

Islington streets ahead of other London boroughs with grassroots Olympic legacy

Newspapers last night awarded TFL gold for their efforts to make travel seamless during the Olympics, but when it comes to grassroots legacy the London borough of Islington romps home with the top medal. Islington Borough Council have engaged with the Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge, run by Fields in Trust, which safeguards outdoor recreational spaces in perpetuity to ensure that communities will always have places for sport and play to mark the great events of 2012.

Islington Council have so far nominated 14 sites for protection under the Challenge despite the area being one of the most densely populated parts of the country. That's 25% of the total number of sites that all London Boroughs have nominated and stands in stark contrast to 14 boroughs whose councils have not yet protected any spaces. With the Home Games hoping to see the success of home-grown competitors such as Christine Ohuruogu, Philips Idowu and Zoe Smith, the need to protect space for the Olympians of the future to flourish in London is underlined. Yet some councils such as Kensington and Chelsea whose park managers think that their parks do "*not require the additional levels of protection that would come from inclusion in the Challenge*", and Bexley, in particular, have shown no interest in creating a grassroots legacy through the programme.

Parks, playing fields and playgrounds continue to be threatened by development and, without these spaces, participation levels in all kinds of physical recreation would be severely reduced. Applications to protect sites under the Challenge can be made until the end of December, 2012.

The Duke of Cambridge is Patron of the Challenge, and supports the vital role green spaces play: '*As we cheer on athletes at the Olympic Games, we should remember how so many of them started their career on local green spaces.*'

'Fields in Trust's Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge is helping to deliver the most fantastic legacy from the Diamond Jubilee and the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. I encourage all the Boroughs to get involved with the Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge and take advantage of this chance to make our precious outdoor spaces even better,' Boris Johnson, Mayor of London.

Alison Moore-Gwyn, Chief Executive of Fields in Trust said '*I'm delighted by the enthusiasm with which Islington Borough Council has embraced the Challenge. They really are setting the standard for ensuring a legacy from the Games in their Borough and I hope the rest of London will follow suit. It is particularly important in urban areas, with the pressure of housing and population, to safeguard access to local facilities. Without this we face the possibility of a decline in the diversity of home grown athletes and sports people.*'

'It is a great idea to protect our open spaces in perpetuity, I think the Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge is a wonderful initiative; councils are under tremendous pressure to build houses, particularly here in Islington where we have a very high waiting list for social housing and yet very little land. So it is especially important that we keep our green spaces in perpetuity and I hope a lot more green space is protected in this way,' Janet Burgess, Councillor and Executive for Health & Wellbeing, Islington Council

Delivery of this wide ranging legacy programme was made possible by the support of Asda and the Asda Foundation. Paul Kelly, External Affairs Director at Asda said '*Asda shares Fields in Trust's commitment to ensuring 2012 brings lasting benefit to communities across the UK and so we are proud to have worked in*

partnership to deliver a programme that will give opportunities for participation in sports and activities well beyond the Olympic Games’.

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For further information please contact:

**Helen Griffiths, Director of Communications at Fields in Trust on 07946 188 371, 0207 427 2112
helen.griffiths@fieldsintrust.org or Kathryn Cook, Communications Manager on 07931 392 176; 0207
427 2117; kathryn.cook@fieldsintrust.org**

Notes to editors:

www.qe2fields.com

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| LONDON BOROUGH | LOCAL AUTHORITY NOMINATIONS | LONDON BOROUGH | LOCAL AUTHORITY NOMINATIONS |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Islington | 14 | Southwark | 1 |
| Enfield | 6 | Tower Hamlets | 1 |
| Ealing | 5 | Barnet | 0 |
| Haringey | 4 | Hounslow | 0 |
| Bromley | 3 | Lambeth | 0 |
| Greenwich | 3 | Lewisham | 0 |
| Wandsworth | 2 | Bexley | 0 |
| Brent | 2 | Hackney | 0 |
| City of London | 2 | Hammersmith and Fulham | 0 |
| Havering | 2 | Harrow | 0 |
| Kingston Upon Thames | 2 | Hillingdon | 0 |
| Sutton | 2 | Kensington and Chelsea | 0 |
| Croydon | 1 | Merton | 0 |
| Barking and Dagenham | 1 | Newham | 0 |
| Camden | 1 | Waltham Forest | 0 |
| Redbridge | 1 | Westminster | 0 |
| Richmond Upon Thames | 1 | | |

- There is also special funding available to QEII sites across London – the London Legacy fund. More information can be found at: <http://www.qe2fields.com/londonlegacy.aspx>
- The Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge aims to protect 2,012 outdoor recreational spaces by the end of 2012 to build a legacy from the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee and the Olympic Games.
- The Duke of Cambridge is Patron of the Challenge. Queen Elizabeth II Field status protects green sites for perpetuity, ensuring communities and future generations will always have access to them. The Challenge builds on the work that Fields in Trust has done so far. Established in 1925 as the National Playing Fields Association, Fields in Trust works to improve the protection, provision and quality of outdoor recreational spaces for all communities in the UK. They currently protect 1362 fields totalling 8586 acres.



- Further details on The Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge can be found at www.qe2fields.com. The Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge's principal partner is Asda and the Asda Foundation. SITA Trust UK are also supporting the Challenge, creating an exclusive £1 million fund available for designated QEII sites in England and Wales to apply to. The Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge is also kindly supported by LV= who have been enthusiastic about the Challenge.