

Hermitage Park Heritage-led Regeneration Project

END PROJECT REPORT

Release: H&L Area Committee

Date: 1st August 2023

Author: Charlie Cairns/ Update by Arlene Cullum in conjunction with CC

Owner: Transformation Projects and Regeneration

Document Number: 1 Version 8



INDEX

Section	Page
Document Location	3
End Project Report history	3
Revision History	3
Approvals	3
Distribution	4
1 Purpose of the Document	
2 Background	
3 Project Objectives	
3.1 Aim	
3.2 Approved purposes	
4 Project Performance	
4.1 Consultation, design, masterplanning and funding	
4.2 Capital works	
4.3 Activities programme	
4.4 Community involvement	
5 Performance against Budget, Time, and approved purposes	
5.1 Budget	
5.2 Timescale	
5.3 Approved purposes	
6 Handover arrangements	
7 Outstanding/residual issues and risks	
8 Lessons learned	
8.1 Project management and reporting	
8.2 Partnerships – delivery	
8.3 Partnerships – activity	
8.4 Community Support	
8.5 Innovation and climate change mitigation	

End Project Report History

Document Location

The source of the document will be found in:

Directory Path : edt\15. Social Enterprise Team\2 - Projects\Hermitage Park\Reports and paper to council\DMT\2023 end of project

Document: HP end of project report v5

Revision History

Date of this revision: 1st August 2023 Date of Next revision: n/a

Revision Number	Revision date	Previous revision date	Summary of Changes	Changes marked
0.1	14 th November 2022	n/a	Initial Outline Draft	No
0.2	3 rd May 2023	14 th November 2022	Changes to structure, details added, photos added	No
1.0		3 rd May 2023	None – DMT 3 rd Mary	None
1.8	1 st August 2023	3 rd May 2023	Minor updates for Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee.	No

Approvals

This document requires the following approvals.

Name	Title	Date of Issue	Version
Audrey Martin	Transformation Project and Regeneration Manager	14 th August 2023	1.8
Fergus Murray	Head of Development and Economic Growth	14 th August 2023	1.8
Tom Murphy	Operations Manager, Roads and Infrastructure	14 th August 2023	1.8

Distribution

In addition to the above, this document has been distributed to

Name	Title	Date of Issue	Version
DMT	n/a	3 rd May 2023	0.5
Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee	n/a	18th August 2023	1.8

1 Purpose of the Document

This document will report on how well the Hermitage Park Heritage-led Regeneration Project has performed against the purposes approved by the Council and main funding partners

The purpose of this document is to:

- To ensure appropriate communication of Project Closure;
- To record how well the project has performed against its approved purposes;
- Check all purposes have been completed and approved;
- Check that outstanding issues are closed or actioned for follow up;
- Communicate continuing project or operational risk;
- To pass on any lessons that can be usefully applied to other Projects;
- To ensure all Project Documentation is complete and archived

2 Background

Hermitage Park in Helensburgh is an important heritage asset and includes the town's 'A' Listed war memorial. The Hermitage Park project aimed to create a sustainable park for residents and visitors to the area and a resource for the local community. It aimed to deliver outcomes related to the economy, health and wellbeing, culture and heritage.

The park was successful in its stage two funding application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) for £2,333,247. This was increased with an approved uplift to £2,382,300 to help mitigate the impacts of Covid19 on the delivery programme. The Council approved the NLHF Terms of Grant for the conservation, development and reconfiguration of the recreational facilities of Hermitage Park in Helensburgh on 21st January 2016 and permission to start was granted by HLF on 4th May 2016. The funding contract with NLHF was to deliver a range of approved purposes.

There are five parts to the project:

1. Consultation, design, masterplanning and funding.
2. The capital contract to repurpose the landscape of Hermitage Park.
3. The capital contract to construct a new Pavilion.
4. Activities programme developed and delivered as part of the approved purposes.
5. Identifying, developing and maintaining community involvement.

