

PLAYING FIELD WORKING PARTY FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Recreation and Leisure Village Survey

1. Introduction

In 2017 the village plan recommended that if relocation of the playing field and playground (PFP) proved unattainable, then the primary focus would be to redevelop and upgrade the existing site.

After establishing that relocation is not an option, the Playing field working party (PFWP) decided to canvas the village to gain public opinion on current and future use of the PFP. It was agreed that a paper survey would be the most useful tool and focus groups would be set up in various age groups if there was enough interest.

The survey was split into four areas:

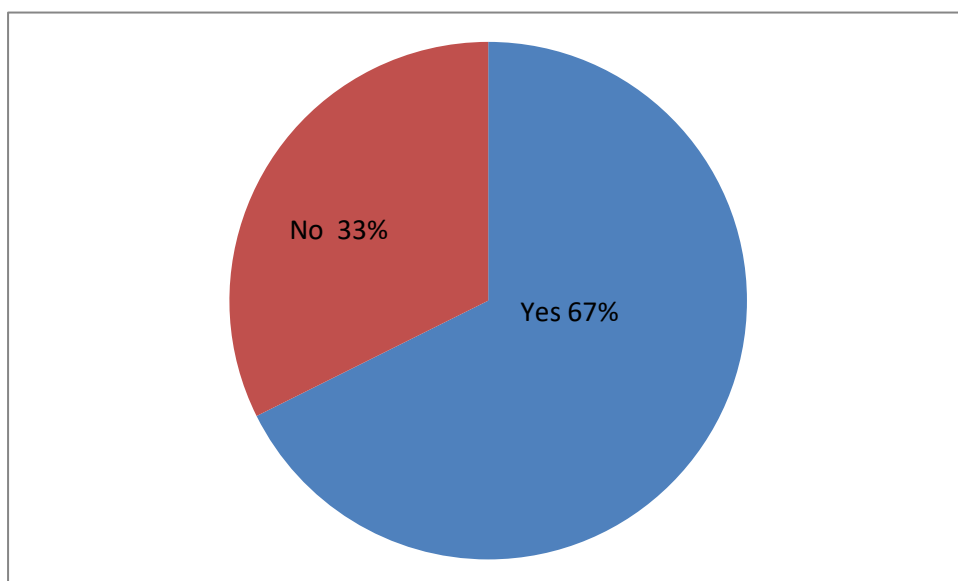
1. Do you currently use the playing field?
2. What type of play equipment would you or your family like to see at the playing field?
3. What sports would encourage you or your family to use the playing field to either participate in or watch a sport?
4. Please indicate the number of people in your household in each age category

The survey was then delivered to all the houses in the village and the responses were collected at the village shop and pub.

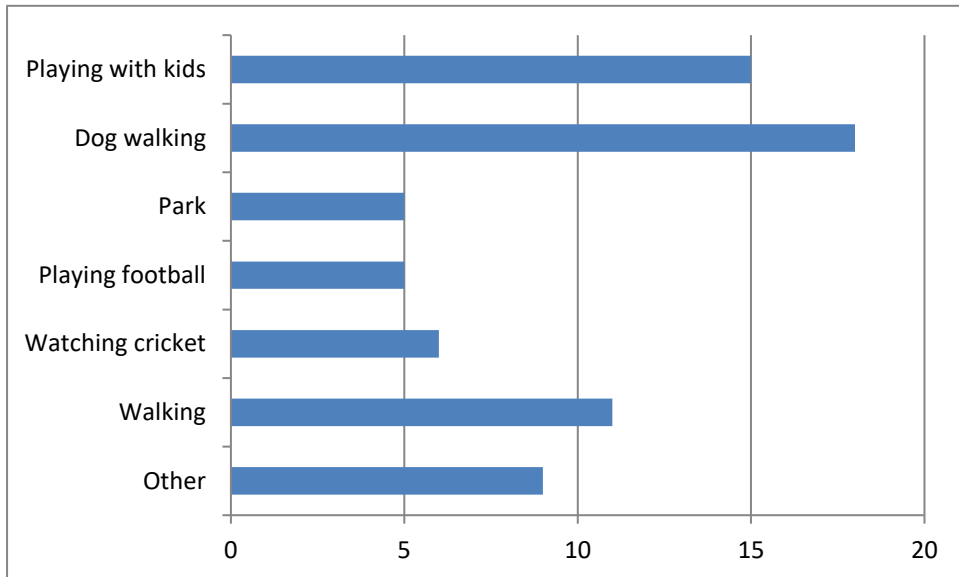
2. Results

68 households in the village responded to the survey, which is approximately 12% of the village.

