apse seminars

Delegate pack

APSE (Southern Region) Parks & Green Spaces Seminar 2026



Thursday 12 November 2026

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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

From rags to resurfacing: Maidstone Borough Council's Innovative Surface Repairs in Parks and Open Spaces

- Exploring innovative pothole repair techniques and how they apply to park roads, footpaths, cycleways and shared-use paths.
- Improving the safety, accessibility and usability of parks and open spaces through effective surface maintenance.
- Assessing the durability, cost-effectiveness and environmental benefits of new repair methods to help councils maintain park infrastructure within limited budgets.

Speaker: Sarah Calcutt Chief Operating Officer (COO) , RECOOL

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

membership resources

Attendance List

APSE (Southern) Parks & Green Spaces Seminar 2026

Date: Thursday 12 November 2026

Venue: Burgess Hall, One Leisure, St Ives, Cambs

First Name	Last Name	Position	Organisation
Abi	Ademiluyi	Principal Advisor	APSE
Shami	Scholes	Research and Business Support Officer	APSE
Mo	Baines	Chief Executive	APSE
Purveen	Hira	Amenity Officer	Binfield Parish Council
Guy	Belcher	Biodiversity Manager	Cambridge City Council
Anthony	French	Parks Development Officer	Cambridge City Council
Ashley	Read	Asset Development Officer	Cambridge City Council
Paul	Van Damme	Heritage & Open Spaces Service Manager	Chelmsford City Council
Melissa	Ralph	Making Space for Nature Manager	Cormac Solutions Ltd
Geoff	Knight	Environment and Design Manager	Durham County Council
Stuart	Priestley	Ecology Manager	Durham County Council
Laura	Davey	Technical Specialist	Fargro Limited
Richard	Binks	Exhibitor	Fargro Limited
Justin	Smith	Director	Green Pigeon Consulting
Daniel	Godward	Physical Activity Manager	Huntingdonshire District Council
Harriet	Robinson	Place Strategy and Climate Lead	Huntingdonshire District Council
Kirsty	Drew	Play and Funding Manager	Huntingdonshire District Council
Nick	Massey	Biodiversity for All Project Manager	Huntingdonshire District Council
Robbie	Bratchell	Recreational Delivery Manager	Huntingdonshire District Council
Kate	Morton	Grounds Maintenance Manager	Huntingdonshire District Council
Megan	Jones	Habitat Banking Project Support Officer	Huntingdonshire District Council
Christian	Howe	Ranger	Huntingdonshire District Council
Jordan	Sailsman	Head of Commercial	Krinkels UK Limited
Steve	Morris	Exhibitor	Krinkels UK Limited
Matthew	Parkhill	Director of Landscape Management	Land Use Consultants
Dave	Hutley	Head of Parklands	Lee Valley Regional Park Authority
Cath	Patrick	Conservation Manager	Lee Valley Regional Park Authority

apse membership resources

Attendance List

APSE (Southern) Parks & Green Spaces Seminar 2026

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Gareth	Roberts	Chair, Environment Committee	London Assembly
Lynda	Townend	Environment Officer	Maldon Town Council
Lauren	Clark	Partnership Manager	Midlands Parks Forum
Benj	Street	Director	NaturaVolt
Esther	Revell	Exhibitor	NaturaVolt
Alan	North	Greenspace Service Manager	North Hertfordshire District Council
Claire	Willis	Senior Ranger	North Northamptonshire Council
Darren	Sharpe	Head Of Service	Peterborough City Council
Chris	Jackson	Streetcare Manager	Peterborough City Council
Cllr Chris	Wiggin	Cabinet Member - Environment	Peterborough City Council
Sarah	Calcutt ARAgS	Chief Operating Officer	Recool Ltd
Lora	Ryan	Exhibitor	Siemens
Lora	Ryan	Exhibitor	Siemens
Nic	Dungan	Green Space Project Manager	Stevenage Borough Council
Darren	Share MBE	Director of Parks	The Royal Parks

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES – APSE Southern Parks & Green Spaces Seminar – 12 November 2026



Mo Baines, Chief Executive, APSE and Visiting Professor, University of Staffordshire

Mo is Chief Executive of the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) and is responsible for the delivery of the Association's services to its UK-wide local authority networks, which support councils in the delivery of excellence in frontline services. APSE also delivers a research programme which seeks to apply theory into practice specifically on frontline services and issues of local democracy and governance.

