

# Parks & Green Spaces

Annual Report  
2023/2024



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# Introduction

This is the seventh Annual Report for Hackney's Parks and Green Spaces Service, and a great opportunity to review progress and reflect on the challenges and achievements of the last year.

In November 2023, I was elected Mayor, and having also been the Cabinet Member for Parks and Leisure for the past 4 years, I'm more determined than ever to make Hackney a greener and healthier borough. Through investment in green infrastructure, green skills and community energy, I will continue to work towards Hackney's climate goals. Each year, the challenges that the service faces become greater, but I am really proud to see the efforts of the team and our dedicated volunteers reflected in our busy, beautiful parks and green spaces.

Despite extreme weather conditions, budget limitations and rising costs, we have delivered welcoming, accessible and well maintained green spaces for all in Hackney to enjoy. This has been recognised this year with an incredible 31 Green Flags. By upholding an open, innovative and collaborative approach, both internally and with residents, we have successfully engaged local communities

in shaping our ideas and designs, with green spaces, heritage buildings and parks regulations benefitting from local insight. We've also delivered on our goals to be more environmentally sustainable.

I am incredibly proud to share the work of our dedicated staff and volunteers and this report will share the great work they do day to day to deliver the commitments of our Parks and Green Spaces Strategy. Thank you so much to all of the staff and volunteers for their commitment to the parks and green spaces and to the communities they serve each and every day.



**Caroline Woodley**  
Mayor of Hackney





# Working with communities

Hackney is a borough defined by its rich mix of cultures and communities. In our Parks and Green Spaces Strategy we committed to engaging with local people, volunteers and staff to improve our parks and green spaces, providing more opportunities for people to learn and develop skills, and establishing a comprehensive volunteering programme.



## COMMITMENT 1

Engage local communities, residents and tenants in improvements that affect their local parks and housing green spaces, with continued engagement from outset to delivery, with a special effort made to reach underrepresented groups.

## New Cross Fire Memorial

The first permanent public tribute to the victims of the New Cross Fire was refurbished and unveiled in March 2024 in Hackney Downs. The memorial project was led by the 'Older Generation, Younger Generation' (OGYG) community organisation and supported by a grant from the Mayor of London's Commission for Diversity in the Public Realm.



### **Engage residents on St Thomas Long Burial Ground:**

This year, we consulted local residents on St Thomas Long Burial Ground and asked their thoughts on installing a brand new entrance on Well Street. 69.2 % of residents said that they would support this change. The new entrance has now been installed, allowing greater and easier access for residents.

### **Engage people on West Reservoir Improvements:**

In April/May 2023, we carried out an intensive consultation with residents on proposed improvements to West Reservoir, including upgrading the existing facilities and opening up the green space to the public for the first time. We held a number of drop in sessions as well as focus groups with user groups. The consultation ran for 8 weeks and we spoke to 794 people, gaining immensely helpful feedback. The improvements have begun and will continue to be implemented throughout 2024/2025.

## **COMMITMENT 4**

**Develop a work experience and apprenticeship programme and explore supported opportunities for people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.**



In the past year we proudly hosted six work experience placements, with durations ranging from half a week to two weeks. These placements have provided valuable hands-on experience across various sites including Haggerston Park, London Fields, Springfield Park, Hackney Downs and Charles Square.

Each site offered unique opportunities for the participants to engage with different aspects of our operations, allowing them to gain a comprehensive understanding of the diverse work we do. Out of the 6 placements we have hosted, 4 of the students say they would now consider a job in horticulture.



## COMMITMENT 8

Undertake a review of Hackney Parks Forum to ensure that it is fit for purpose, representative of our diverse local communities, and a useful network for Park user groups to share learning and ideas around parks and green spaces.

Hackney Parks Forum is the umbrella body for all park user groups in Hackney. This year we undertook a survey with forum members to find out how the group could be more effective. The review identified ten actions which are now being worked on. Early improvements include setting up a Whatsapp group for user groups, and scheduling meetings in advance throughout the year to enable forward planning. In 2024/25 we will be running a series of free training sessions for park user groups to increase their skills.

## COMMITMENT 10

Set up regular volunteer 'clean up days' in our parks and launch a campaign to reduce littering.

We have supported several local clean up days via our park user groups as well as yearly events such as World Clean Up Day. Over the course of 2023/24 we have delivered over 1000 hours of litter picks across our parks and green spaces from both corporate volunteer groups and local people.

We have also installed several dual rubbish/recycling bins that now include litter pickers that members of the public can access in order to litter pick across our parks and green spaces.