3 Project Objectives (taken from NLHF approved purposes)

3.1 AIM - Four broad outcomes were agreed with NLHF, as follows;

- The park and its heritage will be better managed

- The park and its heritage will be in a better condition
- The heritage of the park will be better interpreted and explained
- The heritage of the park will be better identified and recorded

From these broad themes a number of more specific outcomes emerged which then formed the approved purposes

3.2 Approved purposes;

1. To carry out physical repair works to the built heritage features in Hermitage Park, as outlined in the second round application. These include the War Memorial, Japanese Garden, 18th century mill remains and Victorian wishing well.
2. Reintroduction of Victorian walkways and footbridges along the burn, with repairs to drystone banking and bank stabilisation work.
3. To deliver the new Pavilion building which will act as a hub for the park incorporating a cafe, toilets, recreational space and activities space.
4. To redesign recreational areas, creating a multi-use space for formal and informal sports. The children's play area will be moved closer to the new pavilion.
5. To install signage, interpretation panels, benches and lighting.
6. To deliver a wide range of activities as per the Activity Plan submitted with the second round application.
7. To provide training opportunities (both accredited and non-accredited) for Argyll and Bute Council staff, the Friends group and other volunteers.
8. To deliver natural heritage improvements and provide learning opportunities related to natural heritage.
9. To recruit a Full Time Park Manager.
10. To implement a new management and maintenance regime to meet Green Flag standards.

4. Project performance

4.1 Consultation, design, masterplanning and funding

The initial concept to improve Hermitage Park came from a community source, namely the Friends of Hermitage Park. They had expressed a desire to restore the park and had made an initial approach to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) for funding support. NLHF were unable to support this as the Friends did not own the Park. As a result of ownership being a key factor, the Council decided to support the aspirations of the Friends and as a result stage 1 funding from NLHF was achieved.

This initial stage 1 funding was for £169,000 from NLHF, matched with £20,000 from Argyll and Bute Council, and had the aim of allowing the development of a stage 2 application to be based on expressed community and stakeholder aspirations. This funding allowed a Project Manager post to be created.

Extensive consultations took place, a combination of open events, targeted meetings and submitted forms. This then informed the masterplanning of the Park improvements which was in itself taken forward in partnership with the community. Simultaneously a range of supporting

documents was being drawn together, including a management and maintenance plan, an interpretive plan, a conservation plan, business plan, evaluation plan and an activity plan.

This suite of documents then formed the necessary background to enable a stage 2 NLHF application to be made, resulting in the award of £2,333,300 being made on the 4th January 2016, then uplifted to £2,382,300 in March 2021.

A range of proposed works that were not eligible for inclusion in the NLHF funded works, but necessary nevertheless (for example, the car park, traffic light installation etc) attracted funding from further external sources. Thus the final costs and funding for the complete stage 2 programme is;

Funder	Amount
ABC	£380,000
NLHF	£2,382,300
MoD	£253,000
Sustrans	£335,332
War Memorial Trust	£78,550
Section 75	£75,000
Other funders	£105,355
Volunteer Time (in-kind)	£102,090
Management & Maintenance commitment	£47,200
EDST	£104,317
ABC Capital	£69,000
	£3,923,134

4.2 Capital Works

The stage 1 offer from NLHF and other partnership funding allowed capital works to take place. Two major capital contracts were procured and awarded, a groundworks contract to Hawthorn Heights Ltd, and a contract to demolish and replace the old Pavilion building, offered to Stewart and Shields Ltd. Additional capital works out with the scope of the NLHF funded programme were identified, and these attracted external funding from a range of sources. For example the 24 space car park and the traffic lights installed at the crossing on Sinclair Street were funded by a mix of a Sustrans grant, and monies obtained through a section 75 process.

Groundworks to repurpose the landscape of Hermitage Park

An extensive reconfiguration of the park landscape was undertaken as part of the overall capital programme, in light of feedback received during consultation, to remove real and perceived barriers to community use of the park. The former toilet block, and the Japanese shelter, were demolished. The landscaping contract final cost was £1,871,839, and details included the following improvements.

