

APSE Southern Region Parks and Green Spaces Seminar 2026

Sustaining Parks for the Future



Thursday 12 November 2026

The Burgess Hall, One Leisure, Westwood Rd, St. Ives, Cambridgeshire,
PE27 6WU

Programme

9:30 Registration, refreshments and exhibition viewing

10:00 Session 1

How can local authorities protect, enhance and future proof parks and open spaces amid increasing financial pressures and changing environmental challenges?

Speaker: Mo Baines, Chief Executive, APSE

A Fresh Look at Local Authority Green Space: Creating Greater Value for People, Place and Nature

- High-quality affordable urban green space is essential infrastructure
- Equitable access to nature supports healthier and more resilient communities
- The secret ingredient – effective community stewardship
- Case studies and lessons learned from Cornwall

Speaker: Melissa Ralph CMLI | Making Space for Nature Manager, Corserv Solutions Ltd T/A Cormac

Commercial Sustainability of Parks & Open Spaces: Habitat Banking for Revenue Generation and Conservation

- Generating new income from parks and open spaces through habitat banking and Biodiversity Net Gain opportunities.
- Balancing revenue generation with conservation, biodiversity enhancement and long-term environmental benefits.
- Practical approaches for councils to develop habitat banking schemes, attract investment and create sustainable income streams.

Speakers: Robbie Bratchell and Nick Massey, Huntingdonshire District Council

Audience question and answer session

A word from our Sponsor

11:30 Refreshments & Exhibition Viewing

12:00 Session 2

Parks Under Pressure: Keeping Council Green Spaces Resilient, Inclusive and Sustainable"

- Financial and operational pressures facing parks services and the importance of maintaining sufficient revenue funding, alongside capital investment, to protect the quality of parks.
- How parks can contribute to climate resilience, biodiversity, health and wellbeing.
- The role of partnerships, community involvement and innovative approaches in protecting parks for the future.

Speaker: Gareth Roberts, Chair, London Assembly Environment Committee.

Reducing grassfire risk – how The Royal Parks are assessing and managing the increasing risk of fires in parks and open spaces.

- Vegetation and landscape management – balancing biodiversity, long grass and naturalistic landscapes with fire-risk reduction.
- Emergency preparedness and response – working with fire and emergency services to prepare for and respond to grassfires.
- Lessons for local authorities – practical approaches councils can adopt to protect parks while maintaining their environmental and community value

Speaker: Darren Share MBE, Director of Parks, The Royal Parks

Audience question and answer session

13:00 Lunch & Exhibition viewing

14:00 Session 3

Drought-Resilient Grasses for Parks and Green Spaces

- The potential benefits of drought-tolerant grasses and more diverse species mixtures in parks, verges and other managed green spaces.
- Balancing carbon reduction, biodiversity and climate resilience when planning and managing green spaces.
- How local authorities can develop more resilient green infrastructure that is better prepared for future heat and drought.

Speaker: Justin Smith Founder and CEO, Green Pigeon Consulting

Audience question and answer session

Roundtable Discussion: Shaping the Future of Council Parks and Open Spaces

Within this session we will discuss the key challenges and opportunities shaping the future of parks and open spaces. The discussion will encourage delegates to share experiences, explore innovative solutions, and identify practical approaches to maintaining financially sustainable, environmentally resilient and inclusive green spaces for future generations.

16:00 Seminar Close

Seminar Objectives

About the Seminar

Join us as we explore how local authorities can protect, enhance and future-proof parks and open spaces amid increasing financial pressures and changing environmental challenges. The seminar will examine innovative approaches to generating sustainable income, improving biodiversity, strengthening climate resilience and managing emerging risks, while ensuring green spaces remain accessible, inclusive and beneficial to local communities. Through practical case studies and shared experiences, delegates will gain insights into developing resilient, sustainable and high-quality parks services for the future.

Who should attend

Everyone with an interest in health and well-being, parks and green spaces management, sustainability and climate change.

Delegate Packages Exclusive of VAT

What's included?

The delegate fee covers attendance, delegates' documentation, lunches and light refreshments.

Member: **£195+VAT**

Non-member: **£290+VAT**

Commercial: **£420+VAT**

[Click here to reserve your place on this event](#)

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Exhibition and sponsorship
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