Over the course of 2023/24 we have delivered over **1000 hours of litter picks across our parks and green spaces** from both corporate volunteer groups and local people.

# Creating more welcoming spaces

We continue to maintain and improve our high quality parks and green spaces. In 2022/23 we secured a record 29 Green Flags, with Abney Park gaining the prestigious award for the first time this year.

## Completion of the Fairchild's Garden Improvement Project.

Fairchild's Garden Improvement Project was completed in early 2024. The small park, previously known as Hackney Road Recreation Ground, is the former burial ground of St Leonard's Church Shoreditch and contains the remains of Thomas Fairchild, a notable horticulturist.

The improvement works have transformed the previously disused and unwelcoming space into a safe, welcoming, accessible and flexible space that meets the needs of the local community. Works include the installation of a kiosk, widening of the main entrance and new granite entrance steps to an open central area.



New planting, hedges and raised steel planters, a grassed area and raised decking provides informal seating opportunities beneath trees. New benches and cycle parking are coloured with a bright pink that celebrates the flower created by Thomas Fairchild, "Fairchild's Mule".

The heritage of the site has been celebrated with engraving on the entrance steps, the

relocation of Thomas Fairchild's memorial plaque and interpretation plaques throughout the site.

The overall outcome is a distinctive, high quality public space that subtly incorporates the heritage into the fabric of the design.

# Creating more welcoming spaces

## Audrey Street transformation



In September 2017 a temporary school was erected on a hardstanding area on the edge of Haggerston Park whilst a permanent new school (City of London Academy Shoreditch Park) was built near Shoreditch Park.

Last year the temporary school was dismantled and the land transferred back to the Leisure, Parks and Green Spaces service to reinstate into parkland. The new landscape design was developed following consultation with local people and meetings with the park user group.

The large area of hardstanding where the school was previously situated has now been transformed into a beautiful new green space.

The improvements include:

1. Improved access to the site
2. Implementation of habitats to improve biodiversity
3. New tree planting
4. Wildflower planting throughout
5. New links to the nearby orchard area

## Depot improvements

In the past year we refurbished two park depots in Millfields and Haggerston to ensure that facilities for frontline staff are equivalent to office based staff. Millfields depot has been completely rebuilt with new secure storage.



# In 2023/2024 we also delivered the following:

## **COMMITMENT 12**

**Refurbish all of our park toilets, and explore opportunities for additional toilets linked to new cafe facilities**

As part of the Abney restoration project, new toilets were built in the park cafe, allowing people to spend more time exploring and enjoying the park.

## **COMMITMENT 13:**

**Continue to consult people on Hackney's Dog Control Orders / Public Space Protection Orders and byelaws to help parks feel safer**

In January 2024 we consulted the public on proposed updates to our Dog Control Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO). The PSPO defines controls on dog fouling, areas where dogs are not permitted (such as playgrounds) and areas where dogs need to be on leads. We heard from 3989 residents and used the feedback to implement updated PSPOs in early 2024.

## **COMMITMENT 15:**

**Work with partners to prescribe and promote activities across parks and green spaces to improve people's physical, mental and social health and wellbeing**

We've worked in partnership with exercise contractors, volunteers, NHS, community organisations and the Ramblers to deliver a weekly offer of free walks within Clissold Park, Butterfield Green, London Fields, Millfields Park, Haggerston Park and Shoreditch Park. The walks provide a great opportunity for the user to meet new people, explore their local area and reap the benefits of being outdoors and active.

In addition to this we provided monthly walks covering historical and interesting topics, with parts of the routes encompassing green spaces such as Abney Park and Stoke Newington Common.

## **COMMITMENT 16:**

**Introduce three new food growing projects on housing estates each year**

In 23/24 the Council's resident participation team, alongside residents and other stakeholders, worked to introduce three new food growing projects on Kyverdale Road, Kingsgate Estate and Wick Village. Residents took part in training with the organisation 'Seeds of Growth' and delivered numerous improvements to enable food growing opportunities on the sites. The groups on each estate formally organised themselves and grow and tend to their crops communally.

## COMMITMENT 17:

Expand the provision of affordable and healthy food and drink in parks and green spaces

**Fairchild's Garden:** In early 2024 a new kiosk was built in Fairchild's Garden as part of the refurbishment of the space. The kiosk is set to open in 2024/25 and provide an additional opportunity to buy refreshments in one of our parks.

**Abney Park Cafe:** As part of the Abney Park Cemetery restoration project, a new cafe was built to provide visitors with food and drink while they visit and pass through the park.