The landscaping restoration took place to improve and replace existing footpaths, to improve existing bridges crossing the millig burn, to extract over 80 trees opening



up sightlines and improving perceptions of safety, establishing footprint of the former Hermitage House, creating a belvedere below the war memorial, all while preserving areas of heritage interest and items of horticultural interest. A human sundial



was incorporated into the sundial garden and other areas of quality planting have been established. **Park horticulture** was redesigned to become more maintenance friendly while maintaining heritage interest.

In addition to the landscaping, the former play area was taken out and a **new play area** created at a more appropriate location in the park. Adjacent to the play area, an open tarmac plaza was created to act as a **multi-purpose venue** for a range of recreational activities.

Improvements were carried out to the **grade 1 listed war memorial** and the **walled garden** it sits within. This included cleaning and pointing on the war memorial itself, re-gilding of the cross on top of the cupola, and re-pointing of most of the walls enclosing the garden. The prominent entrance gates were removed and refurbished before being replaced, and the planting within the war memorial improved in consultation with the local community and the British Legion.



Items of significant **heritage interest**, such as the Hermits Well and the site of the former Millig Mill, have been preserved, improved and interpreted. Park lighting was improved with a new LED system being introduced.



The climate change credentials of the park were enhanced with the installation of a sustainable drainage scheme to manage run-off and protect the various park assets from damage caused by extreme weather events. The drainage system was completely reconfigured to form a **sustainable drainage system**. Rainwater is captured and directed into a swale and reed bed system, with the rate of discharge into the millig burn being controlled by a hydrobrake.

The site of the former play area was re-purposed as a **demonstration garden** for education, training and community use.

This garden has 8 growing beds available for use by community groups, Currently Alzheimers Scotland, Lockheed Martin, The Park Pavilion Café, University of the Highlands and Islands and Hermitage Primary School are all using growing beds for education, active lifestyles, therapy and low carbon local food production.

Park lighting on key thoroughfares was introduced to improve perceptions of personal safety. Additionally **CCTV at key locations** further improves safety and security. Access to the park was made safer by the installation of **traffic lights and pedestrian crossing** at the park entrance (attracting funding from Sustrans), this controlling vehicular entrance into a newly created **car park offering 23 extra parking spaces**.

The capital contract to construct a new Pavilion



A condition report revealed that the existing pavilion building in the park had asbestos, and was uneconomical to repurpose, therefore a new pavilion was required. Initial procurement failed to bring in a bid within budget but further procurement of a design and build contract was successful, with Stewart and Shields Ltd being appointed.

Built to passivhaus standards and housing a community room (available for rent), a café facility (leased to an external operator) and public toilets, the new Pavilion was handed over to Property Services in February 2021. The café facility has been successfully let to Arran Foods Ltd. who run The Park Pavilion café from it.



The passivhaus standard is met by including triple glazed windows, a PV array on the roof, an air source heat pump, extensive insulation, and a heat recovery system which capture heat generated within the building (including the café) and then filters and recirculates the heat through the building. The cost of the pavilion, as per the final certificate, was £958,041.

4.3 Activities programme (developed and delivered as part of the approved purposes)

A package of funding contained within the stage 2 programme was available to support an activities programme in the Park and to fund the post of Park Manager throughout the programme.



A range of high level aims and objectives was established, key target audiences identified and delivery partners identified. Through working in partnership with council colleagues and external partners, the activities programme has delivered digital trails in the park, two accredited lime mortar pointing courses (with participants now skilled volunteers in the park), art and storytelling classes, comic book creation, dry stone walling classes, tea in the park events, plant

sales, horticulture and floristry classes and an extensive planting programme in the park. The cost of the activities programme was £408,925.

4.4 Identifying, developing and maintaining community involvement

The initial desire to improve the park was started by the local community through the endeavours of the Friends of Hermitage Park, who have remained steadfast supporters of the park improvements since 2011. With the park improvements now complete, the Friends have elected new office bearers and wish to review their purposes. However they have already supported the development of a memorandum of understanding with the Council.

In addition to the Friends, many other people have given their time, knowledge and expertise to the park during the improvement programme. At the time of the most recent report to NLHF, the value of the in-kind support from volunteers had reached £179,860.