Mo is a Visiting Professor at Staffordshire University and holds an MPA with distinction from the University of Liverpool and is author of 'Rebuilding Capacity: the case for insourcing public contracts' as well as a regular columnist for The MJ and local government press.

Mo also serves as the interim lead Non-Executive Director in the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government.

Mo's career in local government began in 1989 working for Manchester City Council's City Solicitors division. In 1993 Mo moved to the Council's Tendering Unit providing operational, employment and strategic support to in-house teams subject to competitive tendering processes. Mo helped implement a number of service reviews and service improvement plans, with regular involvement across a range of local authorities and trade unions.

Mo previously worked as APSE's Head of Communications and coordinated the work of the membership resources policy team and latterly had responsibility for APSE Northern Ireland. Following a period as Deputy Chief Executive she was appointed as Chief Executive in 2023.

Mo enjoys walking and running and trying to cook almost edible vegan food.



Melissa Ralph CMLI, Making Space for Nature Manager, Conserv Solutions, T/A Cormac

Melissa Ralph is a Chartered Landscape Architect, with 30 years' experience in private and mainly public sectors. Melissa is Making Space for Nature Manager at Cormac, delivering beautiful biodiverse landscapes in Cornwall's urban environment. She led Cornwall Council's ambitious European funded 'Making Space for Nature' and UK Shared Prosperity Good Growth funded 'Urban Green Shoots' projects, in 17 Cornish towns (2017-2025). The team received national recognition from The Landscape Institute, CIRIA and CIEEM. Cormac's work has helped create networks for urban wildlife, greater climate resilience and new opportunities for people to experience nature and sense of place.



Robbie Bratchell, Recreational Delivery Manager, Huntingdonshire District Council

Robbie Bratchell is the Recreational Delivery Manager at Huntingdonshire District Council, working within the Active Environments Team. Robbie has over 13 years of experience in local government, beginning his career as an apprentice at Stevenage Borough Council. Throughout his career, he has held a range of operational and management roles across parks, open spaces, leisure, events and community services.

Robbie is responsible for the strategic delivery and development of parks, open spaces, play areas, sports facilities, events and recreational infrastructure across Huntingdonshire. His background spans sport development, recreation, leisure and events management, with particular expertise in strategic planning, developer contributions, facility investment and working with partners to deliver community-focused projects and services.

A strong advocate for creating accessible, high-quality environments, Robbie works closely with partners, developers and local communities to ensure parks and open spaces continue to deliver social, environmental and economic benefits. He is presenting on Huntingdonshire District Council's Commercial Sustainability Plan for Parks and Open Spaces, exploring innovative approaches to income generation, asset management and long-term financial resilience.



Nick Massey, Biodiversity for All Project Manager, Huntingdonshire District Council

Nicholas leads Huntingdonshire District Council's Rangers and countryside service, overseeing nature conservation, volunteering and the development of the council's habitat banking programme. His work focuses on connecting nature recovery with sustainable funding, climate resilience and community involvement.

He previously delivered the council's £1.35 million Biodiversity for All programme, supporting habitat improvements across council sites and grants for 17 landowners. He also secured £130,000 for natural flood management and wet woodland creation.

Nicholas brings more than a decade of local government experience, with a background spanning community safety, violence prevention and environmental programme delivery. He holds a Master's degree in Climate Change Politics and Policy, awarded with Distinction.

He has a particular interest in how councils can use their land, partnerships and commercial opportunities to deliver lasting benefits for nature and local communities.



