

# Friendly Parks for Young and Old: Barnes Green Consultation

September 2016

## Consultation overview

We are working to make Barnes Green a Dementia Friendly Park and sought the views of people with dementia, their carers, family and friends about their experience of using the park, the barriers that they face and what can be done to improve the park to make it more accessible. Following initial discussions with a local dementia group on what improvements would be beneficial and the key areas to focus on were considered to be:

- Entrances / exits
- Footpath improvements
- Access to ponds
- Interpretation and way finding
- Definition of different areas of the park
- Benches and resting places

We were also interested in what the barriers there are to the use Barnes Green for this group, what additional support was required to make it possible to use the park and what types of activity they are interested in taking part in.

The consultation ran from 30th August to 25<sup>th</sup> September and took the form of:

- An online questionnaire aimed at people with dementia, their family and carers
- A more general consultation which asked for comments on the proposals to upgrade park facilities on Barnes Green
- Written questionnaires distributed to organisations who have clients who may not have access to the internet – Age Concern in Barnes, FiSH, Barnes Business Association, Grove Road GP Surgery, Richmond Carers Centre.
- Discussions with 3 support groups for people with dementia. These discussions had a structure relating closely to the online / written consultation
- Feedback to a presentation made to the Retro Café for people with dementia and their carers run by FiSH in Barnes,
- The proposals were also discussed at Grove Road GP Surgery Patient Participation Association who recorded their support of the development of a dementia friendly park in Barnes in the minutes of their meeting.

The decision was taken to include people with dementia in the consultation so that their opinions were reflected and any barriers to making use of parks could be explored in detail with them. It was considered unlikely that they would make use of the internet so we used discussion groups as a means of consulting them.

There was a total of 4 responses to the online consultation and a total of 13 written responses some of these were contributions from groups of people with dementia rather than individuals. The discussion groups involved 32 people in all and were made up of people with dementia, the support group leaders and volunteers who assist the groups. We are very grateful for the opportunity to talk with these groups in detail, collect their views about the proposals and for their friendly welcome. The discussions were lively and there was considerable interest from the participants. In order to write up accurate notes written permission was gained from 2 of the 3 support groups to record the discussion. These recordings were destroyed as agreed with the participants. There are further details of the answers

to the questionnaires (both online and written) and reports of the discussions held with support groups in the appendices.

Appendix A Responses to the online and written questionnaires

Appendix B Reports of discussions held with 3 support groups

## Consultation responses

### 1. Frequency of visits

Only one person who took part in the written consultation was not able to name a local park. Parks that were named included Barnes Green (4/13), and Barnes Common (4/13). Two people mentioned Richmond Park, 1 person mentioned Bushy Park and 2 Hathrop Park, one person mentioned Twickenham Green. Most people said that they visited their closest park (7/13), but three said that they did not. Three people did not answer the question. One person said that they visit on a daily basis and several people (4/13) that they visit more than once a week, three people visit weekly. One person said that he never visits parks and open spaces and 2 that they visit less than once a month. There are a significant number of the group who make regular and frequent visits to parks with 8/13 visiting a minimum of once a week. One gentleman said that he had never visited any of the parks in the area where he lived although he had lived there for some time. He had no interest in doing so. Most people (9/13) said that there was a park less than 1 mile from their house.

### 2. What do you enjoy?

We asked what park users enjoyed when visiting the park:

- Wildlife and seeing animals particularly on the pond was frequently mentioned. Trees, and plants were also mentioned. The natural beauty of the space was also enjoyed. One person said that it was a “lovely green space with a direct view of the pond and its wildlife.”
- An opportunity to take “fresh air” was mentioned by three people
- Being outside with other people was a common theme. Seeing dogs and children playing was also enjoyed by several people. One person mentioned that “feeling part of the world” was something that she enjoyed.
- Others enjoyed the sense of openness and space that can be found in the park and one person referred to the serenity of the space
- It is interesting to note that all the things that park users said that they enjoy about the park are not active activities but tend to be contemplative activities. One respondent said that the park was close enough for her to enjoy walking and another that she enjoyed the opportunity to visit the café based in the park.

### 3. What makes it difficult to visit

Barriers to visiting that were identified by the consultation can be grouped into several themes:

- **Getting to the park** Distance from home and problems with transport were the barriers that were mentioned more than anything else. Someone commented *that “getting to the park if you are not sure where it is from transport links”* caused problems. One respondent mentioned that car parking and public parking space for those who cannot use public transport was a problem. Another written response said *“If we drive, we struggle to find any parking places near to the park – which means we have to struggle walking or just go home.”*
- **Problems with accessibility** were also mentioned by a large number of respondents including those in the discussion groups who make use of walking aids and sticks. The uneven nature of the paths, which is the result of tree roots growing close to the surface of the path was considered as a major problem by several respondents. (One gentleman in one of the discussion groups was keen that the trees roots should not suffer as a result of remedial actions taken in order to make the park more accessible.) In the written comments there were 2 respondents who captured the feelings of others *“Paths are not flat and wide enough for wheelchairs”* and *“All footpaths across the Green are in urgent need of resurfacing for the benefit of all users including old people, young children and people on bikes”*. Someone else commented on the lack of railing around the pond which meant that it was not accessible to people in wheelchairs or young children.

