



# HM Government of Gibraltar

Ministry of Health, the Environment,  
Energy and Climate Change

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **GSD now self-proclaimed gardening experts**

### **But the REAL experts prepare to give it a major International Award!**

In an attempt to find substance for their political arguments the GSD has now re-embarked on their campaign against Commonwealth Park. This is a Park that they didn't want to see, and a Park that they kept very quiet about for almost a year and a half when they failed to recognize what a gem it was and what an asset it had become. Suddenly, thinking that they have found an opportunity to hit not just at the Government, but as is typical of the GSD's philosophy, at the dedicated staff as well, they now remember that Commonwealth Park exists.

It is a fact that the grass suffered towards the end of this summer, up until when it remained in excellent condition. This was not unpredicted. A new area of grass, where the ground had to be completely re-profiled and the soil manufactured, tends to suffer from compaction after a while. This reduces drainage and affects the grass. It is common in any new park of this nature. In fact the turf performed extremely well right through its first summer in 2014, when, being freshly laid, it was at its most vulnerable. No congratulations from the GSD then, but the good condition throughout that period proves that the grass was suited to the site.

In order to tackle this, it was planned to carry out re-profiling and re-turfing in the autumn after the very successful Cinema in the Park and at the time of year when such maintenance is best performed. The unfortunate arrival of a fungus also affected the grass. Once a persistent disease hits a plant, it can be difficult or impossible to eradicate, as Gibraltar and much of the Mediterranean have seen with the palm tree weevil. This is despite all the best maintenance techniques being performed. Much of the grass is now responding, except in the areas hardest hit, which includes the areas of most compaction where the water from irrigation will tend to pool.

It was always expected that within the first 18 months of the park opening areas would need to be re-laid, and this process will now be commencing shortly.

In trying to be clever, the GSD once again strays into dangerous territory, making comments as if they knew what they were talking about, only to expose their utter ignorance. They make

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remarks such as suggesting that the park is no longer acting as a 'lung' in the city area. They clearly can't see the wood for the trees. Of course, they have not commented about the tremendous performance and development of the shrubs nor about the 100% survival rate of the trees, which surpassed expectations and reflects excellent husbandry. It is the trees in fact that are the 'lungs' and contribute to most of the oxygen production in the park. Will they congratulate the expert maintenance team for their success with the trees and shrubs?

The fact is that the REAL experts recognize the value of Commonwealth Park, and its excellent design and production. HM Government of Gibraltar is pleased to announce that Commonwealth Park has been nominated for the main awards in the International Category of the British Association of Landscape Industries National Landscape Awards 2015. It is one of the final three contenders for these awards together with two sites in Shandong Province, China. The final results will be announced at a ceremony in Grosvenor House in London on 5<sup>th</sup> December.

Minister for the Environment, Dr John Cortes, said, "When it comes to Nature, the GSD clearly doesn't have a clue. Lawns go brown around the world, even in Kew Gardens, and are dealt with. They try to make so much out of these things, while the real experts see fit to signal out the Park's excellence. Little else need be said".