## COMMITMENT 19:

Invest in a network of new, free, outdoor gym facilities

### Outdoor Gym - Shoreditch Park

A high number of respondents to the Shoreditch Park Improvement consultation specifically asked for outdoor gym equipment and for the Council to introduce courts and facilities to play a wider variety of sports. In response to the consultation we introduced a new sports hub within the park which includes a new beach volleyball court, a multi-use games area, table tennis tables, new outdoor gym, water fountain, trees and a seating area to provide much-needed facilities for local people. The outdoor gym consists of a mixture of equipment to carry out both cardiovascular and weight training exercises including a Cross Trainer, Spinning Bikes, Hand Bikes and a Large Rig.



# Abney Park Cemetery restoration and opening:

The project to conserve and develop all aspects of Abney Park, including its built and natural heritage, with support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) is now complete.

We've brought Abney Park's historic chapel back into use as a venue. A new cafe, public toilets, community room and makers' workshops are all open at the park's main entrance. There's a new accessible entrance on Church Street, and improved signage throughout the park.



# Being more environmentally sustainable:

## COMMITMENT 21

**Work towards becoming a Zero Carbon service by 2031**

We installed 10 new drinking water fountains across our parks in 2023/24 to reduce people's reliance on disposable plastic bottles.

We installed new Air Source heat pumps and electric vehicle charging points in the newly refurbished Haggerston and Millfields depots, and a grey water attenuation tank in Haggerston Park to store rainwater for watering plants.

## COMMITMENT 22

**Aim to re-use more green waste within parks and green spaces**

This year we introduced two large metal composters in Springfield Park and Abney Park to compost the food waste produced by the cafes, depots and offices at each site. We hope to add further composters to other sites over the coming years.

## COMMITMENT 24

**Replace all single use bins with dual use recycling bins by 2031**

In 2023/24 we installed 65 dual use recycling bins, including the replacement of 47 bins at Clissold Park. All of the bins in Hackney's parks and green spaces are now dual use.

## COMMITMENT 26

**Increase biodiversity across Hackney in line with the emerging Local Nature Recovery Plan, creating more wild areas across all parks and green spaces**

### Rewild London Old Lea River Restoration

In 23/24 The Wildlife Gardeners of Haggerston, in partnership with Hackney Council, continued a project to bring the Old Lea back to health by improving existing habitats and creating new ones for nature to thrive.

The project included:

- Improving existing habitats and adding new places for wildlife to feel safe in.
- Removing invasive species such as Himalayan Balsam which outcompetes other species and offer limited benefit for wildlife.



- Planting beneficial plants such as Common Reed and Purple Loosestrife to provide places for wildlife to live and provide food for their full lifecycle.
- Securing fallen trees in the river to add natural complexity to the flow and aid aquatic wildlife as well as provide refuge for birds which hunt along the river.
- Monthly monitoring of specific aquatic creatures whose presence tells us much about the quality of the river water

## London Fields biodiversity improvements

In 2023/24 the London Fields User Group was awarded £50,000 from the Mayor of London's Grow Back Greener Fund to enhance London Fields for biodiversity. The user group have transformed various parts of the park, improving the woodland area, introducing wetland and meadow habitats as well as enhancing a green classroom area. A number of loggery habitats, a sand habitat and a pond have also been installed in the park near Lansdowne Drive.



## North Marsh Pavilion greening

With the help of local experts Russell Miller and John Little, the areas around North Marsh Pavilion in Hackney Marshes was improved by the addition of flower rich pollinator gardens, bee paths, hedgehog homes and log piles. These improvements provide much needed refuge for a variety of small mammals, amphibians and invertebrates. 400 native trees have also been planted to create a wider wildlife corridor around North Marsh.

### COMMITMENT 29:

**Follow the recommendations of the emerging Green Infrastructure Strategy where they relate to parks and green spaces, including identifying opportunities to connect parks and green spaces together.**

## Planting and Biodiversity Enhancements - Shoreditch Park

Improvements to biodiversity and climate resilience were a key part of the Shoreditch Park Improvement Project - with the implementation of rain gardens, permeable surfaces, hedges, log piles, wildflower meadows and planting, all helping to encourage insects, improve drainage and mitigate against climate change induced flash flooding.