- **Physical fitness** One person said *“Don’t go out much. Get tired.”* And others mentioned mobility and distance as problems
- **Someone to go with** was another comment made in the written responses. In the discussion groups someone else said that she would only visit if her husband was able to take her. In discussions this theme did not come up as a barrier as frequently with people with dementia as it did with carers or volunteers taking part in the discussions but in the written consultation seven out of 13 respondents said that they needed support to visit the park, and only 4 disagreed.
- **Not enough seating** This theme was mentioned by only two written responses but recurred in all the discussions and was thought to be one of the main barriers. While one person thought that there was sufficient seating many others thought that there was inadequate seating in this and all parks in the borough. Richmond Park and Bushy were heavily criticised by one discussion group for having very limited seating as were some of the parks in Hampton. The discussion groups considered that the seating was sufficient along the main paths on Barnes Green and around the pond but the minor paths were not well served. One gentleman said that often many of the seats had people sitting on them and he did not feel able to join another person on a bench. Perching or resting points were thought to be a good idea between benches and it was considered to be important that you can see the next place to rest (either a bench or resting place) from where you are sitting. One lady said that they needed to be the right height and have a backrest and criticised the perching points in bus shelters as inadequate. One written respondent said *“More seating or perching areas in the park in unexpected places would be lovely, at the moment we cannot walk far for fear of not being near a bench when we get tired.”* See Appendix C for an example of a perching point in another outdoor space.
- **Weather** Bad weather and in particular rain was thought to be a major barrier to visiting the park, three people mentioning it in the written responses. One lady, a dog walker, said in discussion that she enjoyed a visit to her local park in the rain.
- **Cyclists** Two of the discussion groups talked about problems of sharing the space with cyclists. One group suggested the introduction of designated cycle paths, another that there should be no cycling at all in the park.
- **Fine as it is** Two responses said that there was nothing that made it difficult to visit and that the park was fine as it is. In answer to the statement *“It is easy for me / us to visit parks on a regular basis”* 8 respondents agreed, three disagreed and 2 did not answer. Many of the participants of the discussions also agreed, although there were more who said that it was not easy and they visited infrequently.

#### 4. How has dementia affected your (or the person you care for) ability to use parks?

There was a long written response in answer to this question from a carer. Several others made contributions in the written versions and the discussions. These covered many of the barriers already identified above:

- Mobility and problems using public transport
- Parking problems
- Accessibility of the paths which were thought to be unsuitable. One person commented *“There are plenty of examples of good dementia friendly paths that could be incorporated”*
- The need for seating or perching areas.
- Confusion and help available. There were several suggestions for improvements:
  - Clear directions to the park from local transport points
  - Clear directions in the park to show where the exits are and what direction you are heading in.
  - Help points where you can call someone if you need help
  - Dementia friendly staff in surrounding buildings so that if we stumble on them looking confused, people will know what to do.
  - There need to be more toilets which two people can fit in with a wheelchair

#### 5. What do you do in the park?

As part of the consultation we asked what people did when they were in parks, and how frequently they engaged in the activities.

- **Looking at nature** was the most popular activity with 6 people in the written consultation doing this regularly and 4 people often. It was also the activity which was most discussed in the discussion groups. The pond is a focal point for this activity.
- **Wildlife watching** Five people said that they enjoyed watching wildlife, and two people said that this is something that they do often. Three people said that they never watch wildlife.
- **Walking animals** In the written responses 4 people said that they walk pets in the park, and 2 other participants in the discussions said that they did this frequently. One of the suggestions was that there should be dogs available to walk. Some stated *"I can't keep a dog myself but I would love to walk someone else's for 10 minutes"*.
- **Sitting** The other activity which was mentioned was sitting. Two people in the written response mentioned this and several people in the discussion also talked about sitting outside. The reasons for doing this varied from an inability to walk, to watching other people and taking fresh air.
- **Walking** This was a popular activity with seven people in the written response enjoying it, four people often. Four others said that it was something that they never participated in. Five people said that they had other health conditions which limits their use of outdoor spaces. This may account for some people not taking part in walking as an activity. The discussion groups also mentioned this as an activity which they took part in.
- **Other exercise or active sport** This was a less popular choice of activity. Five people sometimes played informal games in the park, and 2 said that they did so often. Six said that they never played informal games. Most people do not use gym equipment in parks (10 out of 13 respondents) but one person had. Photographs of gym equipment were shown to the discussion groups but members were divided about whether they would make use of such equipment. Three people said that they sometimes ran in parks, one person ran often (no one in the discussion groups did) and two people cycled. No one in the discussion groups cycled.

It is not clear why active exercise is an unpopular choice of activity, although 5 people did report other health conditions which limit their access to outdoor spaces. It is possible that those consulted do take part in some physical exercise but not in the park. One lady in one of the discussion groups said that she did daily exercises in the house with family members. New gym equipment is about to be installed in 5 parks in the borough. This is something that could be highlighted to people with dementia in order to encourage them to make use of it regularly. There are no plans to install gym equipment on Barnes Green.

6. **What do people with dementia enjoy about these activities?** There were a variety of answers to this question:
- *"sense of freedom"*,
  - *"being out of the house"*,
  - *"It's relaxing and not stressful which reduces the symptoms"*,
  - *"I do not have to remember anything to have a wonderful experience"*,
  - *"We are part of the living world"*.
  - *"It is an opportunity to meet other people"* (Support group discussion)
  - *"Offers an opportunity to talk to other people!"* (Support group discussion)

These answers indicate that people with dementia and their carers can see real benefits to spending time outside visiting parks, despite all the barriers which they identified.