Gareth Roberts, Chair of the Environment Committee, London Assembly

Gareth Roberts grew up in Derby and moved to South West London in the 90s for university, loving the area so much he never left living in Hampton, Richmond.

With a professional background in marketing, Gareth has been a council member of the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames since 2010. He has led the Liberal Democrat Group on the Council since 2015 and led the Council as a whole since 2018.

Gareth has a long record of action of standing up for local people across South West London, including leading the campaign that took Heathrow to court. He has also fought for the protection of local police stations and more police on the streets.

Gareth is also passionate about delivering a greener future and making sure people and liberal values are at the heart of its decision-making across the GLA.



Darren Share MBE, Director of Parks, The Royal Parks

Darren joined The Royal Parks in January 2024 after working for Birmingham City Council for 38 years. Darren started as an apprentice gardener and progressed to work in all sections of Birmingham's Parks Service. Over the last 25 years, Darren has worked with communities to deliver positive benefits of parks in an urban environment. Darren led all of Birmingham's 'In Bloom' entries, and from 2011 designed and led Birmingham's entry to the RHS Chelsea Flower Show.

Darren is also a Trustee for the Royal Horticultural Society and a national 'Britain in Bloom' judge.



Justin Smith, Founder and CEO, Green Pigeon Consulting

Justin Smith is an environmental consultant, agronomist and innovator with over 30 years' experience spanning plant breeding, agricultural research, precision agriculture, soil science and landscape management. Having started his career in plant breeding in the UK and Africa with Van der Have and Pioneer Seeds, Justin later became Research Director at The Arable Group, specialising in spatially variable agriculture and soil mapping technologies. He was involved in the early development of EMI-based soil sensing systems and has a long-standing interest in the relationship between soil health, plant performance and environmental sustainability.

Justin founded TurfTrax in 1999, which subsequently evolved into TGMS, and later founded The CDS Group, which he sold in 2019 while remaining a retained consultant. Through Green Pigeon Consulting, he now focuses on climate resilience, soil carbon, sustainable land management and evidence-based species selection for local authorities, parks and bereavement services. His current work seeks to integrate soil intelligence, carbon stewardship and landscape resilience into the future management of public open spaces.



Sarah Calcutt, Chief Operating Officer (COO), RECOOL Ltd

Sarah joined RECOOL in September to head up operations and people and support the growth and scale up and rollout of RECOOL. We have an ambitious vision and very focussed strategy to resolve the labyrinth of inefficiencies associated with mixed textile waste, by doing so we hope to bring in a new material platform for the UK that will help reduce our reliance on price volatile and human and planet negative petrochemicals.

Prior to joining RECOOL Sarah built a broad career across primary production, representative organisations, consultancy and senior executive and non-executive appointments for arm's length Government bodies.

EXHIBITOR PROFILES – APSE (Southern Region) Parks & Green Spaces Seminar 2026

Thursday 12 November 2026

Leading the Charge in Chemical-Free Excellence: Naturavolt's eWeeding Revolution

As the APSE Parks Seminar 2026 highlights the evolution of green space management, **Naturavolt** is proud to be at the forefront of the transition toward a pesticide-free future. Our mission is simple: to provide local authorities and landowners with high-performance, sustainable alternatives to traditional herbicides. Through our cutting-edge **eWeeding** technology, we are transforming how the UK's parks, heritage sites, and open spaces are maintained, proving that effective weed control does not have to come at an environmental cost.

At the heart of our range are the eWeeding machines—precision-engineered tools that use high-voltage electricity to achieve a total systemic "root-to-shoot" kill. Unlike thermal or acetic acid treatments that often only scorch the surface, eWeeding flows through the entire plant, boiling the moisture in the cells and destroying the root system instantly. This ensures that even the most stubborn perennials and invasive species are eradicated without the need for a single drop of glyphosate.

The impact of this technology in public spaces is transformative. By eliminating chemical runoff, Naturavolt protects vital soil microbiomes and fosters urban biodiversity, creating safer environments for pollinators, pets, and people alike. Our commitment to excellence is reflected in our growing list of prestigious partners. The **National Trust** utilises Naturavolt technology to preserve the delicate balance of our nation's most cherished heritage landscapes, while **Derbyshire Dales District Council** has pioneered the use of eWeeding to maintain pristine public parks and streets with zero chemical footprint.