A wide range of other organisations and agencies have supported the park and its regeneration. The University of the Highlands and Islands are regular users and partners in the park, the Helensburgh British Legion and Community Council oversee the annual Armistice Day event, Alzheimers Scotland utilise a growing bed in the demonstration garden and Lockheed Martin are keen to maintain some planted areas in the war memorial garden.



Uptake of a series of horticulture and floristry workshops was very high, with most classes oversubscribed. Feedback at the time showed a willingness to take part in more classes and to pay for them. This presented the park, and in particular the horticulture of the park, in a positive light.

5. Performance against budget, time, and approved purposes

5.1 Budget

Objective; to deliver the stage 2 outcomes and purposes agreed with NLHF and other funders within the agreed budget.

Performance

The grant award from NLHF, the allocation from the Council and the various other external funding elements were towards an agreed breakdown of costs submitted with the NLHF

allocation. Additional items, not eligible for NLHF funding, were identified, costed and funded from a range of sources as previously highlighted. All capital costs were generated from detailed design costed by an external QS. Revenue costs were precise and submitted by the Council to include salary costs and all appropriate on costs. Activity funding was based on estimated costs, with a commitment to working within that agreed budget through standard Council procurement processes.

COVID19 and the resulting lockdowns had an effect on the delivery of the agreed outcomes within agreed timescales. As a result, a request for an uplift in NLHF funding was submitted and approved in March 2021, this allowing the park manager post to be extended until December 2022.

The expenditure against the capital and revenue elements of the complete park regeneration programme are given below;

Capital Costs		
Lot 1 (Pavilion)	£958,041.81	
Lot 2 (Landscaping)	£1,871,839.57	
Professional fees	£355,374.49	
General additional costs	£164,041.71	
Total Capital		£3,349,297.58
Revenue Costs		
Activity Plan	£408,925.00	
Other revenue	£165,048.00	
Total Revenue		£573,973
TOTAL		£3,923,270

The income to support and deliver these works was as follows;

Funder	Amount
ABC	£380,000
NLHF	£2,382,300
MoD	£253,000
Sustrans	£335,332
War Memorial Trust	£78,550
Section 75	£75,000
Other funders	£105,355
Volunteer Time (in-kind)	£102,090
M&M	£47,200
EDST	£104,317
ABC Capital	£69,000
	£3,932,134

The balance of costs against income therefore currently shows a project underspend of circa **£9k**. This underspend is due to an outstanding item of work that will be completed this year. The project is therefore on budget, due to the additional £69k previously allocated by Council.

5.2 Timescale

The timeline submitted with the stage 2 NLHF application indicated a finish date for the capital works of 2018 and the delivery of the activity plan by 2020. Initial procurement for the construction of the new Pavilion met with difficulty finding a bid within budget. This resulted in further procurement and the adoption of a design and build contract with Stewart and Shields builders. As a result the timescale became extended with the completion certificate issued in June 2020 and the Final Certificate in November 2020. Handover to Estates was delayed due to the COVID19 pandemic and resulting restrictions and was achieved in February 2021.

All extensions to timescale and delivery dates were agreed and approved with NLHF.

5.3 Approved purposes

The contract with NLHF, as approved by Council in 2016, contains a number of approved purposes against which performance is to be measured. These are set out below;

Approved Purpose	Performance
To carry out physical repair works to the built heritage features in Hermitage Park, as outlined in the second round application. These include the War Memorial, Japanese Garden, 18th century mill remains and Victorian wishing well	Delivered via the Lot 2 Capital Contract issued to Hawthorn Heights Ltd. Contract cost £1,871,839.
Reintroduction of Victorian walkways and footbridges along the burn, with repairs to drystone banking and bank stabilisation work.	Delivered via the Lot 2 Capital Contract issued to Hawthorn Heights Ltd. Contract cost £1,871,839.
To deliver the new Pavilion building which will act as a hub for the park incorporating a cafe, toilets, recreational space and activities space.	Delivered via the Lot 1 Capital Contract issued to Stewart and Shields Ltd. Contract cost £958,041
To redesign recreational areas, creating a multi-use space for formal and informal sports. The children's play area will be moved closer to the new pavilion.	Delivered via the Lot 2 Capital Contract issued to Hawthorn Heights Ltd. Contract cost £1,871,839.
To install signage, interpretation panels, benches and lighting	Delivered via the Lot 2 Capital Contract issued to Hawthorn Heights Ltd. Contract cost £1,871,839.
To deliver a wide range of activities as	Delivered via the activities plan agreed