7. **With support which three activities would you take part in?** In answer to this question the clear favourite was looking at or being in nature (alone or in a group) with 10 out of 13 people. This was followed by exercising pets 5/13, guided walks, wildlife watching 4/13 walking 4/13, informal games and cycling 2/13 each. This differed from the discussions in 2 of the three centres where there was most interest in the idea of themed guided walks or guided walks that went at a gentler pace than the health walks which some people had attended. Sitting and relaxation were the other two activities which were mentioned (1/13). None of those who took part in the written responses were interested in more active exercise – using gym equipment, running/jogging, rambling/hiking, although there was some interest in the discussion groups.
8. **What type of support would enable you (or the person with dementia) to take part in these activities?**
- Transport.** In the written consultation three people thought that help with transport to the park was the most important support needed to get people to take part in activities. The need for reliable accessible transport was an ongoing theme in the discussion groups. Several people mentioned the bus used to access events in Richmond Park although there was some confusion about whether it was still running. It was considered that any support with transport should be offered all year rather than on a seasonal basis.

**Befriender.** Two people said that a befriender would be useful to enable people with dementia to take part in activities. The discussion groups talked about the role that a park keeper might have to keep an eye on people who seemed to be lost or confused. One group suggested that volunteers could be recruited to take on this role.

**More information about activities** In the written responses one person mentioned that this type of support would be useful. However, in the discussions this was a recurring topic of discussion. The support group volunteers were interested in where further information about activities in parks could be found and they were referred to the SWLEN event listing. <http://www.swlen.org.uk/events-calendar/> Although there are few events held on Barnes Green there are events held on a regular basis on Barnes Common and the education officer there is keen to develop activities for people with dementia. There are a large number of activities taking place across the borough many may be of interest to people with dementia and/or their carers.

**Route marking, maps and defined routes** were also seen as useful support to enable people with dementia to make use of the park.

**9. Other barriers to participating in outdoor activities and nature.** The consultation sought to understand whether there were other barriers to participating in outdoor activities so asked whether participants agreed whether the following were barriers:

- **Fears and safety concerns.** Four people agreed that this was a concern and one person said that the fear of getting lost was a problem. Five people disagreed with this and said that they did not consider it to be a barrier. Someone attending a discussion group who said that she was concerned about her safety in parks in Hampton as she was often alone. This led to a discussion about lighting parks and how people should be discouraged from walking through them at night. It is worth considering that not everyone may want to admit to their fears or lack of confidence when using the park.
- **Lack of confidence** Some people (4/13) people agreed with this statement but more (5/13) disagreed. This was not an issue which came up in the discussion groups.
- **Lack of spare time** This was thought to be a barrier by one person but 8 people disagreed with the statement.
- **Nature spaces are not accessible.** Most people who responded to this (7/13) disagreed with this statement, 2/13 agreed.
- **Transportation** Most people in the discussion groups and 5/13 in the written responses people said that this was a barrier to taking part in activities in parks. 6/13 people did not think that it was a barrier.
- **Cost / expense** No one agreed that this was a barrier to taking part in activities and 5 people disagreed. It was not an issue that came up in discussion groups.

The picture given in the written responses differs from the picture given in the discussion groups where transport and the accessibility of the paths is an issue. There were also some concerns with safety voiced in discussions.

- Respondents were also asked if there was anything else that acted as a barrier to using the park for activities and replied that crossing main roads was a major barrier as there is too much traffic on Station Road, Barnes High Street and Church Road.
- The Barnes Hospital discussion group suggested that if that if the park was not well maintained this could act as a barrier to visiting and the gentleman who brought this up was concerned that anything put in place through this project should be well maintained.
- A lack of toilets and seating were thought to be the main barrier to visiting a park or open space in all of the discussion groups.

## **10. Outdoor activities for people with dementia**

The next section of the questionnaire asked respondents to agree or disagree with a number of statements.

- a. Most people in discussion groups and the majority (10 / 13) agreed that regularly taking part in outdoor activities and nature were **beneficial** for people with dementia, and no one disagreed. (Three participants did not answer this section of the questionnaire.)
- b. Most people in discussions and in the written response (10/13) thought that **dementia specialist services** are needed to support people with dementia in taking part in outdoor activities. One person disagreed and 2 others did not respond.
- c. Most people in written consultation (8/13) thought that people with dementia would prefer to take part in **organised group activities** in nature rather than going to the park independently. In the discussion groups

there was quite a bit of interest in the different types of activity available to groups – walking, exercise, conservation work and learning activities were all discussed. One lady said that she enjoyed visiting the park to draw. Photography was also discussed as an option. One person disagreed, one said that it was not applicable and another did not answer.

- d. Most people (10/13) in the written enquiry and in the discussions said that it was important to have **people who understand people with dementia** available at outdoor activities. One person disagreed and three did not answer. The discussion groups remembered the role of the park keeper when they could be found in parks was to look after people who needed help, and one of the volunteers at the discussion suggested that there could be volunteer park keepers who carry out a similar role.
- e. There was almost complete support (11/13) for providing **accessible facilities** – toilets, café and seating in parks and most people 8/13 thought that there should be **clearer signage and more maps**. The discussion groups were interested in the idea of carved animals at each entrance to differentiate them from each other. One group felt that the use of colour might help also. All of the support groups discussed how this could add to the enjoyment of a visit especially if there was informative information available. One person disagreed in the written consultation and 3 did not provide an answer. There was some interest (5/11) in creating dementia friendly meeting points, although 4 people disagreed and 4 people did not answer the question. One of the discussion groups talked about this and thought that a labelled point in the park where activities began and finished would be a good idea as it would help to arrive at any of the activities as it would also be visible to other members of the public. It would also be a marked point to return to if you got lost or confused. It should be located near to where people congregate such as the café.
- f. A total of 8 people thought that the provision of **parking spaces** in or near the park would make the park more dementia friendly. 1 person disagreed and 3 did not answer.
- g. **Transport** was also an issue which recurred throughout the consultation, in particular the need for accessible public transport that was close to the park. Someone else thought that something should be done to improve the pedestrian crossings across the main roads to the Green and someone else suggested that businesses organisations and residents around the Green could be trained to be dementia friendly. The ideal of themed walks was liked by 2 people but they thought that the walks should be local and that staff and volunteers were needed to make the walk safe and enjoyable.