For park managers, Naturavolt offers a weather-resilient, carbon-conscious solution that fits seamlessly into modern maintenance schedules. We invite you to explore our full range of professional eWeeding machinery and high-quality weeding services at **Naturavolt.com**. Join us and our partners as we power the next generation of vibrant, healthy, and chemical-free green spaces.

Fargro is a specialist horticultural wholesaler based in Arundel, West Sussex, with over 80 years of experience supplying growers, retailers and amenity professionals across the UK. A Royal Warrant holder for more than 50 years, we combine deep technical expertise with a genuine, practical approach to supporting the people we work with.

Our expertise spans sundries, technical solutions, biological controls and amenity. This gives councils and grounds teams a practical, sustainable way to keep parks and public green spaces in good health.

At the heart of this is our biological controls offer. As a supplier of Koppert biological controls, we help teams manage pests naturally, using beneficial insects and nematodes to reduce reliance on

conventional pesticides - an increasingly important consideration as public scrutiny and regulation around pesticide use continue to grow.

Our technical range covers plant health and the root zone, backed by our own technical team. This is our Holistic Growing philosophy in practice: a connected approach that considers the whole growing system - substrate, nutrition, root zone and plant health - rather than treating problems in isolation.

Our amenity range brings together fertilisers, lawn and grass seed, and grounds-care inputs for keeping turf and green spaces healthy year-round.

What sets us apart is the support behind the products. Our technical specialists work directly with grounds and amenity professionals to build practical programmes that fit how they work - offering honest advice, reliable supply, and genuine expertise built over eight decades in British horticulture.

We're proud to be an approved supplier to APSE and look forward to supporting councils across the UK.

fargro.co.uk | 01903 756856 | technical@fargro.co.uk

Krinkels UK is a leading provider of grounds maintenance, street cleansing, and arboricultural services to local authorities, housing associations, NHS trusts, and private companies across the United Kingdom. Krinkels is a privately owned family business that was formed in 1989. As one of the largest providers of green services in the UK, it supports almost 1,000 employees, working from over 30 depot locations.

The company delivers services comprehensively, safely, and sustainably, and is a regular winner of industry awards for excellence, including green flag, green heritage, and cemetery of the year to name a few.
Krinkels UK is certified to ISO 9001, ISO 14001, ISO 45001, ISO 50001, and is accredited to ISO 27001 as part of the Krinkels group of companies.

The company has a robust health and safety culture and has achieved 12 consecutive Gold Awards for RoSPA Health and Safety management over the last 12 years, winning the President's Award (10 consecutive Gold awards) in 2024. It has also won 7 consecutive Gold awards for Fleet Safety. Krinkels UK has been carbon neutral since 2024, accredited and verified by One Carbon World.

You can find out more about Krinkels UK, it's culture and partnership approach at:
www.krinkelsuk.co.uk

Siemens, leveraging the legacy of Brightly, stands as the global leader in intelligent asset management solutions, dedicated to empowering organisations to revolutionise the performance of their assets. With a rich heritage spanning over two decades, Siemens' sophisticated cloud-based platform harnesses extensive data to provide predictive insights that guide users through every critical phase of the asset lifecycle. This rebranding reinforces Siemens' commitment to delivering unparalleled asset management expertise.

Smarter Assets, Sustainable Communities
At its core, Siemens is driven by a powerful vision: Smarter Assets, Sustainable Communities. They partner with over 12,000 clients across diverse global industries, enabling them to meticulously manage and optimise their assets and operations. By leveraging more than 20 years of accumulated data, Siemens' platform delivers crucial predictive insights. This allows clients to

proactively tackle challenges such as preventing floods or leaks, averting costly power outages or equipment failures, and ensuring timely repairs of vital infrastructure like city streets and bridges.