per the Activity Plan submitted with the second round application.	with NLHF. Final activities delivered in December 2022. Activity plan cost £408,925
To provide training opportunities (both accredited and non-accredited) for Argyll and Bute Council staff, the Friends group and other volunteers.	Delivered via the activities plan agreed with NLHF. Final activities delivered in December 2022. Activity plan cost £408,925
To deliver natural heritage improvements and provide learning opportunities related to natural heritage.	Delivered via the Lot 2 Capital Contract and the agreed activities plan.
To recruit a Full Time Park Manager	Park manager in post between 2014 and 2022.
To implement a new management and maintenance regime to meet Green Flag standards.	Management and Maintenance Plan formed part of the Stage 2 NLHF bid. Green Flag award achieved in 2020, 2021 and 2022.

6. Handover arrangements

Throughout the park regeneration programme to park has remained under the auspices of Roads and Infrastructure Services, but with the management of the NLHF funded improvements being taken on by Transformation, Projects and Regeneration. The completion of the NLHF project means that full control of the park passes back to Roads and Infrastructure Services.

The regeneration process, delivered in partnership with the community, resulted in new infrastructure, new relationships, new buildings, new opportunities for income generation and new roles being created within the park, all of which has combined to enable the park to obtain its Green Flag Award for the last 3 years. In order to maintain the standards required of a modern park to meet Green Flag criteria, these new facets to the park will have to be maintained and improved. As such, a number of handover arrangements have been discussed and agreed at an operational level.

Maintaining a quality environment, generating income from the Pavilion while offering continuing opportunities for community support is key to the sustainability of the park. The handover discussions have reflected this and have sought to ensure that certain roles, previously fulfilled through the NLHF programme, can continue.

6.1 The Pavilion

The completion certificate issued in June 2020 and the Final Certificate in November 2020. Handover to Estates was delayed due to the COVID19 pandemic and resulting restrictions and was

achieved in February 2021. Day to day running of the Pavilion will become the responsibility of Roads and Infrastructure Services, with appropriate support relating to maintenance, statutory testing and repairs being given by Property Services. Issues specific to the agreed lease with the café tenant are being handled by Estates.

6.2 Park maintenance

The NLHF supported park improvements and activities have helped make Hermitage Park a valued space for the community. With the NLHF grant now complete, it is important to have a newly established mechanism in place to allow for the continuing delivery of quality activities and to maintain a quality environment. This will help the park to remain as a valuable community asset.

A condition of the NLHF grant is that the approved Management and Maintenance Plan is adhered to for a 10 year period after NLHF funding ends. Additionally the park should achieve the Green Flag Award for a similar period. As the Management and Maintenance Plan is the foundation for the quality demanded by Green Flag, the two things are closely linked. Maintenance in the park is currently carried out by the Park Supervisor supplemented by an agreed programme of additional input, including (but not restricted to) annual regimes for cutting grass, spraying weeds and cutting hedges. The budget annually for employing the Park Supervisor and carrying out these operations is £85,000 and sits with Roads and Infrastructure Services.

Experience has indicated that additional maintenance is required on occasion and this has been agreed at officer level - this level of support will be necessary to maintain the standards contained within the approved Management and Maintenance Plan, which are in turn necessary to meet the conditions of grant.

6.3 Income Generation

The NLHF funding award was given with the expectation that the park would generate income which would contribute to the future sustainability of the park. This is done principally through the Pavilion building where rental income from the café leaseholder, and rental income from groups using the community room. As mentioned previously the rental relationship with the café leaseholder is a matter for Estates. To date the hiring of the community room, with all associated communications and invoicing, has been carried out by the Hermitage Park Manager. With that post ending, responsibility for the management of income generation through the community room will pass to Roads and Infrastructure Services.