## 11. Recommendations

All those who took part in the consultation were supportive of developing Barnes Green as a Friendly Park. The recommendations from the consultation fall into 5 different categories.

- a. **Physical improvements to the park.** Recommendations in this category include:
  - Provision of flat wide pavements that are accessible by wheel chairs, and people with walking aids such as sticks and wheeled walkers
  - Safe access to the pond for people in wheelchairs and using walking aids. A rail and some resting places near the pond were also mentioned. An example of an interpretive barrier can be seen Appendix C.
  - Regular benches and resting points throughout the park. An example of resting points can be found in the Appendix C. Ideally these should have a backrest as well as a seat, although other people involved in discussions like the idea of resting on logs.
  - Easy access to toilet facilities and other facilities.
- b. **Way marking and interpretation** This was considered to be an important element of the project as it would give confidence in using the park on a regular basis.
  - Distinctive entry and exit points. There was support for the idea of carved animals at each entry, but there was also a feeling in the discussion groups that there should also be colour coding linked to the animals.
  - In the discussion groups there was support for the use of way markers to mark out set routes of varying length. The groups suggested the use of colour coding within the park to encourage park users to explore the park.
  - The idea of informative notices and signs covering the history and ecology of the Green was also welcomed by the discussion groups.
  - The idea of a meeting point that could be used for activities was also supported.
- c. **Transport**
  - Marking public transport links from within and outside the park was considered to be important.

- There was support for disabled parking bays on the streets adjacent to the park.
- There were suggestions of improved road crossings in the streets surrounding the park. Another suggestion not explored by the discussion groups could be some road safety training for carers and people with dementia to encourage good practice when walking to the park.
- Information on how to get to the park and what transport links were available was also requested by respondents. A leaflet distributed to care organisations could set out this information along with other information such as a map of the way marked routes and some additional information about facilities available in the park.
- Three people out of 13 suggested that there should be a transport scheme which brought people with dementia to the park. The model used in Richmond Park was given by several of the participants.

**d. Activities within the park**

- There was support for the idea of activities within the park that could be attended by people with dementia. It would be useful for these activities to be run by people who are able to support people with dementia in an appropriate way although the activities could be open to the wider community.
- One of the issues that became clear is that those who responded were not aware of events that are run within by the environment sector in the borough in local parks including nearby Barnes Common. Methods of disseminating information effectively to people with dementia should be developed. A means of identifying events that are suitable for people with dementia should also be developed and SWLEN are crucial to the development of this role and ongoing liaison with organisations such as the Alzheimer's Society, the Carers Centre, Age Concern and other similar groups who disseminate information to about events to their clients.
- Organisations, including Friends groups, who hold activities in the park and other parks in the borough could receive the Dementia Friends training to help them support people with dementia who attend their events.
- There was some support for activities held specifically for people with dementia. Activities that respondents suggested that they currently enjoy are: looking at and being in nature, guided walks, exercising pets, informal games and walking.

**e. Additional support**

- One respondent in the written consultation suggested that there should be **befrienders** who could take people to the park. Some of the discussion groups also explored the idea of (for example) Friends groups taking people with dementia to the park on a regular basis together with their carers.
- **Dogs** to borrow was also another suggestion. This could be part of an initiative to encourage befrienders.
- **Help points** were another suggestion made in the written consultation. There is a café in the park which could take on this role perhaps with some signage encouraging people to ask for help if they become lost or confused. Someone else made the suggestion of dementia friendly staff in surrounding buildings so that they are able to help if they come across anyone who is confused.
- **Wheelchairs and walking frames** to borrow to allow access to the park was also suggested. This is probably an action for one of the organisations based on the Green perhaps working closely with Parks staff.
- **Toilets** with space for 2 people. There is a disabled toilet in the café which allows for 2 people and a wheelchair. There is also a disabled ramp. All organisations on the Green should be encouraged to join the community toilet scheme.

## 12. Conclusions

The consultation found that all those who took part in the consultation, both written and in informal discussion groups were supportive of developing Barnes Green as a Friendly Park. Some people who took part already make use of the park and enjoy the experience. Others in the discussion groups do not make use of the park but most are interested in any future opportunities to make use of the open space and others. Three gentlemen said that they had no interest in visiting the park. One does visit Richmond Park but although he enjoys the experience said that he does not get out of the car.

The main issues that should be addressed to make the park "Friendly" are to provide adequate walking surfaces and plenty of opportunities for taking a rest. Making the park more accessible by improving

information about transport links and disabled parking bays is also crucial. One carer commented “*If we drive there are never any parking spaces near to the park – which means that we have to struggle walking or just go home.*” Someone else also talked about having benches just outside or immediately within the park entrance so that it was possible to recover before going into the park.

