on our existing audiences and work to expand and broaden the range of people who actively use the parks and participate in activities and events.

Our research has shown that current visitors are broadly representative of the parks catchment area, with the notable exception of disabled people. Observational studies tell us that the ethnicity of visitors is broadly representative of the catchment area - however we recognise that BME communities often experience specific disadvantages and we will continue to work hard to engage them with the project and the parks more generally. We know that the majority of existing visitors know little about the parks heritage and there are virtually no opportunities for new users to find out more. Our market analysis strongly suggests that potential visitors are likely to be on low incomes and/or budget conscious, while employment, skills and training are significant issues facing young people in particular in deprived local areas.

Based on our market analysis and consultation, five target audiences have been identified:

- Low income families with children
- Budget conscious adults looking for a heritage day out
- Young people looking for employment opportunities and skills
- Disabled people
- Schools

Low income families with children

There are a significant number of families living in our catchment area and audience spectrum data demonstrated that there are 5,626 families that have dependent children (44%) and this number is on the rise. There are also significant areas of deprivation within the parks' catchment area.

Audience Agency profiles also indicated that these families will typically be on a low income and will be looking for a low cost day out that involves plenty of activities for children. Families are also likely to fall into one of four spectrum categories (*Heydays 5%, Facebook Families 18%, Up our Street 17% and Trips and Treats 21%*) all of which are over-represented in our the audience profiling for the catchment area. These groups generally have low engagement with heritage and cultural activities.

During our development phase, a number of family orientated events took place in order to trial some of the ideas. Free activities including forest school sessions, arts and crafts, pond dipping, and treasure hunts were well attended.

When families were asked at the activity day consultation, what types of activities they would like to see in the parks in future, they were extremely receptive to all of the suggestions put forward. Some of the most popular options included organised activities for children, arts and crafts, music events, open air theatre and outdoor cinema. Many respondents were also very

interested in wildlife and ecology, plants, trees and gardens, forest school, gardening, walking routes, village fetes and creative activities such as painting and photography.

We will ensure that there is a good variety of activities available to families and that these activities are inclusive and accessible to all. Activities will need to be free or of low cost and suitable for range of ages. Our marketing and promotion will need to be targeted at areas where we know there is a high proportion of low income families. The aim is to engage families with the unique heritage of the parks through providing interactive interpretation, opportunities for people to select their own level of engagement and a chance for families to learn and participate in activities together.

We recognise that we need to continue working hard to engage families from BME communities, to overcome the barriers that may make it more difficult for them to use the parks. In the delivery phase of our project we will continue to work with representatives of local BME communities to establish a panel that focuses on which measures would be most effective to overcome barriers and encourage greater engagement. We will need to take the parks to the community, working with community representatives to access existing community venues and events to promote the parks, their facilities and heritage.

Budget conscious adults looking for a heritage day out

Our population data tells us that within a 3 mile radius of the parks there are 35,246 people that fall within the category adult (18 - 85+ years) who equates to 77% of the catchment area. Audience Agency mosaic profiles indicate that adults mainly fall into one of four categories (*Family Basics 15%, Transient Renters 14%, Vintage Value 8% and Modest Traditions 12%*) and these are all significantly over-represented in the population.

We now know that there are mixed responses to heritage, arts and culture, with engagement ranging from medium to low on the Audience Agency spectrum (rank score range 4 – 8), but overall engagement is below average in our catchment area. It is unclear whether this is because there are limited low-cost opportunities to engage with heritage or as a result of other factor. Our heritage and cultural offer will need to be relatively main stream both in its format and content in order to attract visitors. It also needs to offer value for money to attract people that are looking to engage with heritage activities at a relatively low cost.

Activities that help people to understand and engage with heritage in fairly traditional formats and sociable, popular cultural events are likely to attract this particular target audience and will be incorporated into our action plan. We will need to target our marketing and publicity on areas where we know there is a high proportion of people on low incomes by working with existing community groups, housing associations and other service providers to effectively target our efforts.

Young people looking for employment opportunities and skills

The proportion of young people using the parks is broadly representative of the catchment area population. However, skill levels and educational attainment are generally low compared to county, region and national averages and the number of 16-18 years olds classed as NEET is also higher than the average for Kent and continues to increase. We want to boost skills and create opportunities for people to overcome disadvantage.

We will help young people from deprived areas to develop work related skills and take part in vocational training. We will also develop volunteering opportunities so that a wider range of people can develop skills and experiences that will help them access employment. Working with secondary school pupils and existing apprentices, we will establish a Young People's Panel to ensure that the work experience placements, volunteering and training opportunities meet the needs and aspirations of this target audience.

Disabled People

Our observation study has shown that disabled people are underrepresented in the parks current user profile. To better understand the barriers that limit use of the parks by disabled people we carried out an access audit, attended Dover District Disability Association (DDDA) meetings and organised a site visit for members of the Association. The need to overcome physical barriers was a key finding and this will largely be addressed through our capital works programme. Poor quality and often incorrect pre-visit information was another important barrier and our project will address this.