# Accounts 2023/2024

## Parks and Green Spaces capital expenditure 2023/2024

Type of work/ service or goods	Sum of financial spend
Abney Park Restoration Project	£2,211,770.57
Connecting Green Spaces - St Thomas's	£80,237.50
Daubeney Fields	£63,015.34
Drinking Water Fountains	£64,002.27
Fairchild's Garden	£698,532.39
Green Building Fund	£50,000.00
Grow Back Greener - North Marsh	£44,307.03
Litter Bin Replacement	£72,826.27
Millfields Park Depot Works	£150,392.60
Parks Depots Refurbishment	£448,704.69
Parks Equipment and Machinery	£85,415.00
Parks Public Conveniences and Cafes	£24,455.91
Parks Infrastructure Works	£606,542.59
Pathway Repair Programme	£235,438.66
Play Area Refurbishments	£65,328.22
Rewild London River Lea	£57,323.15
Shoreditch Park	£101,263.97
West Reservoir Improvements	£725,253.17
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>£5,784,809.33</b>

## Parks and Green Spaces income 2023/2024

Income Area	£
Contributions from partners	£139,917
Corporate volunteering	£25,695
Grant	£99,387
Grounds maintenance income	£61,785
Hire charges	£147,542
Housing services	£1,210
Internal procurement	£134,419
Recharge to capital	£143,098
Rents	£7,500
Sponsorship	£24,520
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>£785,073</b>

## Parks and Green Spaces expenditure (revenue) 2023/2024

Budget area	£
Employee costs	£4,377,835
Premises costs	£884,427
Supply & services	£372,180
Transport costs	£237,816
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>£5,872,258</b>



# Future priorities

Looking ahead to 2024/25 we will be delivering the following improvements:

## Hackney Buzzline:

In 2024/25 we will support local volunteers to create a 4km pollinator corridor which will enhance habitats throughout Hackney. The buzzline will stretch through Mabley Green, Daubeney Fields, Millfields and Hackney Downs.

## Kiosk openings:

In 2024/25 we plan on opening new cafés in Abney Park and a new kiosk in Fairchild's Garden, delivering on our goal to provide more welcoming spaces and healthy food provisions in our green spaces.

## West Reservoir:

We will be updating the leisure facilities at West Reservoir, and opening the eastern bank of the reservoir to the public for the first time.

## Play Areas:

We will improve play areas in Clapton Common, Hackney Downs, Stonebridge Gardens & Well Street Common in 2024/25.

## Park Depots:

We will continue to create fit for purpose depots at Clissold Park, Hackney Downs & London Fields providing quality welfare facilities for front line staff.

## Clissold Park Toilets:

Clissold Park has over 3 million visits a year. We plan to upgrade and refurbish the toilets in Clissold Park, creating a more welcoming space for visitors.

## Daubeney Fields:

Daubeney Fields will see the installation of a new path network, further improvements to the entrances, an upgraded adventure playground and installation of a new outdoor gym.



# Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all of our staff and volunteers for their hard work looking after Hackney's parks and green spaces in 2023/24.

## Parks staff

Trinity Adomako  
Joe Ahvee  
Steve Akinwale  
Clement Allen  
Benjamin Attafuah  
Rudolph Bartley  
Mick Beanse  
Curtis Bent  
Mark Bibber  
Alvin Blake  
Paul Bouyen  
Wendy Bowes  
Anthony Brown  
Georgie Brown  
Delroy Bryn  
David Burdis

Stanley Chapman  
Andrew Clifford  
Modo Colley  
Cihan Cosgun  
Romeo Cupee  
Norman Dacosta  
Tom Dawson  
Jason Deweyleader  
Raymond Dixon  
Darren Dorsett  
Leanne Douglas  
Christopher Easton  
Freddy Ehikhamem  
Somia Elmartaoui  
Obed Gambah  
Stella Garman  
Quinten Geurs

Roy Glaze  
Malachi Gokhul  
Lemory Grenyion  
Mia Guercini  
Ignacio Gutierrez  
Catherine Hay  
Jerone Haywood  
Peter Harman  
Rasa Harman  
Daven Hastings  
Kishrow Heath  
Graham Hodgkin  
Ian Holland  
Robert Hughes  
Bruce Irving  
Deniz Isilsoy  
Lloyd Jackson  
Martin Jarmaine  
Leslie Jones  
Selim Kelmendi  
Stephen Knight  
Peter Kurajda  
Francisco Lopez  
Frank Magloire  
Alex Mair

Gary March  
James Martin  
Phil Matijuk  
Desmond McAdam  
Horace McKen  
Aytac Mehmet  
Hassan Miller  
Edison Mongolo  
Gilbert Mulewa  
Martin Mwachrio  
Aaron Myall  
Daniel Nevill  
Teddy Ngade  
James O'Donnell  
Peter O'Reily  
Cetin Omer  
Yaw Owuso  
Victoria Page  
Sam Parry  
David Pentland  
Junior Pierre  
Anna Pisney  
Jon Price  
David Proll  
John Purcell