Way marking and other interpretation, including a leaflet so that visitors can anticipate any problems before they arrive were thought to be important. Aids to help lessen confusion – making entrances and exits distinctive and marking transport links would also be welcomed.

There was considerable interest in a programme of activities, including guided walks. In order to make these activities successful links between the environmental sector and care organisations need to be strengthened with dementia friendly training being made available to activity providers and information about activities distributed to care organisations.

The proposals for the development of “Friendly Parks for All” support the five evidence-based actions designed by the New Economics Foundation for “Five ways to well-being” which if practiced regularly can improve personal wellbeing (Connect, Be active, Take notice, Keep learning, Give). The use of parks could be encouraged as part of this type of therapeutic activity by people with dementia and their carers.

[www.mind.org.uk/workplace/mental-health-at-work/taking-care-of-yourself/five-ways-to-wellbeing/](http://www.mind.org.uk/workplace/mental-health-at-work/taking-care-of-yourself/five-ways-to-wellbeing/)

#### Acknowledgements

We would like to offer sincere thanks to everyone who took part in the consultation for their very valuable comments. Thanks also to the support group co-ordinators for organising the discussion sessions with their groups which allowed us to explore some of the issues in greater detail.

Frances Bennett

Seeds of Change Project

LBRuT Parks Department

25<sup>th</sup> October 2016

For further information contact: [Outdoor.learning@outlook.com](mailto:Outdoor.learning@outlook.com)

## Appendix A

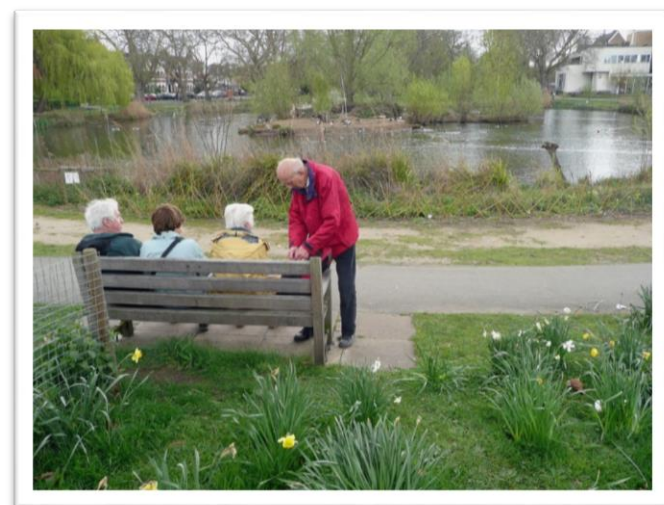
### Responses to the online and written questionnaires



#### Friendly Parks for young and old

##### A survey of park use for people with dementia, their family and friends

We are working to improve the parks in the London Borough of Richmond for people with dementia. Please take a few minutes to fill out this survey about how you use local parks and what makes it difficult for you to make use of them. Your answers will be kept confidential. Thank you for your help.





Barnes Green Consultation  
September 2016

About you

What is your postcode?	SW13 – 4 SW14 – 3 SW15 – 1 Not answered 5
Are you:	Male 5 Female 8 Other
Please tell us your age in years:	Under 50 3 50-59 4 60-69 3 70-79 1 80+ 2 Prefer not to say
What is your ethnic/cultural background:	1 Chinese 4 White British 1 White Irish 1 European 5 Not answered
Do you: (You can tick more than one box if you are completing the form together.)	Have dementia 5 Care for someone with dementia Have a family member or friend with dementia Other 8 not answered but 4 were members of support groups

Visiting parks

<b>Which parks are near to where you live?</b>	Barnes Green 4 Barnes Common 4 Richmond Park 2 Hathrop Park 2 Bushy Park 1 Twickenham Green 1 Not answered 1
<b>Please estimate the distance to the nearest park from your house?</b>	Don't know Less than 1 minute walking distance 3 Approximately 1 mile away 6 1-5 miles away 1 More than 5 miles away Not answered 2
<b>Do you or the person you care for visit the park?</b>	Yes 7 No 3 Not Answered 3

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<p>Please rate how frequently you or the person living with dementia visits parks</p>	<p>Everyday 1 Several times a week 4 Once a week 3 1-2 times a month 1 Less than once a month 2 Never 1 Not Answered 1</p>
<p>What do you enjoy about visiting a park?</p>	<p>Natural beauty Wildlife Serenity Being with other people Feeling part of the world" A lovely green space with direct view of the pond and its wildlife. open space FRESH AIR BARNES POND FRESH AIR TREES seeing the animals looking at nature and trees, breathing fresh aim, having a break in one of the cafes near enough for an easy walk children playing, dogs and people, plants, space, trees and fresh air wildlife dog walking Being outside</p>
<p>What makes it difficult to visit?</p>	<p>Transport 3 Public and car parking space for those who cannot use public transport and need to be driven Directions for getting there if you are not sure where it is from the transport links Someone to go with Mobility Not enough seating No railings by the pond Paths are not flat and not wide enough for wheelchairs" All footways across the Green are in urgent need of resurfacing for the benefit of all users including old people, young children and people on bikes. BAD WEATHER 3 Don't go out walking much. Get tired quickly Distance Nothing, Fine as it is 2 It is very local to me No benches Not answered</p>

