

## Parks team excellence

Copeland Council has been ranked top in the UK for the value-for-money way it looks after its open spaces.

The council's parks and open spaces department delivers its services for just £17.06 per household each year – compared to a national average of £50.38. The figures have been compiled by the Association for Public Service Excellence.

Copeland's parks manager, John Davis, said: "We strive to offer a good service within our budget and I'm really pleased for our team that these figures place us so highly. We work hard to deliver the best services. The amount of resources we have has changed in recent years but this shows we are still offering great value for money."

The parks and open spaces department:

- maintains 180 hectares of land,
- looks after 200 hectares of woodland,
- inspects and maintains 13 play areas and 2 skateparks,
- cares for the grounds in five working cemeteries and 12 closed ones,
- maintains the surroundings of the crematorium,
- carries out hard landscaping including fences, footpaths drainage etc,
- controls weeds, including invasive weeds like Japanese Knotweed,
- maintains shrub beds and hedges,
- picks litter in council parks and open spaces, and empties the litter bins there,
- Clears snow and grits footways in council-owned parks and open spaces,
- Maintains some allotments,
- Supports the employment of two horticultural apprentices and
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Carries out responsive emergency work.

The parks and open spaces department is also further expanding its services to paying clients, as part of Mayor Mike Starkie's drive to commercialise the council.

The council can provide competitively priced packages to homes and businesses as well as schools, sports clubs and parish councils looking for grounds and garden services.

With more than 40 years of experience maintaining Copeland Council's parks, play areas and open spaces, the service has the local knowledge and skills to ensure grounds look their very best.

Services include:

- grounds maintenance
- grass cutting
- weed control
- litter collection
- sports pitch maintenance
- play area inspections
- footpath and boundary maintenance
- hedges and drainage care
- tree maintenance, inspection and planting requirements.

John Davis added: "Choosing Copeland Parks and Open Spaces is an investment in your landscape, in the borough and in young people, as we always have at least two apprentices working with us. And all our profits are reinvested in Copeland Borough Council's services."

Free quotes are available from Parks and Open Spaces by calling 01946 598300 and asking for John Davis or David Strong.

APSE performance networks, which collated the figures in this release, is the largest voluntary public sector benchmarking service across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. It is used by more than 200 local authorities.



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**Source URL:** <https://www.copeland.gov.uk/node/16045>