Q1 – Do you currently use the PFP



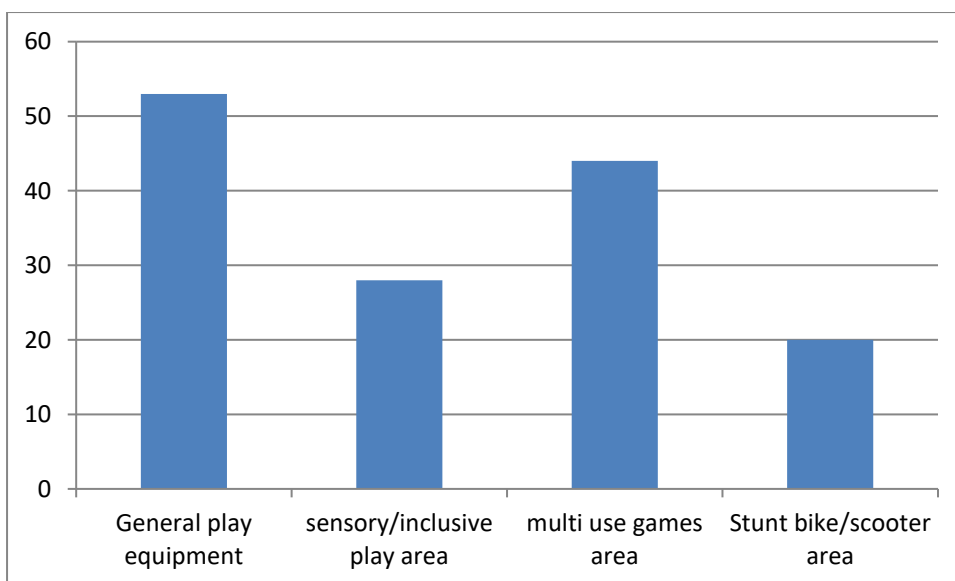
Reasons why respondents currently use the playing field



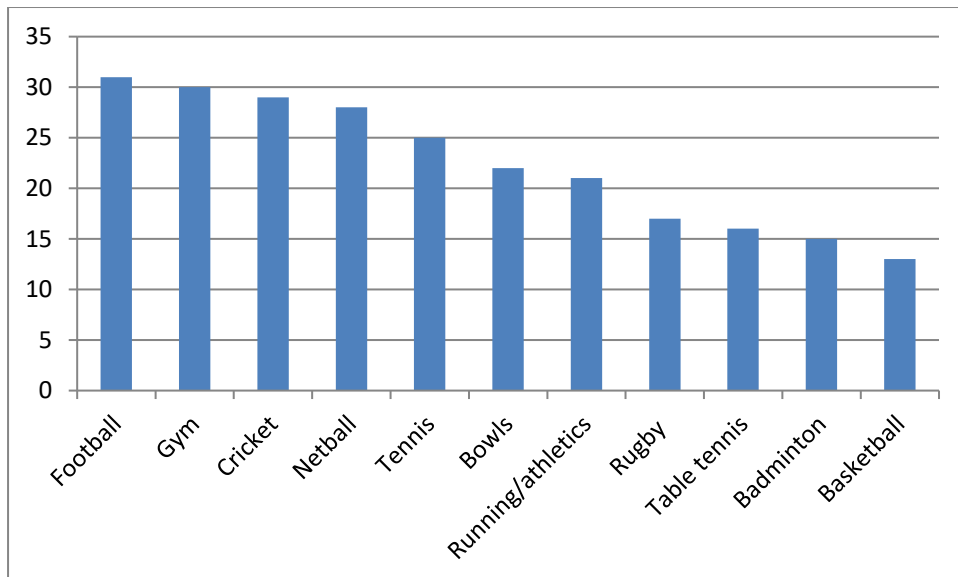
Most common reasons why respondents didn't use the playing field

- **Aesthetics** (Graffiti, Dog faeces, Unattractive recreational area)
- **Age** (to old, no young children in the family, nothing for young children to do)
- **Playground** (Needs updating, no equipment for very young children)
- **Access** (uninviting access from Westfield's, too far out of the village, no disabled access, overgrown verges)
- Nothing up there worth going for

Q2 - what type of play equipment would you or your family like to see at the playing field?