<p>Do you agree or disagree with the following statements:</p>	<p>It is easy for me / us to visit parks on a regular basis Agree 8 Disagree 3 Not answered 2 I / we need support to enable the person living with dementia to visit parks Agree 7 Disagree 4 Not Answered 2</p>
<p>Living with dementia and taking part in nature</p>	
<p>Please briefly describe how the dementia has affected your /the person's ability to use parks</p>	<p>Firstly getting to the park. If we use public transport then it needs to stop within a decent distance of the park and using the bus is becoming increasingly difficult due to mobility and confusion. If we drive then there are never any parking spaces near to the park - which means we have to struggle walking or just go home. Once we are at the park then the paths are not flat - there are trips hazards everywhere and I would not let someone with dementia come here along for fear of falling. The paths are also not wide enough for wheelchairs. There are plenty of good examples of dementia friendly paths which could be incorporated. More seating or perching areas around the park - in unexpected places would be lovely. At the moment we cannot walk far for fear of not being near a bench when we get tired. Clear directions - to the park from local transport points and then in the park to show where the exits are and what direction you are heading in. Help points - like the have on TFL platforms where you can call someone if you need help. Railings by the pond so that wheelchairs can rest and not roll in. Also so that people with dementia do not slip. Dementia friendly staff at the buildings surrounding the park so that if we stumble into them looking confused people know what to do Wheelchairs and walking frames to borrow! Dogs to borrow! I can't keep a dog myself but I would love to walk someone else's for 10 minutes Toilets! There need to be more toilets with space for 2 people to be in there/a wheelchair" Suitable walking paths Difficulty with balance Don't feel confident / no benches NOT ANSWERED</p>
<p>Does the person living with dementia have any other health conditions or a physical disability which limits their use of outdoor spaces and nature?</p>	<p>Yes 5 No 3 Not answered 5</p>
<p>How often do you or the person living with dementia usually participate in the following outdoor activities in the park?</p>	<p>a. Looking at/being in nature Often 4 Sometimes 6 Never 2 Not Answered 1 b. Exercising pets/animals (e.g. dog walking) Often 1 Sometimes 4 Never 6 Not answered 2 c. Wildlife watching Often 2 Sometimes 5 Never 3 Not answered 3 d. Informal games or sports Often 1 Sometimes 5 Never 6 Not answered 1</p>

Barnes Green Consultation  
September 2016

	<p>e. Use gym Equipment Often 0 Sometimes 1 Never 10 Not answered 2</p> <p>f. Repetitive movement/exercise/yoga Often 0 Sometimes 4 Never 6 Not answered 2</p> <p>g. Walking Often 4 Sometimes 3 Never Not answered 2</p> <p>h. Running/Jogging Often 1 Sometimes 3 Never 7 Not answered 2</p> <p>i. Cycling Often 1 Sometimes 1 Never 9 Not Answered 2</p> <p>j. Other (please specify) Walking Being outside It's important to get fresh air and about a bit more Sitting x 2 Relaxation</p>
<p>What do you think it is that you or they enjoy about these activities in the park?</p>	<p>We are part of the living world It's relaxing and not stressful which reduces the symptoms I do not have to remember anything in order to have a wonderful experience</p>
<p>If the right support and information was available, which activities in the park would you or the person with dementia would choose to participate in? (Please tick three).</p>	<p>a. Looking at/being in nature (alone or in a group) 10 b. Exercising pets/animals (e.g. dog walking) 5 c. Wildlife watching 4 d. Guided walks 5 e. Informal games or sports 2 f. Use gym equipment 0 g. Repetitive movement/exercise (yoga, tai chi,) 1 h. Walking 4 i. Rambling/hiking 0 j. Running/Jogging 0 k. Cycling 2 l. Any others? (please specify)</p>
<p>Briefly what types of support and information that would enable you or the person living with dementia to participate in these activities?</p>	<p>Transport to the local park 3 Information on how to get there and transport links More information Befriender Easy route to follow and easy to read maps Coloured routes marked on the ground</p>

<p>Do you agree or disagree that the following items are existing barriers to you and the person living with dementia participating in outdoor activities and nature.</p>	<p>a. Not enough information Agree 5 Disagree 4 N/A Not Answered 4</p> <p>b. Fears and safety concerns Agree 4 Disagree 5 N/A 1 Not Answered 3</p> <p>c. Lack of spare time Agree 1 Disagree 8 N/A 1 Not Answered 3</p> <p>d. Nature spaces not being accessible Agree 2 Disagree 7 N/A 2 Not Answered 2</p> <p>e. Expense Agree 0 Disagree 9 N/A 2 Not Answered 2</p> <p>f. Lack of confidence Agree 4 Disagree 5 N/A 1 Not Answered 3</p> <p>g. Transportation Agree 5 Disagree 6 N/A 0 Not Answered 2</p>
<p>Please describe anything else that stops you and the person living with dementia participating in outdoor activities and nature.</p>	<p>Lack of safe crossing on main roads (too much traffic on Station Road, Church Road and Barnes High Street). Transport Just don't normally consider visiting parks Getting to the parks need transport / knowing which buses to catch and where from</p>
<p>Do you agree or disagree with the following statements.</p>	<p>a. Regularly taking part in outdoor activities and nature is beneficial for people who are living with dementia. Agree 10 Disagree N/A Not Answered 3</p> <p>b. It is easy for people living with dementia to access support and information about participating in outdoor activities and nature. Agree 6 Disagree 3 N/A 2 Not Answered 2</p> <p>c. It is difficult for people living with dementia to participate in outdoor activities and enjoy nature spaces. Agree 8 Disagree 3 N/A Not Answered 2</p> <p>d. People who have a dementia would prefer to participate in organised, group activities in nature. Agree 8 Disagree 1 N/A 1 Not Answered 3</p> <p>e. Dementia-specialist services are needed to support people with dementia to take part in outdoor activities and nature. Agree 10 Disagree 1 N/A</p>