Stephen Reeves  
Lino Ravis  
James Rogers  
Sam Samuals  
Francesco Sforza  
Dawn Simpson  
Vincent Sinanan  
Julie Simpson  
Carl Stark

Sandor Timar  
Katie Tomkins  
Marco Trevisan  
Leon Vernon  
Amarah White  
Mark White  
Jonathan Williams  
Terry Woodroffe  
Abubakar Yasin





## User Groups, Friends Groups and Interest Groups

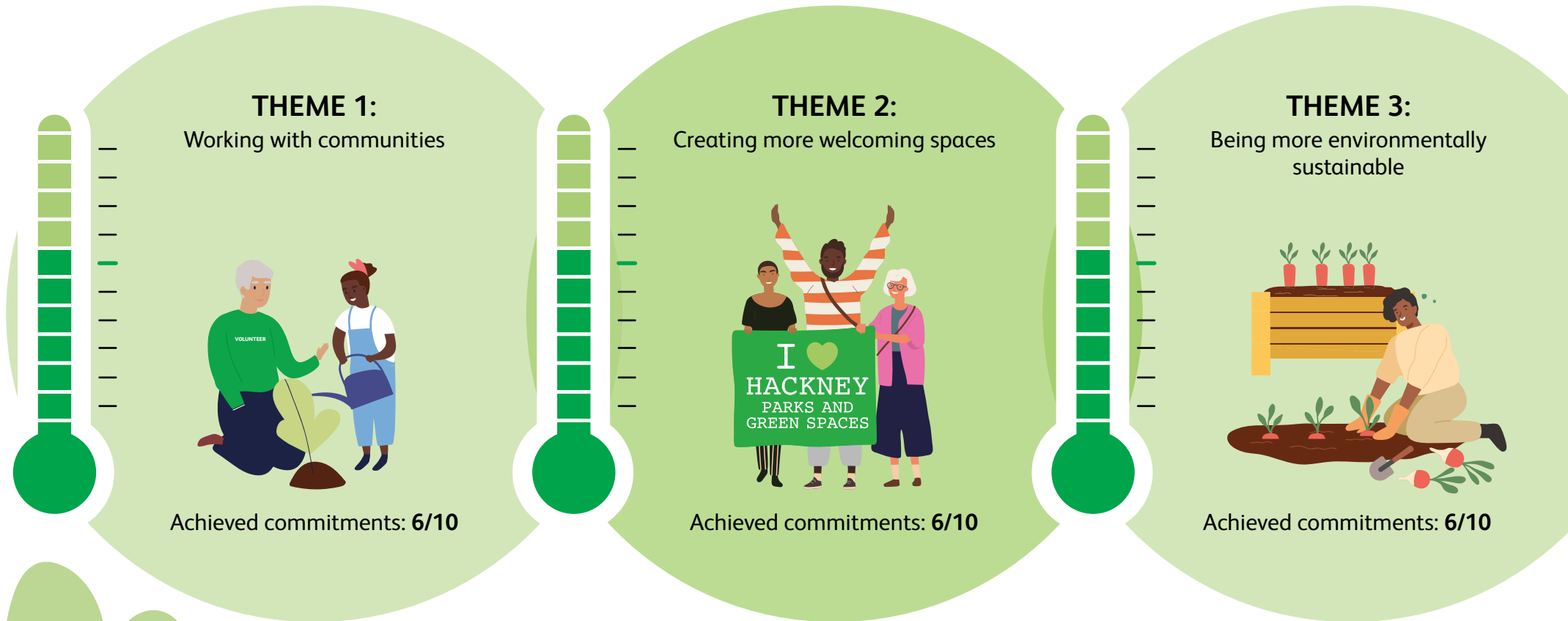
Abney Park User Group  
Albion Square Residents Association  
Butterfield Green User Group  
Clapton Pond Neighbourhood Action Group  
Clissold Park User Group  
Daubeney Fields Forever  
De Beauvoir Gardeners  
East and West Bank Nature Reserve Group  
Hackney Downs User Group  
Hackney Parks Forum  
Haggerston Park User Group  
Friends of Kynaston Gardens

London Fields User Group  
Millfields User Group  
ReNature  
Robin Hood Community Garden  
Springfield Park User Group  
Stoke Newington Common User Group  
Tree Musketeers  
Well Street Common User Group  
Niall Weir and Sam Silverlock  
West Hackney Recreation Ground  
Wildlife Gardeners of Haggerston



# How we're doing – Strategy Progress in 2023/24

Each year we will monitor and chart our progress towards achieving all 30 commitments in our Parks and Green Spaces Strategy. The progress we have made in 2023/24 can be seen below:



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