Members of the DDDA were keen that we do not organise specific activities for disabled people but rather ensured that information, activities and events are planned to be inclusive and they are designed with the needs of disabled people in mind. Rather than organise additional meetings, we will attend existing DDDA meetings throughout the project to test our plans and monitor their inclusiveness, organising site visits or specific meetings as necessary.

Schools

Schools are an important audience group for this project and there are multiple opportunities to form partnerships with local schools, as well as engage them better with the heritage, ecology and nature that the parks have to offer. School engagement was fairly limited prior to the start of this project, but through successful consultation during the development phase, we now know that the local schools in particular, are very interested in participating more in activities in Kearsney Parks. There are opportunities to develop curriculum related activities with pre-school, primary and secondary schools in the area and this will work towards changing perceptions that teaching outside the school environment can be problematic.

There are 41 primary schools, accommodating 8,343 children, nine secondary supporting 7,658 children and 156 children attending one of the two special schools in the district. This equates to 16,157 children in total. Whilst we have predominantly liaised with those schools most local to the parks, a formal education programme will be developed and distributed amongst all schools in the district and beyond so that they all have equal opportunity to engage.

Schools have expressed a particular interest around encouraging more engagement with the heritage, ecology and nature of the parks in order to supplement science lessons. However, there is also a keen interest in developing links to other areas of the curriculum such as history, maths, literacy and art. Coupled with providing a wider range of educational activities in the parks, are the objectives to provide improved facilities, school related resources and Continuous Professional Development sessions. In practice, these will ensure that schools have the support they need to plan and deliver visits to the parks and make learning outdoors more sustainable.

Existing users

Over 40% of Dover District residents live within 3 miles of the parks. Consultation and visitor and annual surveys have informed us that many of these local people use the parks every day to carry out routine activities like walking the dog, exercising, relaxing, meeting friends and model boating. This group of people are very familiar with the parks and feel a strong attachment to them; however their knowledge of and engagement with the parks' unique heritage could be improved.

Existing users are not a specific target audience but there is a great opportunity to improve their engagement with heritage and the experience they have when visiting the parks. The activities that will attract and engage our target audiences will also appeal to existing users, encourage them to use less visited parts of the parks, support their increased involvement and deepen their appreciation and understanding.



5.4 Overview of future activities

Our activities have been developed specifically to deliver our activity plan aims and with our target audiences in mind. The activities have been grouped around five themes that directly relate to our aims – engagement with heritage, recreating a cultural venue, formal learning, helping young people develop skills and take part in training, community involvement and volunteering. Our Action Plan in section 6 provides full details and a summary is provided below.

Engagement with heritage

We know that most park users know very little about the heritage of the parks, there are few opportunities for new users to find out about their history and significance, and many facilities are not accessible to all. Through our capital works and a varied programme of free activities and new interpretation, heritage will be uncovered, better interpreted and accessed by more and a wider range of people. Outreach work will help us to reach audiences that do not currently use the park. Activities will cover all heritage elements including landscapes and gardens, industry, ecology, social and cultural heritage. Activities include:

Uncovering heritage

- Volunteer research projects to uncover information about the parks role in paper making, WWII, Festival of Britain, food production
- Oral history and personal memories project
- Prehistoric Folk, Ancient Dour and Great Mansions of the Past archaeology projects
- My Place in the Park children's mapping project
- Bioblitz events
- Improving pre-visit access information

Sharing and interpreting heritage

- Interpretation in a variety of formats and an improved Kearsney Parks website
- Annual exhibition sharing project and activity outputs
- Mills, gardens, ecology and trees trails, audio trails, geocache trail and tours
- The Kearsney Quilt project
- Paper making, Art in the Landscape and Shakespeare Rewired workshops
- The Big Tree Climb and veteran tree propagation
- Horrible Histories story telling
- Croquet on the Lawn
- Disability awareness for staff and volunteers

Recreating a cultural venue

The parks have played host to community events throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century, culminating in the open air theatre productions during the Festival of Britain. We want to recreate their role as a popular cultural and arts venue, which reconnects people with the historic use of the parks through affordable and accessible events and activities, while minimising the impact on the local community.

Activities include outdoor theatre productions, open air cinema, community music events and afternoon tea on the lawn in Russell Gardens.

We will work with the Kearsney Parks Forum and local community to develop a policy around the number, frequency and cost of events. We have already produced and consulted on our Travel Plan (see appendix 1) and implementing it will help us to promote use of sustainable transport and minimise the impact of events on the local community, as well as reducing the parks' environmental impacts. We will work with the Kearsney Parks Event Group, as well as community and commercial partners to deliver these events. Income from events will be reinvested into the management and maintenance of the parks.