	Not Answered 2
Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree that the following adaptations will make the park more dementia friendly.	<p>a. Providing accessible facilities (café, toilets, seating) Agree 11 Disagree N/A Not Answered 2</p> <p>b. Offering more information about parks and activities. Agree 8 Disagree 2 N/A Not Answered 3</p> <p>c. Having clearer signage and more maps. Agree 8 Disagree 1 N/A Not Answered 3</p> <p>d. Having people who understand how to support people living with dementia available. Agree 10 Disagree 1 N/A Not Answered 3</p> <p>e. Creating dementia-specific meeting points. Agree 5 Disagree 4 N/A Not Answered 4</p> <p>f. Parking spaces in / near park Agree 8 Disagree 1 N/A 1 Not Answered 3</p>
Are there any other improvements that you would suggest for making parks more dementia friendly?	<p>Improve crossings to the green across main roads Offer dementia friendly workshops for businesses/organisations and residents around Barnes Need staff and volunteers to go on walks as well as transport Guided walks should be local</p>

Additional Feedback (Please use the back page as a continuation sheet)

Personal Information

Providing the following information is optional.

First Name

Last Name

Address

Email

Phone

Thank you for taking the time to fill out our survey.

**Appendix B**

**Reports of discussions held with 3 support groups**



## Discussion with Alzheimer's Society Support Group

Barnes Hospital 12<sup>th</sup> September 2016

### What is a "dementia friendly park"?

Frances Bennett attended the support group for people with dementia in order to discuss how individuals in the group used parks and open spaces, what they enjoyed about parks, what they did in outdoor environment and what the barriers were to using parks. We also discussed some of the proposals for Barnes Green Friendly Park. This consultation will feed into the main online consultation *Friendly parks for young and old (Barnes Green)* which will take place between 31<sup>st</sup> August and 25<sup>th</sup> September.

There were 4 members of the group, one lady and 3 gentlemen. All members were elderly and have a diagnosis of dementia. The support group coordinator was also present for the session and was asked to contribute where appropriate. One member of the group arrived late but was included in the discussion from that point. Permission to use a recording device was sought from the group members so that we were not distracted by the need to take notes. The discussion followed a prepared structure but was loosely adhered to so that the conversation was free flowing. Relevant sections of the conversation have been extracted and laid out in the form of questions and answers.

#### **Do you visit parks? Can you name any parks near to where you live? How far is the nearest park from your house?**

The discussion began by talking about the parks and open spaces that the group members knew well and were close to their homes. All three members of the group said that they lived very close to Barnes Green, 1 member of the group said that his house backed onto Barnes Common and Beverley Brook others lived not far away. They all said that they knew the Green well and had visited it for many years. Other parks that were visited were Barnes Common, Palewell Common and Richmond Park. Two of the group members said that they no longer visit the parks at all, with the exception of Richmond Park as it is accessible by car, and the third said that he does visit Barnes Common still but because of arthritis in his knees his visits are very limited.

#### **What do you do when you visit the park?**

All three members of the group said that they enjoyed watching the wildlife in particular the birds on the pond. One member of the group commented that he enjoyed the peacefulness of the area around the pond on Barnes Green. Other activities included watching the world go by, and walking, watching the deer in Richmond Park. We discussed the possibility of more active opportunities – table tennis and the outdoor gym equipment placed in some parks as well as cycling opportunities in parks. No one had played table tennis in a park and there was little interest in this idea or in cycling. There was interest in the outdoor gym equipment and two members of the group thought that they might make use of this. A third member of the group thought that he would not be able to use it because of his arthritis. The fourth member of the group said that she took daily exercise at home.

#### **What do you enjoy about visiting a park?**

The group mentioned that they liked the peace that could be found in parks, but one member also liked parks because it offered an opportunity to talk to other people. Other members of the group agreed that it was a good place to see children playing and to meet other people. One member of the group said that she enjoyed drawing while she went out for walks in a park. Someone else in the group said that he enjoys feeding the ducks and bird watching. The views in Richmond Park were much appreciated as they can be seen from a car.

#### **Is there anything that you do not like about visiting parks?**

One member of the group said that he was no longer able to visit Barnes Green because the surface was bad and made it difficult to walk. He needs a flat surface but tree roots get in the way. Steps are also difficult. One member of the group said that he does not like visiting parks which are not well looked after, he said that he had concern that whatever was put in place would not be well looked after. A lack of toilet facilities was also thought to be a barrier to using parks.

**Is there anything that makes it difficult to visit a park?**

Finding information about activities in parks is a problem especially as the information can be in lots of different places. The group felt that they did not know that there are activities which they could attend. It is difficult to find parking spaces near parks and this was important for one group member as he is not able to walk far.

**Have memory problems made it more difficult to use parks? Please tell us why it is more difficult.**

One member of the group said that she is always accompanied by her husband because she is worried about getting lost. We talked about the possibility of using signs placed in parks to indicate where entrances and exits are, and colour coding was thought to be useful.

**What could be done to make it easier for you to visit parks?**

Seating to take regular rests was thought to be very important, it should not be too far to the next bench. Problems with transport was a recurring theme, we talked about the need to have parking close to the park to enable people to visit easily.

