

**Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting**

Delegated Officer Decision – 31 January 2025

**Report Title**

Merger of Green Spaces social media pages to become Rotherham Parks and Countryside

**Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?**

No, but it has been included on the Forward Plan

**Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report**

Name of Strategic Director

**Report Author(s)**

Hannah Jackson, Senior Ranger **AND** Neil Best  
01709 254588

**Ward(s) Affected**

Borough-Wide

Choose an item.

**Report Summary**

Request to

**Recommendations**

1. The Facebook pages for Rotherham Parks, Thrybergh Country Park and Ulley Country Park are merged and become Rotherham Parks and Countryside.

**List of Appendices Included**

Appendix 1 Insert title here

Appendix 2 Insert title here

**Background Papers**

**Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel**

Name of Committee – Click here to enter a date.

Name of Committee – Click here to enter a date.

**Council Approval Required**

Yes or No?

**Exempt from the Press and Public**

Yes or No? If yes, use text below.

*An exemption is sought for (insert appendix number) under (Select reason for exemption) of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 is requested, as this report contains (insert why it meets that paragraph).*

*It is considered that the public interest in maintaining the exemption would outweigh the public interest in disclosing the information because (insert why*

## The Merger of 3 Green Spaces Facebook Pages

Error! Reference source not found.

### 1. Background

1.1 The Green Spaces Service consists of 4 different teams

- Countryside)
  - Thrybergh Country Park
  - Ulley Country Park
  - Ecology
- Rother Valley Country Park & Waleswood Camping & Caravan Park
- Tree and Woodlands Service (including)
  - Tree Engagement Officers
  - Woodlands
- Community Parks and Open Spaces (including)
  - Clifton Park
  - Urban Parks
  - Recreation Grounds
  - Play areas

1.2 Currently there are various social media platforms and accounts for services within Green Spaces, these are

Name	Team responsible	Facebook	Instagram	X(Twitter)
Rotherham Parks	Urban Green Spaces	Y	Y	N
Rother Valley CP	Rother Valley	Y	N	Y (not active)
Thrybergh CP	Countryside & Woodlands	Y	N	N
Ulley CP	Countryside & Woodlands	Y	N	N
Waleswood	Waleswood	Y	Y	N

1.3 The content created is very similar on each page, typically

- Upcoming events information
- Updates on services within parks – Watersplash, Café openings/closing, technical issues
- Sharing other Culture, Sport & Tourism social media pages posts
- Other content – monthly highlights, pictures of the parks, trees, swans

1.4 Each individual page is managed by the relevant team to schedule in posts, answer queries and report on monthly stats. The approach is mixed throughout the pages, although they are all inconsistent in the number of posts that are created, this is based on skillset, and capacity to be able to create content. Pages can go without any posts being uploaded for weeks at a time, particularly at key times in the year dependent on service needs.

## **2. Key Issues**

- 2.1 Facebook is a free marketing tool, which teams use to engage with their audiences as well as sharing key messages
- 2.2 When content is created it is well received with good reach and engagement figures, although the rate in which posts are created have dwindled, which will result in lower engagement over time and a bad reputation when questions/messages aren't being responded to.
- 2.3 Staff are keen to create content and engage with customers but are unable to manage pages consistently and give it the time it requires to manage each page properly.
- 2.4 Having met with the teams, they feel there are missed opportunities for content they haven't got time to individually create, some of these include
- Nowhere to promote trees
  - Nowhere to promote the good works being done on rights of way and other countryside sites apart from Thrybergh and Ulley.
  - The pages are lacking in educational content, telling people about the countryside code, nesting season etc.
  - Commercial hires of buildings, pavilions, Garden Room at Clifton etc.
  - Input/feedback from residents
  - Conservation
  - Love your park week
- 2.5 Currently there is no page that the tree engagement officers, or countryside team are able to post onto. They can post onto each individual page, but this doesn't make sense to the customer.
- 2.6 Customers/followers of all pages want the same things:
- Fun, positive, and engaging posts, with relevant images/graphics
  - Consistency of posting – including design and tone of voice
  - Response in a timely manner – it is thought social media answers should be answered within 2 days if not sooner
  - Informative posts – when events are taking place if sites are open or closed
- 2.7 A mapping exercise has shown that there is enough content to cover a year, which is spread out evenly within the teams due to the various jobs the teams cover.
- 2.8 The Waleswood and RVCP pages, should be treated separately to other Green Spaces pages due to the commercial promotion that needs to take place, being commercial sites.

## **3. Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 3.1 The alternative to this proposal is for the existing situation of 3 separate pages to continue.

3.2 The recommendation is to merge the 3 pages into a single Facebook page.

#### **4. Consultation on proposal**

4.1 Briefing paper circulated in April 2024 which included the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Neighbourhood Working

#### **5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

5.1 The pages will start the process of merging in February 2025 - the Senior Ranger in Urban Spaces and Head of Commercial Development and Visitor Experience will coordinate the merger with support from the Strategic Partnerships Manager

#### **6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications (to be written by the relevant Head of Finance and the Head of Procurement on behalf of s151 Officer)**

6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising as a result of this report. Services within Culture, Sport and Tourism are income generating services, and in some cases, such as Waleswood, fully commercial operations. The use of social media is becoming key to engaging potential customers and generating interest in services, to encourage customer visits, and therefore increase income generation.

6.2 There are no direct procurement implications associated with the recommendations detailed in this report.

#### **7. Legal Advice and Implications (to be written by Legal Officer on behalf of Assistant Director Legal Services)**

7.1 There are no legal implication arising from the contents of this report.

#### **8. Human Resources Advice and Implications**

8.1 There are no direct Human Resources implications associated with the recommendations detailed in this report.

#### **9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

9.1 More frequent relevant content advertising events and opportunities for involvement in Green Spaces, all information will be in one place so easily accessible.

## 10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

10.1 There are no Equalities or Human rights implications

## 11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change

11.1 There are no CO2 Emissions or Climate Change implications

## 12. Implications for Partners

12.1. There are no implications for partners.

## 13. Risks and Mitigation

13.1 Key risks include losing followers who may not transition to the new page, confusion among followers about the change, and potential loss of historical content and engagement metrics.

13.2 To mitigate these risks, it's essential to communicate the merger clearly and frequently to followers, providing detailed instructions on how to follow the new page. Additionally, preserving and transferring important content and engagement data to the new page can help maintain continuity. Running targeted campaigns to re-engage followers and monitoring feedback closely will also ensure a smoother transition.

## 14. Accountable Officers

Neil Best, Head of Commercial & Visitor Experience  
Jon Hinchliffe. Urban Parks & Open Spaces Manager

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers: -

	<b>Named Officer</b>	<b>Date</b>
Chief Executive	Sharon Kemp	Click here to enter a date.
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	Click here to enter a date.
Assistant Director of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Phil Horsfield	Click here to enter a date.

*Report Author:* Hannah Jackson, Senior Ranger **AND** Neil Best  
01709 254588

This report is published on the Council's [website](#).