Formal learning

Kearsney Parks are an incredible yet somewhat undiscovered resource for learning, with links to nature conservation, ecology, horticulture, built environment and local history. There is huge potential for the parks to contribute to the education and development of children and young people. Our formal education programme will continue to build relationships with schools that are already enthusiastic and interested in the parks, as well as targeting schools that do not use the parks. Our capital work programme will provide the infrastructure that schools have said they need and our activities will provide the resources for successful school visits for both lessons and extra-curricular activities. Activities will include:

- Establishing a School Advisory Panel to ensure resources meet the needs of teachers and pupils
- Forest school sessions and ecology, biology and science lessons
- Shakespeare Rewired workshops specifically for schools
- Online resources including lesson plans, risk assessments, worksheets for children
- Rucksack packs for use in the park
- Teacher training (learning outside the classroom, forest school, Arts Award)

Helping young people develop skills and take part in training

The parks' catchment area includes areas of significant deprivation, with employment and skills both major issues for the area. We want to boost skills and create opportunities for people to overcome disadvantage. We will help young people from deprived areas to develop work related skills and take part in vocational training. We will also develop volunteering opportunities so that a wider range of people can develop skills and experiences that will help them access employment (more on that in the next section). Although open to all, we will specifically promote opportunities in areas of deprivation. Activities will include:

- Two 18 month level 2 horticultural apprenticeships
- Work experience placements for secondary school pupils
- School gardening club
- Construction phase site visits

Through our Management and Maintenance Plan (MMP) we will provide opportunities for 20 Kent Woodland Employment Scheme apprentices to develop and implement new skills. We will also continue to work with local partners including English Heritage, the Land Trust, Canterbury Cathedral and East Kent College to develop a heritage conservation apprenticeship

programme; once established, apprentices on the programme could help to deliver parts of our MMP.

We will also provide training for existing staff and volunteers to familiarise them with our conservation plan and give them the skills to manage historic parks, work with volunteers, and provide inclusive access to facilities, activities and events.

More information on the training programme can be found in appendix 4.

Community involvement & volunteering

Traditionally there has been a high level of interest in the parks among park users and the local community but very low levels of active community involvement and no volunteering. Enthusiastic community participation during development phase of our project highlights the enormous potential the parks have to develop community cohesion, as well as helping individuals and the parks to benefit from volunteering. To build on this, activities will include:

- Helping the Kearsney Parks Forum become more independent, representative and formalised
- Supporting the Kearsney Parks Event Group to organise and deliver cultural events
- Supporting the Kearsney Parks Quilting Group to engage with and represent the heritage of the parks
- Reinvigorating the local community orchard group
- Developing advisory panels with young people and BME communities
- Outreach work in areas and with communities facing disadvantage
- Working with existing organisations who represent disabled people
- Developing policies for managing volunteering, events and memorials
- One-off and long-term volunteer opportunities and associated training in four key areas:
 - management (e.g. Forum, fundraising, monitoring, observation study)
 - horticulture & maintenance (e.g. orchard maintenance, veteran tree propagation, scrub clearance)
 - access to heritage (e.g. archaeology projects, research, interpretation and learning activities)
 - events (e.g. organising and delivering community events)

More information on the volunteering programme can be found in appendix 3.

How audiences are linked to future activities

The following table provides a summary of how the future activity programme is linked to our target audiences.

Target Audiences	Future Activities
All audiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New interpretation – to help people understand heritage • Site maps – encourage public participation in design and promote a historically accurate map of the parks • Develop events policy and annual programme – to promote parks as a regional cultural attraction and provide activities for everyone, while managing the impact of visitors • Self-guided trails – to enable audiences to explore the heritage of the parks at their own convenience and to encourage visitors to explore a wider area of the parks • Travel plan – to encourage people to use sustainable transport to reduce the environmental impacts to the parks • Accessibility – to ensure that the parks are accessible to all visitors and that promotional materials are accurate and informative • Kearsney Parks Forum – to increase sense of ownership
Low income families with children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities that uncover the hidden histories of the landscape and garden including archaeology, ecology, people and buildings – to increase peoples understanding of heritage • Archaeology projects - to uncover hidden heritage of the parks and involve the local community in the digs and research • Big tree climbing activity - an activity for the family that promotes health and wellbeing as well as encouraging people to be outdoors • Bioblitz project – to discover and record ecology in the parks • Art Workshops – engaging the community with the heritage of the parks in creative ways • Shakespeare Workshops – to explore the historical context of the parks and to bring a theatrical, musical element that people can participate in • Croquet on the lawn in Russell Gardens – to celebrate a former activity and bring families together for an enjoyable experience • Targeted marketing to areas and communities affected by deprivation

Target Audiences	Future Activities
Budget conscious adults looking for a heritage day out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities that uncover the hidden histories of the landscape including archaeology, ecology, people and buildings • Art Workshops – engaging the community with the heritage of the parks in creative ways • Storytelling and horrible histories – to offer an alternative way of engaging and presenting visitors with the heritage of the parks, enables participation • Photography workshops and exhibitions – to allow people to develop their photography skills alongside learning about the heritage and ecology of Kearsney Parks and present their work • Afternoon Tea on the Lawn in Russell Gardens – to recreate the life of former owners of Kearsney Court and bring people together for a sociable and fun activity
Young people looking for employment opportunities and skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a volunteering programme – provide opportunities to volunteer and learn new skills • Deliver training to volunteers – deliver induction training and opportunities for volunteers to develop their skills and gain experience in a work-based environment • Young People's Panel – to engage young people with the parks and project and ensure we meet their needs • Apprenticeships – enable two apprenticeships in horticulture during the project to support career development and promote employment opportunities • Arts Award – enable professional assessment of young people's art work to allow them to achieve arts qualifications • Work experience placements – to help young people develop work related experiences
Disabled people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better pre-visit information • Awareness training for staff and volunteers • Capital works • Regular attendance at DDDA meetings and site visits
Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop formal educational programme – to encourage school engagement with the parks and their heritage • School resource packs – to provide schools with learning materials to support visits as well as supplement lessons • Shakespeare Workshops – to explore the historical context of the parks • Forest School Programme – to connect schools with the outdoors and learn about heritage and ecology • Teacher training – to encourage greater use of the parks for learning and to give teachers the confidence to teach outdoors • School Advisory Panel - to make sure we are meeting the needs of schools and pupils