Software for Smarter Assets

Siemens' comprehensive suite of software is engineered to simplify and oversee every detail of asset management and operations. From mitigating potential leaks to preventing power disruptions and facilitating essential urban infrastructure maintenance, Siemens supports clients throughout the entire asset management lifecycle. Their data-driven solutions are designed to eliminate waste, avoid unnecessary expenses, and foster more intelligent work processes.

Siemens pairs its complete suite of intuitive software – including CMMS, EAM, Strategic Asset Management, IoT Remote Monitoring, Sustainability and Community Engagement – with tailored consultancies and award-winning support services. This holistic approach illuminates the path toward a bright future where assets are optimised, communities thrive, and efficiency reigns supreme.

Our free services included in the membership

Network Queries

APSE Network Queries offers members the opportunity to ask questions, share advice and receive information from peers in local councils across the UK.

Briefing Service

APSE Briefings provide members with expert briefings on policies, consultations, legislation, surveys and State of the Market reports.

Advocacy Service

APSE Advocacy ensures our members are represented in a variety of key policy and legislative developments.

Network Groups

APSE Networks offer members the opportunity to share best practice with local authorities through our informal network meetings.

Regional Events

APSE Events offer members the oportunity to attend regional events, meetings and networking opportunities throughout the UK.

Sector News

APSE Sector News provides members with the latest news and local government updates covering our service areas.

Your one stop shop for the frontline...















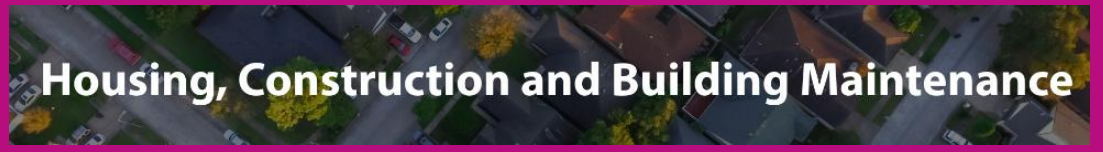









Member discounts on our traded services
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apse training

UPCOMING COURSES



Protect native wildlife with **Plant Biosecurity for Local Authorities**
Tuesday 01 December, 10:00 – 16:00

Jump start your career or train up your team with **Introduction to Parks Management**
Tuesday 01 and Wednesday 02 December 2026, 09:00 – 12:00

Go into depth on financial management and commercialisation with **Advanced Parks Management: Sustainable Finance** Tuesday 08 December, 09:00 – 16:00

Put BNG into practical action with **Biodiversity Net Gain for Parks and Green Spaces**
Wednesday 09 December, 09:00 – 16:00

Scan the QR code or click here to learn more about all our courses or book your spot today!



Looking for a consultant or interim to step in and hit the ground running?

APSE has an enriched database of specialists within local government....

Contact Lucia Gervis at 0161 772 1810 or email LGervis@apse.org.uk

Click **here** to check out our available interim managers in your service area!

apse solutions

Interim Management

Critical friend

Workforce strategy

Survey-based work

Commercial development

Diagnostic health check

Coaching and mentoring

Service improvement planning

Comprehensive service review

Data Insights

apse performance networks

Turn performance data into better public services

APSE Performance Networks is a UK-wide benchmarking service that enables councils to measure and compare the cost, quality and productivity of frontline services, such as recycling, waste collection, street cleansing, sport and leisure and parks and open spaces.

Councils submit performance data and receive benchmarking reports, insights and expert support to identify improvements, share best practice and deliver better value for money.



- **See how your service compares**
- **Use insight to guide improvement**
- **Learn from a UK-wide local authority network**

SCAN TO EXPLORE

apse.org.uk • Performance Networks

Email the team performance.networks@apse.org.uk or scan the QR code to learn more

Did you know?...

APSE Energy can help your council with:

- **Building energy audits**
- **Thermal modelling**
- **Cost and emissions estimates**
- **EPCs and DECs**

Scan the QR code
to find out more

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