

Open Spaces with Green Flag Awards

Indicator

The number of open spaces with a Green Flag award.

Status



The number of open spaces with a Green Flag award in Worcestershire is good, and is improving.

Overview

The quality of parks and open spaces are essential to the way that local communities feel about where they live. High quality open spaces also have a massive impact on local social and economic regeneration. The Green Flag Award is the national quality award for parks and open spaces that has been running since 1996, and is awarded to spaces satisfying eight criteria:

- a welcoming place;
- healthy safe and secure;
- clean and well-maintained;
- sustainability;
- conservation and heritage;
- community involvement;
- marketing; and
- management

The Green Flag award is administered by Keep Britain Tidy and has the backing of DCLG.

Performance

There are currently 15 parks or open spaces in Worcestershire with Green Flag awards (as at end of March 2011). This is an increase on 2010 (14) and 2009 (11). The increase on last year has arisen due to the inclusion of Overdale Park, in Astwood Bank, Redditch.

In local terms the breakdown of the green flag awards in the county is as follows:

Responsible Authority	No. of sites	Site Details
Worcestershire County Council	3	Waseley Hills Country Park, Rubery St. Wulstan's Local Nature Reserve, Upper Welland Worcester Woods Country Park, Worcester
Bromsgrove District Council	1	Sanders Park, Bromsgrove
Malvern Hills District Council	0	-
Redditch Borough Council	3	Overdale Park, Astwood Bank, Redditch Arrow Valley Country Park, Redditch Morton Stanley Park, Redditch
Worcester City Council	2	Cripplegate Park, Worcester Gheluvelt Park, Worcester
Wychavon District Council	3	Abbey Park, Evesham Workman Gardens, Evesham Abbey Park, Pershore
Wyre Forest District Council	3	Queen Elizabeth II Silver Jubilee Gardens, Bewdley Brinton Park, Kidderminster Broadwaters Park, Kidderminster
County Total	15	

Details correct as at end March 2011. All information taken from Green Flag website.

There are no defined boundaries for what constitutes 'good', 'fair' or 'poor' performance within the Green Flag scheme, in terms of the number of award-winning sites. Arriving at an objective judgement on performance is therefore far from straightforward. The judgement is therefore largely based on Worcestershire's performance relative to other authorities in the region, together with comparison against performance in previous years. It would theoretically be possible to calculate what proportion of the potentially eligible sites within the county could have won an award and apportion incremental values within this to determine the level of performance. In reality such a calculation is, however, almost impossible; the range of sites that could be eligible is almost limitless (this year including shopping and leisure complex in Liverpool, for example), and it would be inappropriate to attempt to quantify the results in these absolute terms.

Geographical Context

The West Midlands region has 58 current Green Flag award-winning parks and open spaces. Worcestershire's 15 registered sites comprise a healthy 26% of this total, and show that the county is well represented in terms of the quality of parks and open spaces on offer. Whilst the West Midlands urban authorities total 32 green flags, Worcestershire performs well

against the region's other shire counties of Shropshire (3) and Warwickshire (4), being beaten only by Staffordshire (19).

In the UK, there are 1,066 Green Flags (994 in England), and the scheme has also been extended to the Netherlands and Germany.

Actions

Whilst the number of green flags will hopefully continue to increase in future years, it is likely that it will be difficult to exceed a maximum number of around 4 sites per authority, due to the numbers of 'conventional' Green Flag candidate sites in the county.

The Green Pennant Award has recently been launched to complement the Green Flag award. The Green Pennant "recognises high quality green spaces in England and Wales that are managed by voluntary and community groups". Worcestershire sites should seize this opportunity for formal recognition.

Further Information

For more information visit the [Green Flag Award](#) website.