5.5 Resources needed to support our activities

Governance - Project Steering Group

In the delivery phase, our project will continue to be overseen by our Project Steering Group. Membership will include:

Cabinet Member for Property Management and Public Protection
 Director of Environment and Corporate Assets
 Head of Regeneration and Development
 Head of Assets and Building Control
 Head of Communication and Engagement
 Funding and Communications Manager
 Kearsney Parks Project Manager
 Parks Development Manager

Governance – Community

The Steering Group, via the Kearsney Parks Project Manager, will work closely with the Kearsney Parks Forum to ensure that local stakeholders are involved in making key decisions about the project. In practice this will involve quarterly meetings, regular email updates and consultation or extra meetings as necessary. Once appointed, the Parks Development Manager will work closely with the Forum on the day to day management of the parks more generally. Once the Forum has developed as a properly constituted group, a representative of the Forum will be invited to become a member of the Project Steering Group.

Staff

The nature of the project means that the current staffing structure covering parks management and maintenance be revised. Currently there is no community engagement in the parks, so this aspect of the project also needed careful consideration to ensure that the delivery of the activity plan is feasible and sustainable. Staffing for Kearsney Parks is currently administered by Dover District Council and it will continue to do so.

We want the creation of additional posts to contribute to our project aims, so we have attempted to provide potential employment opportunities for a range of people in different circumstances. Collectively the new posts offer full time and part time roles that require varying skills and levels of experience. Job descriptions and personal specifications can be found in appendix 5.

Four posts have been created to ensure we deliver a high quality project that is sustainable in the long term, along with two apprenticeships. These positions are:

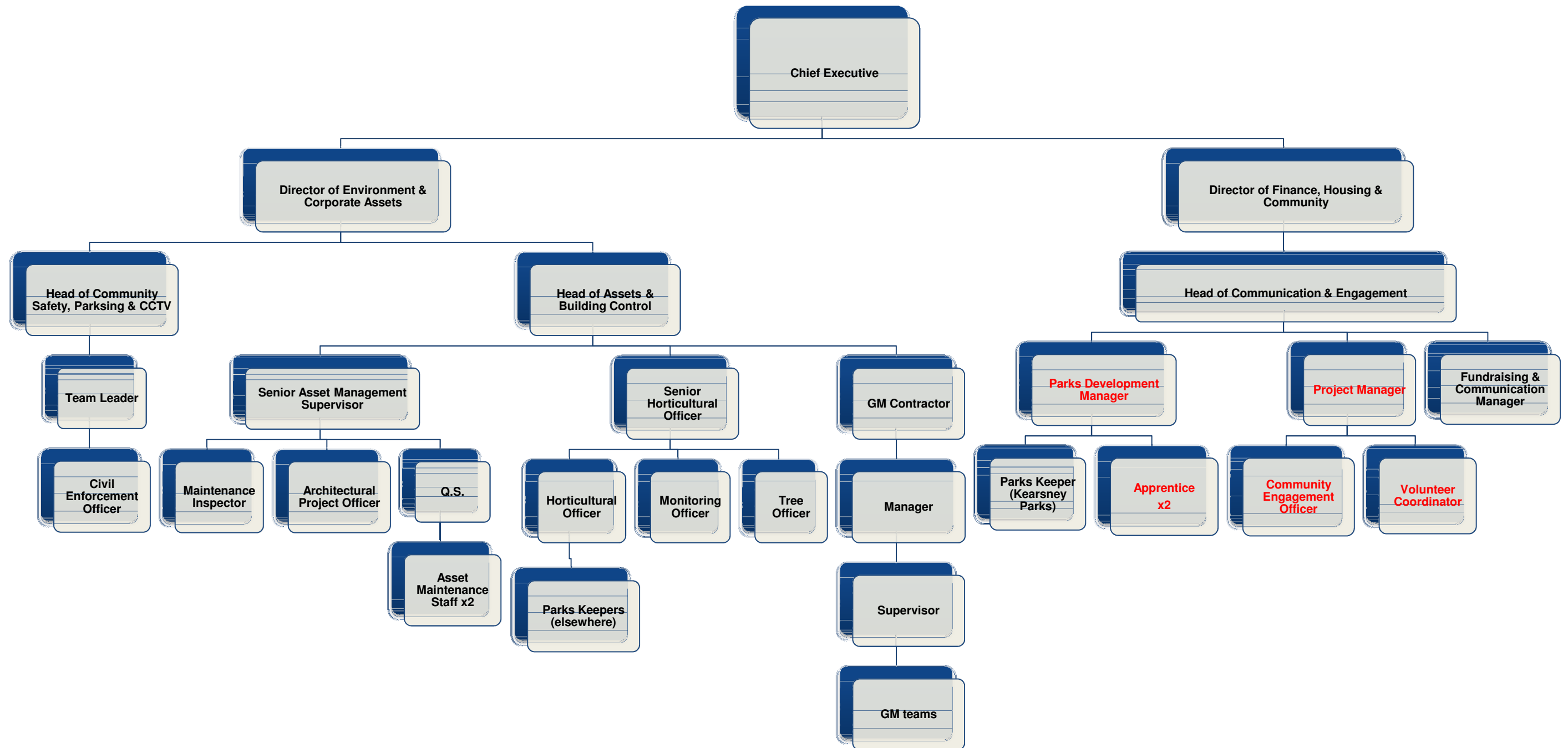
- Project Manager(full time)
- Community Engagement Officer (full time)
- Parks Development Manager (full time)
- Volunteer Coordinator (part time)
- Two Horticultural Apprentices (full time)

