

FPF slam council over parks awards scheme

A NEW interest group representing Trafford's friends of the park volunteers has announced it will continue to fight for the nationally prestigious Green Flag scheme.

The 'Friends of Parks Forum' (FPF), that met for the first time last month, are upset with the alternative they are being offered: Trafford Council's in-house bronze, silver and gold parks award scheme.

Earlier this month Baroness Kay Andrews, parliamentary under secretary of state, awarded the national standard for parks and green spaces to a record 159 north west sites.

But in sharp contrast to the rest of the country - where there was a 32 per cent rise in the number of winners - just six Green Flags were awarded to Trafford.

It follows Trafford Council's announcement in January that they would not be renewing the Green Flag status of eight parks because it was seen as 'elitist' to the borough's other parks.

FPF spokeswoman Judie Collins explained: "Messenger

by Simon Greenhalgh

has featured several letters from disgruntled friends groups who feel let down by Trafford Council and their management consultants (Kendrick Ash).

"There is now a network of friends groups across the borough who are seeking to deal with the present unsatisfactory situation."

Last month Phil Sherratt, the new director of environmental services, revealed that Trafford Council's new parks award scheme should be completed by September and will cover the borough's 42 major parks.

He said that he hoped the initiative would be assessed by external advisors, friends groups and ward councillors.

But Jude Collins, who is also a member of Altrincham's Friends of John Leigh Park, said there's little enthusiasm for the council's replacement initiative.

She explained: "There is no enthusiasm for the substitute Green Flag scheme proposed by the council to award its own

standard for parks and great fears for the future of the staff who do the day-to-day work in our parks.

"The decision by the council to leave six parks in the Green Flag scheme is seen by many as a cynical move to set the friends groups against each other but if that was so it has failed.

"We've put too much work into raising the standards of the parks to allow them to fall into the state of disrepair and neglect that we faced when we first formed."

She added: "While individual parks staff and councillors have been supportive FPF feel there is a lack of leadership and contact from the decision makers and we are determined this will change.

"The allegation, that Green Flag is 'divisive and elitist' and harms the less developed parks does not seem to us to be rational."

Friends groups wishing to join FPF should contact Neil Peden on 07802 538 032.

Trafford Ecology Park has recently retained its nationally recognised current Green Flag Award status



Green resolution rejected at Council meeting

Labour and Liberal Democrat councillors and the Green Party have hit out a decision to make £200,000 cuts following a review, by consult-

ants Kendric Ash, of the council's highways, parks and countryside.

A Labour resolution at a full council meeting on June 28 called for

an enquiry into the impact the department changes will have on the 'people and green environment of Trafford'.

The resolution was rejected.

Trafford's six remaining Green Flag parks

- Denzell Gardens and The Trafford Park
- Devisdale, Bowden
- Victoria Park, Stretford
- Hullard Park, Old Trafford
- Walkden Gardens, Sale
- Trafford Ecology Park, Worthington Park, Sale