

## **UPTON PARK APPLICATION FOR LOCAL GREENSPACE DESIGNATION**

### **Site:**

- Upton Park (2.4 hectare area)

### **Location:**

• *SX 9116 6455*. This linear shaped park in the Upton Conservation Area of Torquay is bounded by Lymington Road (eastward), Magdalene Road (westward), Trematon Avenue (south) and Torquay Coach Station (north). The park can be accessed via numerous entrances on all sides.

### **Ownership:**

- Torbay Council

### **Proximity:**

• Lymington Road is a main thoroughfare into Torquay town centre for traffic and pedestrians. This eastern boundary comprises residential properties, stretches of on-street car parking and a steep embankment below Thurlow Road. The civic hub and business/retail heart of Torquay is approximately 300 metres to the south of Upton Park. The western boundary, Magdalene Road, comprises residential properties and small businesses/trading units. The area to the north of the park is the site of the town's coach station; an Innovation Centre; a taxi office and a cafe building (though this area will be re-designated if the coach station operation relocates to a new "travel hub" elsewhere in Torquay). Upton St. James Primary School is located approximately 400 metres to the north.

### **Is the greenspace demonstrably special and does it hold a particular local significance to the local community? See below:**

• Upton Park was created in the late 1920's on what had been little more than a public tip. The bowling green opened in May 1928 (there had been one in use from 1912 on a plot nearby). The first two hard tennis courts were completed at about the same time. In 1944, prior to D-Day, a US Army field-kitchen was set up in the park to serve meals to troops before they marched down to Torquay Harbour to embark onto the ships that would take them over to the Beaches of Normandy.

In the 1980s, part of the park was dug up to provide a 'holding tank' for the water which builds up during heavy rainstorms. The River Fleet, which has run through the Stoney and Upton valleys from time immemorial, still flows through a pipe below the ground.

The parks' most immediate local community has a high incidence of multi-occupancy rented properties with pockets of high deprivation, so the park offers a valuable opportunity for outdoor relaxation and/or exercise. Upton Park can also provide a haven for town centre workers who only have a short walk to reach attractive green space. The park also attracts visiting students attending the numerous English Language colleges situated in Torquay, who take particular advantage of the sports courts.

A striking feature is the substantial number of mature trees which form avenues along the whole length of the Park and at main walkways across the park. However, consideration is being given to removing a proportion to ensure the healthiness of the stock and to allow more light into the realm in order to promote other greenery and improve visibility.

Today, Upton Park is home to the thriving Upton Park Bowling Club (which is leasing the green from Torbay Council); tennis and basketball courts; 5 a-side football court; playground and fitness equipment as well as open space for dog walking and general play. A popular feature is the "Galaxy Play Area" containing several items of modern play equipment for young children. The parks' open spaces and proximity to the town centre lend themselves to being a valuable site for staging modest sized events and performances, as proven by summer and Christmas festivities staged during 2013.

The well established "Friends of Upton Park" group has contributed to the park achieving RHS Green Flag Award (2009) and RHS It's Your Neighbourhood Award (2013). The group works in partnership with Torbay Council. This partnership has embarked upon creating blueprints, based upon effective public consultation. This should ensure any future development protects and enhances the parks' valued features and assets, whilst boldly introducing new aspects and facilities that underline it's role as an important urban community space.

The Upton Conservation Area Character Appraisal of 2002 (Revised 2005) makes several references to the park and in "Section 5 – Character and Relationship of Spaces" declares that "Upton Park is an important open space – more so here for residents than visitors".

Upton Park NPPF para 77 compliance summary:

- Upton Park lies within the heart of the community it serves;(Torre, Upton and Toquay Town Centre)
- Upton Park is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for it's history; the amenities it provides to residents, workers and visitors alike; and it's setting as an urban community space within a conservation area. The park provides a significant open space with a wealth of many fine specimen trees that form a significant site of well established avenues. The park offers a variety of opportunities for people of all ages to enjoy peaceful, restful relaxation; sporting activities; dog walking; play equipment; or to participate in community events. This green space contains some imaginative and attractive planting and is a valuable home to wildlife within an urban setting.
- Upton Park is local in character and not an extensive tract of land.

Please contact the Friends of Upton Park if you need any further information in support of this proposal.