Key responsibilities for each member of the Kearsney team are provided below:

Role	Key responsibilities
Project Manager	Overall project management and coordination HLF reporting and claims Capital works Evaluation Staff management
Community Engagement Officer	Activity Plan Training Plan
Volunteer Coordinator	Volunteer Plan (coordination, policies, admin)
Parks Development Manager	Management & Maintenance Plan Volunteer Plan (delivering opportunities) Staff management
Apprentices	Support delivery of MMP, volunteering, activities Learning and skill development

The staff structure for delivering this project is outlined on the next page.

Proposed staff structure



Volunteers

We estimate there will be 163 volunteers supporting the activity plan and they will be involved in every aspect of delivery. The target number of volunteers has been based on the response we received to volunteering opportunities during the development phase of the project, as well as what people told us during consultation sessions. The actions below provide a summary of volunteer activities and how they relate to specific themes. These activities are supported by further activities in the Action Plan in section 6.

Volunteer activity	Volunteers per task	Total volunteer hours per year	Professional Skilled Unskilled
Management			
Kearsney Parks Forum	10	40	U
BME Panel	4	16	U
Accessibility workshops	4	16	U
Observation surveys	3	9	S
Visitor surveys	3	9	S
Horticulture and Maintenance			
Orchard maintenance	5	45	S
Veteran tree propagation	3	9	S
Bread amnesty	2	12	S
School litter picks	60	60	U
Gardening club	10	20	S
Scrub clearance	5	15	S
Livestock monitoring	5	38	U
Defect monitoring	2	24	S
Access to heritage			
Archaeology projects	20	420	S
Research projects	4	40	S
Interpretation workshops	4	24	U
Leading quilting project	1	8	S
Podcast audio trails	2	16	S
Guiding	3	12	S
Story telling	1	4	S
Developing geocaches	2	24	S
Education resource packs	1	12	P
Events			
Kearsney Parks Event Group	4	48	S
Helping to deliver events	5	15	U
TOTALS	163	936	

At the moment, volunteering is limited to the River Dour clean-up day organised by White Cliffs Countryside Partnership (WCCP). This mainly relies on people from their volunteer database, rather than local people or parks users. The development phase of the project showed that although there are no formal volunteer opportunities at the moment, there is enthusiasm for getting involved in volunteering opportunities. A key aim for the project is to establish a volunteer base and to recruit more volunteers primarily from our target audiences.

On the back of events hosted by the HLF-funded Up on the Downs Landscape Partnership project, we are also in the early stages of developing a Dover-specific heritage volunteering network. We are working with partners who also offer heritage volunteering opportunities locally including WCCP, Kent Wildlife Trust, National Trust and English Heritage so that local volunteering opportunities can complement each other and university students can be offered a varied volunteering programme across the partner organisations.

Our audience agency profiling suggested that our volunteers are likely to be:

- Adults looking to contribute to their community
- Young people looking to gain work-related skills and experiences
- Families looking to take part in an activity together

Recruitment and coordination will be via a volunteer coordinator, a part time post specifically created for the project. By approaching people that represent all of our target audiences we aim to diversify our volunteers.

A more detailed volunteering plan can be found in appendix 3.

Training

There is a comprehensive training programme in appendix 4 that details all the training opportunities for staff, volunteers and young people which will help us to deliver the activity plan.

The training programme itself is divided in to the following areas:

- Training for staff and key volunteers
- Volunteer training
- Teacher training
- Apprenticeships and work experience

The training plan pulls together all of the training that is needed to ensure we deliver our project successfully, meet HLF outcomes and sustain them into the future. The plan has been informed by an assessment of existing training opportunities, as well as the needs of the project and parks.

Training for staff and key volunteers

Existing and new staff will play a key role in conserving the parks heritage and supporting increased use by our target audiences. Our staff training will focus on increasing understanding of the parks unique heritage, developing conservation management skills, helping to support a wider range of visitors, particularly disabled people and developing skills in working with and managing volunteers.