Q3 – What sports would encourage you or your family to use the playing field to either participate in or watch a sport



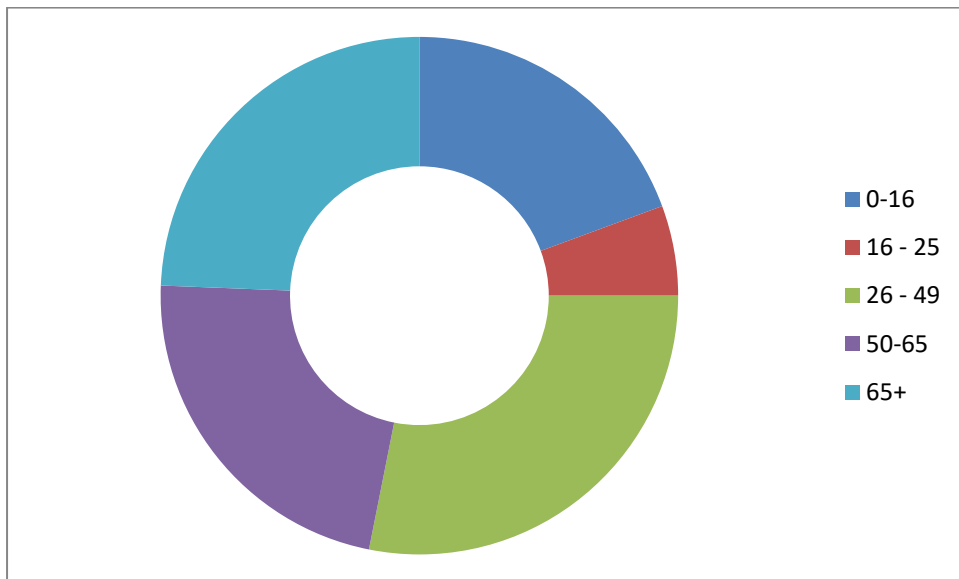
Other recreational suggestions for the PFP

- Path around the field for disability access
- Zip wire
- Multi court
- Outdoor gym/community gym equipment
- Picnic/seating area/seats to watch sports
- Cycle track
- Fitness circuit
- Climbing area
- Enclosed space for dogs to run off the lead
- Fitness studio/changing room/showers
- Skate park
- Dog agility equipment
- Climbing area/wooden climbing apparatus
- Pentanque
- 5-a-side artificial pitch
- Cordoned off rubber match surface to prevent dogs entering
- Hand cycles for all

Other general suggestions for the PFP

- Gate across the entrance to keep out cars
- Volunteers to maintain area
- Improved road access
- More for children in the village

Q4 - Please indicate the number of people in your household in each age category



Following the survey there were not enough participants for a focus group, but we have included all additional written feedback into the report.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION

The working party has considered all the responsibilities as directed in our terms of reference.

It is suggested you look at the attached Recreation and Leisure Village Survey, prior to reading the recommendations

PLAYING FIELD LOCATION

We have looked into and considered other locations for the whole playin field or for just the equipped play area. There is not a suitable venue within the village or on its perimeter that could adequately accommodate the requirements the current location offers.

Recommendation

The PF should remain in its current location, and money be raised to refurbish it.

ACCESS

We consulted with the PCC with regard to gaining access to the playing field directly off the A43, which would alleviate traffic problems through the village and on the Bridle Way. The PCC feel that ownership of the field and designation of the Bridle Way need to be resolved before they are willing to enter into discussions about this option.

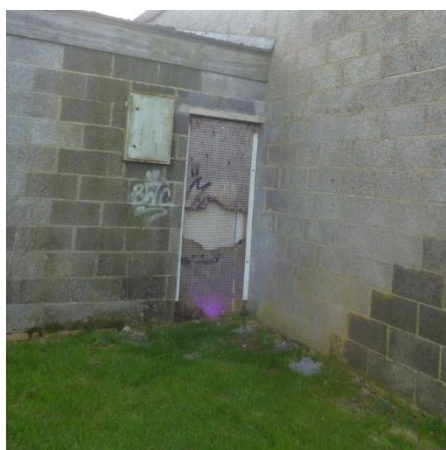
CHANGING ROOMS

We originally considered that we would refurbish the changing rooms as we were mindful of the considerable effort and time that had already gone into building the structure. We also considered SCOBRC's proposal to take over the building – but a 25 year lease to them is not possible until ownership is resolved and questions were asked about the benefit to the village residents? Also after consulting with the residents rugby came 8th out of 11 sports that would encourage people to use the field to either play or watch sport. The public opinion showed little desire amongst residents for organised team sports and clubs and therefore, no need for a changing room.

We also for a while, considered using part of the building as toilets to be used when the playing field was being used for organised events, again after further consideration about the cost of refurbishing and then ongoing running costs, it could not be justified for the limited amount of times during the year when it may have been used.