6.4 Community relationships and volunteering

Hermitage Park is fortunate to have been so ably supported by the local community in terms of aspirations, funding and volunteering. The Friends of Hermitage Park Association have been steadfast supporters and are currently redefining their purpose with a view to providing continuing support now that their initial aim of helping to establish a regenerated park is complete.

To date their principal contact has been the Hermitage Park Manager, with support from the Park Supervisor. With the ending of the Park Manager role, their principal contact will be through Roads and Infrastructure Services, again supported by the Park Supervisor.

The practical arrangements for community volunteering in the Park have been shared between the Park manager and the Park Supervisor. These tasks will remain with the Park Supervisor.

6.5 Summary of handover arrangements

Task	Current	Proposed
Managing HP budget	Approved earmarked reserve in place.	To be managed by R&IS
Management of Park Supervisor	Shared between HP Manager and R&IS	R&IS
Green Flag Award application (a condition of NLHF grant)	HP Manager	Park Supervisor with support from R&IS
General Park management and maintenance	Park Supervisor/R&IS, as per approved programme	As per current arrangements but augmented by up to 6 work parties per year, to maintain Green Flag standards
Pavilion management and maintenance	HP Manager liaises with Property to report faults, arrange maintenance etc	Transfers to R&IS
Managing café leaseholder	HP manager with support from Estates	R&IS with support from Estates
Managing Community Room – bookings, invoicing, meeting groups, cleaning etc	HP Manager	R&IS
Recharging of service costs to leaseholder – income to go into earmarked reserve.	Estates – process still to be finalised	Estates – process still to be finalised
Liaison with Friends of Hermitage Park	HP Manager	R&IS
Volunteering in the Park	HP Manager/Park	Park Supervisor

	Supervisor	
Managing existing partnerships	HP Manager	R&IS

6.6 Handover documentation

To help ensure a smooth transition after handover, a full suite of project and management documentation will be shared and will include Management and Maintenance Plans, O&M manuals for both the Pavilion and the park, previous Green Flag applications, an inventory of equipment and assets, procedures for community room hire and communication procedures for volunteers and Friends.

7 Outstanding/Residual issues and risks

7.1 Income Generation and ongoing park sustainability

A condition of the NLHF grant was that the Pavilion should play a role in income generation and be a contributor to ongoing park sustainability. Approval was given to establish an earmarked reserve fund into which income, generated by the café lease, the service charge and contribution for electricity and other services from the tenant, hire income from the community room, would go. Maintenance and service costs borne by the Council would come out of this budget, and any excess funding accumulated would be used to support ongoing park actions and activities.

A positive balance in this earmarked reserve will help support ongoing activities in the park and help to maintain community involvement by helping meet their aspirations. This community support in turn will help the Council fulfil its core purpose to maintain the park to Green Flag Award standards. Thus establishing the processes to effectively, and timeously, bill the café leaseholder for all appropriate charges is key to the sustainability of Hermitage Park.

7.2 Friends of Hermitage Park/ Volunteering Programme

The Friends of Hermitage Park Association (FoHPA) have been strong supporters of the park and indeed initial drive and vision for the park improvement came from them. They have contributed funding and highly valuable in-kind support through volunteer hours. For a variety of reasons in 2022 the Friends, as they existed at that time, had decided to cease their work supporting the park and to wind up their charitable existence. Happily before this could happen, new office bearers came forward willing to keep the group running and to work closely with the Council to help promote and manage the park as a key community asset. The new group are currently in their infancy and are receiving support as required from a number of council officers.

However, as a new group it will be important to continue to support them to ensure that they can be an effective communication tool to the community, and that they can continue to contribute to the management of the park by carrying out key tasks that cannot be programmed into existing council resources. As an example of this, there regularly open and close the war memorial gates

at times when no council staff are available. This helps to maintain a positive profile of the park within the community.

Additionally, the Friends have previously, and are currently, seeking small pots of funding for actions in the park to supplement the baseline management carried out by the council. Continued support to the Friends will help ensure that these small funds can continue to be accessed for activities that support community activities in the park.