Volunteer training

Our volunteer training programme will help us to attract more people to volunteering, encourage them to take part in a wider range of activities, and help them to develop skills and experiences. Our volunteer training will focus on developing skills in park management, horticulture and maintenance tasks, increasing access to heritage and event management.

Teacher training

Our teacher training programme will help to overcome barriers that currently limit school use of the parks. It will give teachers the confidence, skills and resources to continue using the parks once the project is complete, helping to ensure the long term sustainability of key project outcomes. Teacher training will focus on developing skills and confidence in learning outside the classroom, delivering a variety of lessons in the parks and Arts Award accreditation.

Apprenticeships and work experience

Delivering apprenticeships and work experience placements will make a significant contribution to delivering our objective to help young people take part in vocational training and develop work related skills. We will be offering two apprenticeship placements during the course of this project. Both apprenticeships will be 18 month level 2 diplomas in Horticulture (Parks, Gardens and Green Spaces) run by Hadlow College. They will enable participants to gain technical knowledge and practical experience. We will also work with schools in deprived areas to provide a range of work experience placements to help pupils develop work related skills.

More information on the training programme can be found in appendix 4.

Partnerships and collaboration

The successful delivery of this project will not only depend on the new staff and volunteers, but also on other DDC staff and a number of partner organisations.

Community Development Officers from the Communication and Engagement team will support with the coordination and delivery of the activity programme. Communication Officers will provide advice and guidance on marketing and will also assist with the delivery of the communications for the parks through the course of the project. Our in house design studio will play a key role in developing the Kearsney Parks podcasts and film.

A number of partnerships have emerged as we developed our project and they will play a significant role in delivering the project and HLF outcomes. Kent Gardens Trust played an important role in our round 1 bid and we will continue to work with their members to share knowledge about the gardens' design and significance.

We have a strong relationship with Rippledawn Education Centre, who will deliver lessons for schools, train teachers and help us to develop our education resources.

Kent Woodland Employment Scheme will help us to deliver a key part of our MMP and we can help their apprentices develop new skills.

We will also build on positive relationships we have developed with a variety of community organisations, including River and Temple Ewell Parish Councils, local schools, Canterbury Christchurch University, Dover Tales, and Canterbury Archaeological Trust to benefit both the project and their organisation.

We are also developing a partnership with the local teams of national organisations including the National Trust, English Heritage, The Land Trust and Kent Wildlife Trust to coordinate existing volunteering opportunities, provide new opportunities and share experiences.

Budget

The total cost of employing staff and delivering the activity programme, as well as detailed costs for activities, volunteering and training are in section 6.

The costs for individual activities have largely been established by asking delivery partners and/or suppliers to provide a quote for providing staff, materials and anything else needed to deliver activities. As a result, we are confident that the costs included in our activity plan are realistic and have therefore included contingency at 5%.

We have calculated staff costs by taking current salaries and including 2% inflation each year of the project, in line with HR estimates of salary inflation for the life of the project.

Marketing and Promotion

We will develop and improve the promotion methods used during the development phase of our project to promote the parks, activities and events. Methods have included:

- Creating a Kearsney Parks brand
- Dedicated website (www.kearsneyparks.co.uk) including
 - o heritage information about the parks
 - o how to get involved in the project
 - o Project documents
 - o How to get there
- Press releases
- Email newsletter with over 500 recipients
- Twitter updates with over 300 followers
- Posters and flyers onsite and in local community facilities

At the start of our delivery phase we will work with key stakeholders to assess the effectiveness of these measures and update our methods as appropriate.

Marketing and promotion will play a key role in ensuring the project reaches our target audiences. To help reach low income families, budget conscious adults and young people looking for employment related opportunities, we will target the 4 lower super output areas identified in section 4 by:

- promoting activities and events through existing organisations and venues
- producing a newsletter early in the project to be delivered to every home in the 4 lower super output areas, providing information on future activities, apprenticeships and training
- deliver outreach work in these areas including attending community meetings, having a stall at community events, showing the Kearsney Parks film at community venues

We will work with the Dover District Disability Association to identify ways to reach a wider range of disabled people and continue to build relationships directly with teachers and schools within the catchment area. Promoting the project to these two audiences is likely to predominantly involve staff time (attending meetings, assemblies, events, etc.).

5.6 How the project will deliver Parks for People outcomes

We will improve the way the parks and their heritage are managed by:

- securing staff resources including a Park Development Manager and two apprentices to support our existing park keeper
- increasing awareness among staff and Kearsney Parks Forum members through training in the management of historic landscapes and the significance of the parks and their heritage
- increasing community involvement, helping the Forum and other user groups become more confident, skilled and representative
- establishing a volunteering programme and developing skilled, experienced and enthusiastic volunteers
- creating a stronger financial position by reinvesting increased income from land hire, commercial events and café rent into the parks
- implementing and regularly reviewing our MMP and retaining a Green Flag and Green Heritage Awards

We will improve the physical state of the parks and their heritage by:

- delivering capital work to restore Mawson's original design for Russell Gardens and key landscape features in Kearsney Abbey
- carrying out repairs to listed and other heritage structures
- removing culverted sections of the River Dour
- improving maintenance arrangements for the calcareous grassland on Coxhill Mount

