Manifesto for Public Parks launched by Fields in Trust

Monday 8 May, 2017

- **Call to re-value parks and recognise impact on community health and wellbeing**
- **National Have a Field Day 8th July to demonstrate public support for parks**

UK-wide green space charity **Fields in Trust** has launched a "Manifesto for Parks" in advance of the General Election on June 8th calling on the next government to recognise the vital contribution that parks and playing fields make to the physical health and mental wellbeing of our communities.

In recent months, the nation's green spaces have had significant political attention through the Communities and Local Government Parliamentary Committee Inquiry and its subsequent report into Public Parks, yet the dissolution of Parliament, before CLG Parks Minister **Andrew Percy** has formally responded to the report, risks the loss of impetus and the issue being overlooked in a crowded legislative programme of the next Parliament.

As an advocate for parks, playing fields and recreation grounds **Fields in Trust** has published a "Manifesto" which identifies four "green line" issues, Fields in Trust asks voters to challenge prospective parliamentary candidates on their support for parks during the campaign. The manifesto calls for a re-valuing of green spaces, to take account, not just of the cost of upkeep, but the vital contribution parks make to health, wellbeing and community cohesion - and to ensure they are safeguarded for future generations.

Writing in the foreword of the manifesto Fields in Trust Chief Executive, **Helen Griffiths** said: *"Our nation's parks and green spaces are at a critical juncture. In these challenging times, our local spaces are vulnerable to closure and so it is important we stand up to champion the positive impact they have on our society. Our Manifesto for Parks furthers the calls set out in our inquiry submission through four policy "green lines".*

• ***Championing*** *our parks is about revaluing our green spaces to ensure their contribution to society is properly recognised.*

• ***Supporting*** *our communities calls for parks to be available to all.*

• ***Activating*** *our nation puts parks at the heart of efforts to create a healthier nation.*

• ***Protecting*** *our green future looks at how the next generations require a safeguarding of our parks today".*

The manifesto is available to download from the Fields in Trust website.

Parks and playing fields are a well-loved part of our local landscape and used by the whole community from pre-school children to retired adults; but funding cuts mean these green spaces are under threat, less well maintained and at risk of building development.

Local authority funding cuts could have a damaging impact on the nation's health. Recent research shows that local access to green space leads to people feeling healthier and happier – and becoming more active as a result.

To demonstrate just how much our parks matter, charity Fields in Trust is encouraging all communities to celebrate their local green spaces, one month after the election, on Saturday 8th July. The national **Have a Field Day** event will show the many ways people use their public parks and why local communities value them so greatly; event organisers can register their events on the Fields in Trust website, www.fieldsintrust.org/haveafieldday.

This election, presents an opportunity to ensure the UKs Parks, Playing Fields and green spaces are addressed as a vital national issue by the next government. Fields in Trust is championing our green spaces and raising awareness of the positive impact they have on our communities and encouraging voters to ask prospective Members of Parliament to commit to supporting the UKs Parks.

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CONTACT

For media enquiries, please contact Richard McKeever, Fields in Trust Communications Manager,

e: richard.mckeever@fieldsintrust.org, t: 0207 427 2117, m: 07940 072832

The Fields in Trust Manifesto is available for download http://bit.ly/FITManifesto

Our Have a Field Day video available on request www.fieldsintrust.org/news

NOTES TO EDITORS

- **Fields in Trust** is a charity operating throughout the UK to safeguard recreational spaces and campaign for better statutory protection for all kinds of outdoor sites. Fields in Trust currently protects over 2,600 sites, around 30,000 acres of land (12,140ha.) including playgrounds, playing fields, and formal and informal parkland which are safeguarded as recreational spaces forever
- **Have a Field Day** was established by Fields in Trust in 2012 as a way for local communities to celebrate their newly protected Queen Elizabeth II Field. Later expanded to be available to all sites protected with Fields in Trust, in the five years since almost 1,800 *Have a Field Day* events have taken place with in excess of 360,000 attendees. Following the second year of Fields in Trust's highly successful **UK's Best Park, as voted by YOU! Award**, which saw any local green space eligible to be nominated and voted for by the public, for Have a Field Day 2017 we invite any community from across the UK to participate.

Founded in 1925 as the National Playing Fields Association by King George V, the mission is the same now and as it was then: to ensure that everyone – young or old, able-bodied or disabled and wherever they live – should have access to free, local outdoor space for sport, play and recreation. These spaces are vital to building happy and healthy communities and sadly continue to be threatened by all kinds of development. www.fieldsintrust.org

Company Contact:

Fields in Trust

T. 02074272110
E. richard.mckeever@fieldsintrust.org
W. https://www.fieldsintrust.org/

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