Finally, the Friends physically volunteer in the park on a range of light maintenance tasks and general horticultural activities – currently this has been Tuesday morning and Thursday afternoon activities. This is augmented by some other volunteers who cannot commit to regular visits but are available on occasion. For example, through the activities programme a cohort of local people received training in lime mortar pointing skills, from the Scottish Lime Centre. All of the participants then undertook to volunteer in the park to help point the walls of the grade 1 listed war memorial – this is a skilled task beyond the financial resources of the council but achievable over time by these trained volunteers.

All volunteers, if registered and working on activities that have been risk assessed and approved by Council staff, become covered by the Councils insurance.

It is vital to the park to keep ongoing good relations with the Friends and our other volunteers. Their activities will require support, management and encouragement. Communications will require to be consistent and clear.

7.3 Green Flag Standards

It is a condition of the NLHF grant that park standards are maintained to a level that achieves Green Flag Awards for a period of 10 years. Green Flag is an accepted standard of excellence for public spaces and has been achieved for the last 3 years. These standards will require to be delivered to meet the conditions of grant. As community support and input is also a criteria for Green Flag assessment, the support for volunteers as discussed above is also critical.

7.4 Partnership working

Currently the park enjoys support from a range of local groups and organisations who use the park constructively, who help manage the park or who deliver education and learning in the Park. It helps keep the park busy, promotes a positive image and contributes to perceptions of safety by having responsible use ongoing in the park. Maintaining these partnerships and encouraging new ones is an important role for the park moving forward.

CURRENT RISKS / ISSUES

Description	Risk Owner	Prob	Imp	Mitigation
NLHF final drawn down of £100k is not permitted due to breach of purposes of grant	Council	High	High	Skate park is located in a suitable spot in Helensburgh. If located in Hermitage Park a full suite of documents are required by NLHF including; a heritage impact assessment undertaken by a specialist consultant in historic parks, H&S risk assessment, statement from planning department, survey of park users and stakeholders, the local community and Friends group to gauge public opinion, an updated and fully funded management and maintenance plan explaining how skate park will be maintained over 20 years, an updated Pavilion business plan, statement of impact on Green Flag award. This requirement is legally binding in order to draw down funds and not be liable for clawback.
Income Generation opportunities are missed, affecting park sustainability (condition of grant)	R&I	Low	High	Ensure recharging of maintenance, service and service supply costs to café leaseholder are carried out, with funds going to approved earmarked reserve. Continue to market and manage community room
Maintenance requires to be to Green Flag standards for a period of six years (condition of grant and reputational risk)	R&I	Low	High	Ensure that the obligations within the approved Management and Maintenance Plan continue to be delivered.
Level of community involvement reduces. Reduction in volunteering opportunities in the Park.	R&I	Med	High	Encourage existing partnerships and develop new partnerships. Keep good communications with Friends of Hermitage Park. Park Supervisor to continue regular volunteering sessions. Develop a clear structure for these with clear learning points
External funding opportunities are missed	R&I	Med	Med	Encourage Friends of Hermitage Park to continue to target small pockets of funding for agreed purposes, and offer support as and when required.
Existing legal agreements lapse	R&I	Low	Med	Finalise/review when necessary agreements with UHI and FoHPA

7.5 Outstanding items

A number of items remain outstanding in the park and the Pavilion

Roof safety system – the installation of a weighted cable support system on the roof of the Pavilion has been identified as necessary to allow safe maintenance of the PV array. This is being progressed.

Legal agreements and issues – a Memorandum of Understanding with the Friends group is currently being prepared and is still subject to final tweaking. Additionally, the agreement between the Council and University of the Highlands and Islands, who use the park for practical elements of their horticulture course, was initially for a one year period and as such requires extending.

Additionally there is an ongoing dispute with the contractor of Lot 1 – The Pavilion, regarding payment and eligible cost issues. To date this has been through two rounds of arbitration which have found largely in favour of the Council, however the contractor has, till recently, been pursuing civil proceedings on the matter. However the contractor has recently been subject to Liquidation and the court action they initiated is currently paused to clarify whether the liquidators wish to pursue. That is currently considered unlikely.