The heritage of the parks will be better interpreted and explained as a result of:

- new onsite and online interpretation, maps, signage and access information
- a wide range of activities to uncover, share and celebrate heritage including research projects, self-guided trails and audio tours, creative workshops, heritage events
- a schools programme, onsite and online education resources and teacher training

The heritage of the parks will be uncovered and made accessible following:

- volunteer research projects, archaeological digs and an oral history project to fill gaps in information about periods in the parks' history and people's experience of them
- the development of our website to signpost people to countrywide primary sources of information about the parks
- outputs from activities and events will be available online, in the café, at the Dover Museum and at our annual exhibition

Individuals will have gained skills as a result of:

- training for staff and Forum members in the management of historic landscapes, volunteer coordination, and disability awareness
- volunteering and training in park management, horticulture and maintenance, access to heritage and events

- training for teachers to increase their confidence in using the parks to deliver lessons outside the classroom and specific lessons in the parks
- horticultural apprenticeships
- general project and construction-specific work experience placements

People will have developed their knowledge and understanding of heritage as a result of:

- our activity programme, helping visitors engage with landscape, ecological, industrial and social heritage in ways that meets their needs and interests
- improved access to Russell Gardens, helping more people appreciate its spectacular design
- value for money cultural events, bringing new audiences to the park
- improved onsite interpretation
- increased school visits as a result of our new educational resources, teacher training and schools advisory panel
- increased volunteering

People will have volunteered time and benefitted from the experience as a result of:

- new volunteering opportunities in park management, horticulture and maintenance, access to heritage and events
- coordination by our new Volunteer Coordinator
- opportunities to take part in training and social events for volunteers
- the ongoing development of the Kearsney Parks Forum and Kearsney Parks Events Group
- establishing a Dover-specific partnership between organisations offering heritage volunteering opportunities

The local area will be a better place to live, work or visit as a result of:

- the restoration of the parks' role as a venue for sociable cultural events
- capital works to create more accessible and attractive visitor facilities, park infrastructure and local pedestrian network
- our travel plan and the associated reduction in visitors driving to the parks
- more opportunities to use healthy travel options and take part in physical activities, leading to a better and healthier quality of life
- more opportunities to get involved in the parks through the Forum, volunteering, activities and events and to meet a more diverse cross section of the community, with associated benefits for community cohesion

Negative environmental impacts will be reduced as a result of:

- lower carbon emissions from fewer visitors traveling by car and a more energy and water efficient building
- the reuse and recycling of materials from our construction phase site waste management plan
- using environmentally sensitive materials including building finishes, FSC-certified timber and peat-free compost

More people and a wider range of people will engage with the parks and their heritage as a result of:

- free and value for money activities and events focused on our target audiences
- outreach work targeted at areas and communities affected by deprivation
- more accessible parks, better pre-information about access, disability awareness training for staff and ongoing collaboration with Dover District Disability Association
- young people taking part in heritage and horticulture related training and work experience and establishing a Young People's Panel to ensure we meet their needs
- establishing of a BME Panel and overcoming barriers faced by communities in accessing the parks and project activities

5.7 Evaluation and measuring success

We will collect evaluation data and assess the impact of the project to ensure we are delivering both project and HLF outcomes, as well as reaching our target audiences. We will use the results to identify when the project is performing successfully and equally when it needs reviewing and adjusting.

Our evaluation framework is structured around the Parks for People outcomes for heritage, people and communities, with additional indicators that will help us to assess the impact of the project on our target audiences. Our action plan includes a budget for evaluation which will cover the cost of collecting data and small incentives to encourage participants to provide feedback.

Our baseline data and targets are set out in our evaluation table in appendix 2. It sets out both the Parks for People and project specific indicators.

Responsibilities

The Project Manager will have overall responsibility for coordinating project evaluation, reporting on success, instigating changes in response to feedback, and completing the HLF monitoring spreadsheet each year. Different members of our team will be responsible for collating and collecting data:

Project Manager

- capital works and interpretation
- promotion and website
- income
- travel plan initiatives
- annual visitor survey and observation studies

Parks Development Manager

- Green Flag and Green Heritage scores

Community Engagement Officer

- events and activities, participant numbers and profile
- learning resources and partnerships

- jobs, training, apprenticeships and work experience placements

Volunteer Coordinator

- volunteers, hours, activities and training

Data collection

Project records

Project staff will record information relating to Green Flag and Green Heritage scores, capital improvements to heritage features, new interpretation, additional income, learning resources, activities and events, training, volunteer and participant numbers and profiles.

Annual visitor survey

Our first annual visitor survey established baseline data on general visitor satisfaction, understanding of heritage, propensity to visit Russell Gardens, postcode and travel habits. This will be repeated each year in August and September and will be carried out by project staff, DDC Communication and Engagement team, volunteers and temporary staff if necessary. We aim to obtain 100 responses through face to face and online surveys. A template is in appendix 2.

Participant feedback

People who participate in activities, events, volunteering and training will be asked to complete a short feedback card so that we can record profile information (gender, age, ethnicity, disability, and postcode) and obtain qualitative information about the activities as well as the difference they have made to people.