We met with a surveyor to discuss the future of the changing rooms and it was felt that although the building was sound – internally it is not fit for purpose any longer.

Throughout this process the changing rooms became a target for repeated vandalism causing a large amount of damage to the door and roof – highlighting the problem that it continues to cost us money in insurance and maintenance, repairing mindless damage and yet nobody has ever benefited from it, and there is no desire within the village to use it.



Recommendation

It is considered this is not fit for purpose and should be demolished. We appreciate this is an emotive issue.

It has: No ceiling, No showers, Only 2 windows, No internal wiring and has not been utilised in 30yrs?

PLAY EQUIPMENT

We were aware from work carried out 15 years ago by the PC that moving forward the equipment on the playing field was supposed to be for older secondary school children (Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play) as the equipment in the Close play area has been designed specifically for younger children (Local Equipped Area for Play)

After the public opinion it became obvious that all ages need to be catered for on the playing field. Whilst older children enjoy playing up there independently, parents and grandparents also cherish taking much younger children up there to play on the equipment.

A MUGA seemed a really popular choice with many families going to Collyweston to use theirs. This will meet the needs of all ages and abilities and would allow people to use the playing field in all seasons.

The public opinion also highlighted the need for newer and more challenging pieces of play equipment for all ages of children.

Recommendation

It is our recommendation that once a Playing Field Association has been formed and funding secured that the slide should be replaced with a larger multiuse piece of equipment which includes a climbing frame, a slide, climbing wall/nets and maybe other used dependant on cost. The arch climber should be replaced with a similar piece of equipment aimed at much younger children, with a smaller slide and steps and maybe a bridge between platforms.

A Zip wire was also a popular choice and could maybe be added as and when funds are available.

PLAY AREA IN GENERAL

After speaking to staff at Little Lane Nursery, it was also felt that the play area could be improved by:

- Being fenced off to stop dogs accessing the play area
- More seating to allow parents or grandparents sit whilst supervising the children
- Adding a stage/platform for more imaginative play
- Rolling hills and balance beams to help develop basic gross motor skills
- A woodland walk through the area to the right of the swings with wildlife features and den making opportunities.

This final option could be achieved at little cost. We just need a good working party. It was also felt that we could ask Northants Wildlife Trust for help and advice in this area.

PATH AND GYM

Public suggestions to improve the playing field included paths around the field, gym equipment, circuit training and hand cycles. Bearing in mind almost half of our respondents were over 50, this is what they feel would most benefit the way they access the playing field.

Recommendation

It is therefore our recommendation that we install a path around the playing field and use the areas in the corners to place a single or multiple pieces of gym equipment that will be suitable for all ages and abilities, be fully inclusive and will be able to be used all year.

CAR PARK



This requires a new fence and a secure gate. This could prevent/curtail the drug use that is taking place on the field, and the anti social behaviour such as breaking the fence and driving on the field. It is considered if access is denied then the problem will resolve itself. It could also be made smaller, dependant on what happens to the Sports Pavilion and the siting of the MUGA.

Recommendation

To fit a partial locked gate onto the playing field joining Ketton Drift, this could be unlocked for organised events. Ensuring we leave a wide enough gap for mobility scooters, wheel chairs and pushchairs.

Look into alternatives to the metal fence to separate the car park from the playing field.

FOOTBALL FIELD

The main posts should remain where they are. The two small posts should be removed/re-sited.

CRICKET CLUB

The main user of the PF. A lease needs to be agreed on to enable the CC to obtain funding.

PLAYING FIELD ASSOCIATION

An association needs to be established once ownership is established. Their remit will be to enact the recommendations from the PFWP,

OWNERSHIP

The main obstacle throughout this exercise has been ownership of the playing field. We personally find it incomprehensible how, the playing field having been in existence for over 50 years, the Parish Council do not own the Field! This needs sorting as a matter of urgency, it is not good enough to say solicitors are dealing with it or the Land registry are dealing with it. The Parish Council needs to take ownership of the problem and resolve it. It is strongly recommended a member of the council is nominated to deal with the issue.

It is clear from public opinion, that all areas of the village feel there is nothing for them up the playing field, they have no pride in the playing field, it looks unloved and unused – it is no longer an asset to the residents of this village.

We need to improve the aesthetics of the whole area, and the community needs to be included in the decisions and the processes. The community needs to be able to take ownership and responsibility for our field, so that it can a benefit to all in our society.

It should be an asset, a place to be used by all, a place to be proud of and a place that can benefit the health and wellbeing of all the residents all year round.