Finally, a number of obligations remain as a condition of grant, highlights as follows:

- maintain maintenance standards in the park for a period of 10 years post project end as per Management and Maintenance Plan to 2032, signed June 2023
- 6 further years of successful Green Flag Award
- 20 year contractual period of grant

8. Lessons learned

8.1 Project Management and reporting

The funding from NLHF enabled the appointment of a Hermitage Park Manager with a responsibility for the day to day lead in the regeneration programme, with supervision coming from the appropriate Senior Development Officer. Support was available through the capital contracts by the appointment of a lead architect to oversee the wider process.

Further reporting was carried out through a Steering Group comprising key Council staff, community representation and neighbour representation. This Steering Group was the primary reporting tool for the regeneration programme. In addition, a programme of regular reporting to NLHF, via their online portal, has been carried out.

This approach worked well and served to keep major stakeholders involved in the process and informed of progress.

8.2 Partnerships - delivery

A partnership approach was adopted from the outset and this permeated most aspects of the park regeneration. The initial masterplan was agreed through community consultation and the community were represented in the ongoing process through partnerships with the Friends of Hermitage Park, Helensburgh Community Council, MOD (and Armed Forces Champion), armed forces families, Live Argyll and youth representatives. Funding for the programme came from a variety of partners and reflected the multiple outcomes being delivered – so for example, SUSTRANS were keen to fund the main paths being constructed to agreed multi-use

specifications, and the War Memorial Trust made funding available for improvements specifically for the war memorial.

Maintaining a wide range of community and funding partnerships within a single programme was demanding and at times difficult, however the final outcome is a modern park delivered to exceptional standards. This vindicates the partnership approach.

8.3 Partnerships – activity

The ongoing activities in the park, both organised and casual, are the result of continually developing partnerships. The University of the Highlands and Islands have been delivering practical elements associated with their horticulture courses in the park, the Helensburgh branch of the British Legion are keen supporters of any developments or actions that benefit the war memorial and its garden, Alzheimer's Scotland are regular users of a growing plot in the demonstration garden, as are Lockheed Martin through their community volunteering programme. These active partnerships help to present a positive profile for the park and show it as a positive resource that contributes to local wellbeing.

8.4 Community Support

We have also been fortunate in our Friends of Hermitage Park group who have been largely steadfast in their support of the park and the activities within it. With the regeneration now complete, they have reformed with new office bearers and are currently restructuring their purpose to focus on supporting the future of the park. They are the key community partners in the park and their ongoing support is greatly appreciated.

8.5 Innovation and climate change mitigation

The park masterplan and the design of the pavilion incorporate a number of innovations that boost the carbon credentials of the park and, subsequently, the Council. At the outset the badly scoured existing paths illustrated the need to manage rainwater and run off across the whole site. Significant investment of a largely hidden, sub-surface, drainage system alleviated the scouring and captured the rainwater into a sustainable system featuring reed beds, ponds, swales, an attenuation pond and a hydrobrake. As a result discharge into the Millig Burn is controlled to help mitigate the risk of flooding downstream.

The pavilion itself was designed to passivhaus standards and indeed far exceeds the standard passivhaus specifications. A solar array on the roof, triple glazing, roof and floor insulation, an air source heat pump and a heat recovery system combine to make the building energy efficient.

Planting in the park reflects a more modern, climate hardened approach to future proof the horticultural interest. Heavy mulching has been adopted to retain moisture in the soil, leaf mould and green waste is recycled and dependence on chemical control is being reduced.

The volunteer bothy features repurposed containers, green roofs, links to the sustainable drainage system, solar lighting and many recycled elements, such as doors, sinks and worktops.

The demonstration garden is a venue for community groups to learn the necessary skills to grow their own food, reducing reliance on shop bought products and thus helping to reduce local food miles and packaging. Workshops have been held to emphasise these skills and have been very popular. Comments received and observations made indicate that the community are very willing to support and learn actions that have a positive climate impact.

8.6 Further lessons

The final evaluation of the project is now complete and further learning points are identified within this document named Hermitage Park Evaluation Report Final. This shows that the project met all its approved purposes and exceeded targets for visitor numbers.