Double sided A7 feedback cards were trialled during development phase events and participants were generally happy to complete them because they were brief but also provided space for open, qualitative responses. The limited space for detailed responses is outweighed by the greater likelihood that people will complete them. Participants completing feedback cards will be entered into a draw for a small prize. A template is in appendix 2.

Observation Study

Our observational study will allow us to record and estimate total visits, visitor profile (gender, age, ethnicity, disability) and visitor activity. We completed a baseline study during the development phase of the project and this will continue in the delivery phase. It will be carried out by project staff, the DDC Communication & Engagement team, volunteers and temporary staff if necessary.

We know that there are significant variations in visitor number depending on weather and school holidays. To deal with this, the observational study takes place over 3 one week periods throughout the year - May school holiday, August school holiday and November. Full details about this method and extrapolation, as well as a template recording sheet, are in appendix 2.

Although this approach is dependent on the ability of the observer to estimate profile information, it does allow us to collect information about visitors in a reasonable amount of time and with less time and resources than a face to face survey. It also overcomes the problem of siting electronic counters in parks with many entrances and open boundaries. Using the same methodology at the same time each year and extrapolating it in the same way will ensure that the benefits of this approach outweigh the disadvantages.

Key stakeholder interviews

To obtain in-depth qualitative data on the difference the project is making to people and communities, we will identify key individuals to interview face to face or on the phone about the difference the project is making to them and/or the community they represent. The interviews will take place at the same time as the annual visitor survey and will be conducted by project staff.

We will aim to interview at least three people, each representing a key group in the project. This could include a representative from the Kearsney Parks Forum, Events Group, Quilting Group, BME Panel, Dover District Disability Association, School Advisory Panel, apprentices, volunteers and project steering group.

The results will help us to tell a story that demonstrates the impact of the project on an individual, a group of people, the wider community or our organisation. During the course of the project, if our data shows that we are not reaching particular audiences we will also use interviews with representatives of non-user groups to identify barriers and how they can be overcome.

Target audiences

We will be able to assess whether target audiences are benefitting from the project in the following ways:

Target audience	Evaluation
Low income families with children	Observation study, visitor survey, feedback cards
Budget conscious adults	Observation study, visitor survey, feedback cards
Young people looking for employment & skills	Project records and key stakeholder interviews
Disabled people	Observation study and key stakeholder interviews
Schools	Project records, key stakeholder interviews and feedback cards

For consistency in our data collection and evaluation we will use the following definitions:

Low income / budget conscious – people living in the postcodes which cover the 4 lower super output areas identified in section 4 and listed in appendix 2

Disabled people – people with observable disabilities and members of groups representing disabled people

Young people – people under 25

5.8 The legacy and sharing our experience

The lasting legacies for heritage, people and communities will include restored and sensitively improved Kearsney Parks; increased understanding of their unique landscapes and social and cultural histories; a pool of skilled and knowledgeable people with access to a lasting body of evidence about the parks; fewer negative environmental impacts; the Council and community working in partnership to maintain, promote and advocate for the parks in the long term.

The project will leave behind improved visitor infrastructure and more comprehensive interpretation that will see a wider range of people using and enjoying the parks and their heritage. The parks will once again become an outdoor cultural venue, building on their historic use as a venue for community events, musical performances and open air theatre. We will coordinate an events and activities programme that is largely organised and delivered by volunteers, community groups and commercial operators. The Kearsney Parks website will provide historical information uncovered during the project, as well as education resources. Copies of our conservation plan and other project outputs will be deposited with the Dover Library and Dover Museum

The park community will have the skills and experience to organise and deliver their own events and heritage activities, as well as getting involved in strategic decision-making about the parks. The Kearsney Parks Forum and Kearsney Parks Event Group will be properly constituted, community-led, representative of the local community and working in a positive partnership with the council. Schools and other education providers will have the infrastructure and physical and online resources required to make much greater use of the parks for formal education. Teachers will have the skills, confidence and access to educational resources to continue using the parks in the long term.

Income from the hire of land, a share of the profits from commercial events and increased rental income from the café will help to provide more sustainable funding for the long term conservation and maintenance of the parks, as well as the continuation of the Parks Development Manager and Park Ranger posts.

Our organisation and staff will have developed significantly over the life of the project. Existing staff will have developed skills and enthusiasm for the parks unique features and the district's wider heritage more generally. Our apprentices will be trained for new roles in the horticultural sector. We will have policies and procedures for engaging and managing volunteers which are imbedded in the council and will have a confident and enthusiastic volunteer base to help with park and heritage related projects in Kearsney and elsewhere in the district. We will have demonstrated our commitment to engaging the community in parks and this will have a lasting impact on the way we work together with local communities to improve other parts of area. We will have stronger partnerships with other heritage organisations in our area, coordinating our volunteering efforts and helping to confirm Dover's place as a significant heritage tourism destination.

We will share our experience of the project, along with that of our partners and participants, through our regular email newsletter and on social media. We will share our experiences with other professionals by taking part in related conferences, contributing to the online HLF community, welcoming other projects to visit and discuss what went well and what could have been done differently. Our end of project evaluation will help HLF share our experiences with future Parks for People projects.