**What sort of activity would you like to take part in when you visit a park?**

The group liked the idea of themed walks in the park and we discussed some of the walks that we could hold – wildlife watching, pond dipping, and bat walks. One group member liked the idea of art activities in the park and mindfulness activities were of interest to some group members. One member of the group talked about a tree walk in Kew Gardens that he had enjoyed.

**What sort of support would you need to do this? What do you need to make this happen?**

One of the group said that she would go if her husband could accompany her and thought that he would enjoy the activities also. Another group member thought that a carer would know when it was the right time to have a rest, and would know where the walk started from and could help getting to the activity. A carer would also know when and where the activity was taking place. Information about activities available to the carers was thought to be very important.

We talked about having a labelled meeting point in the park where activities might begin and end, and where you could return to if you got lost. We also talked about the need for accessible facilities in the park that were available – toilets and a café were thought to be very important. Good weather was also thought to be important.

**Are there any other improvements that you could suggest for making parks more dementia friendly?**

Flat surfaces for walking on and plenty of seats were thought to be a priority. The group talked about walks that could be followed and that encourage you to move from one point to the next and introduce you to interesting information and objects as you walk around the park.

**Do you agree with this statement? *“Regularly taking part in outdoor activities and visiting nature is beneficial for people who are living with dementia”* Why do you think this?**

We discussed whether the group preferred indoor or outdoor activities. One group member said that she loved being outdoors, and another said that he liked a bit of each and thought that exercise and fresh air was important. He also liked the opportunity of being outdoors with other people. Another group member said that he thought that being outside was uplifting and enjoyed being in the sunshine, but would not go out in the rain. The final member of the group said that he preferred to be inside and felt that being outside was not interesting and was a waste of time.



FB will follow up the conclusions of the consultation with the group and suggested that they might like to go on an outing to see the park once the improvements had been made.

Frances Bennett

12 September 2016



### Discussion with Alzheimer's Society Support Group

Twickenham 13<sup>th</sup> September 2016

#### What is a "dementia friendly park"?

Frances Bennett (FB) attended the support group for people with early onset dementia in order to discuss how individuals in the group used parks and open spaces, what they enjoyed about parks, what they did in parks and what the barriers were to using parks. We also discussed some of the proposals for Barnes Green Friendly Park. This consultation will feed into the main online consultation *Friendly parks for young and old (Barnes Green)* which will take place between 31<sup>st</sup> August and 25<sup>th</sup> September.

There were 4 members of the group present, 2 ladies and 2 gentlemen. All members have a diagnosis of dementia. The support group coordinator and a volunteer helper were also present for the session and were asked to contribute where appropriate. Permission to use a recording device was sought from the group members so that we were not distracted by the need to take notes. The discussion followed a prepared structure but was loosely adhered to so that the conversation was free flowing. Relevant sections of the conversation have been extracted and laid out in the form of questions and answers.

#### **Do you visit parks? Can you name any parks near to where you live? How far is the nearest park from your house?**

The discussion began by talking about the parks and open spaces that the group members knew well and which were close to their homes. One gentleman visited Bushy Park to attend a regular health walk on a Friday but did not visit at other times. Another gentleman said that he did not visit parks at all, he crosses Twickenham Green on a regular basis to catch buses but this was his only experience of local parks. He has never visited any of the other local parks. Two of the group members said that they visit parks in Hampton including Hathrop Park, Tangle Park and Hampton Common. One of these ladies was a dog walker and the other had been a dog walker in the past. The volunteer who took part in the conversation regularly visits Bushy Park, and other parks in Hampton but no parks outside her local area. Richmond Park was also given as a destination park by some members of the group, but on the whole the group members tended to use local parks in preference to those outside their local area.

#### **What do you do when you visit the park?**

Walking for pleasure and for health, and walking a dog were given as reasons for visiting parks. The volunteer said that she cycled in Bushy Park but thought that cyclists in parks could be dangerous to pedestrians as they tended to speed. The group discussed ways that could be used to limit the impact of cyclists. One member of the group commented that she enjoyed people watching in parks and the group member who regularly dog walks said that she thought that it was a good way of meeting people as dog walkers all know each other. No one in the group mentioned that they enjoyed watching the wildlife, or taking part in any other activities organised or independently.

#### **What do you enjoy about visiting a park?**

The group mentioned that they liked the peace that could be found in parks. Another member of the group said that he enjoyed being outside and taking part in the weekly health walks in Bushy Park. He walks to the start of the event from home and then returns home on the bus. He does not attend in the rain, another group member said that she enjoyed walking in the rain in a park.

#### **Is there anything that you do not like about visiting parks?**

The group talked about the need for even flat pavements which was particularly important for one member who walked with a stick. A lack of toilet facilities was also thought to be a barrier to using parks. We talked about the fear of getting lost and way that a dementia friendly park might overcome this problem – meeting points, maps and signage, marked trails and other methods of orienting yourself within the park were thought to be important.

A lack of seating and places to rest within parks was thought to be a major failing in some of the parks that group members visit. There are apparently no benches at all in Bushy Park and some of the parks in Hampton (Hathrop Park and Tangle Park were mentioned) have very few benches. We discussed the need for resting places, both benches and perching places, and how you could be encouraged to walk further if you can see the next place to stop from a bench that you were sitting on.

### **Is there anything that makes it difficult to visit a park?**

The group talked about the problem of getting to parks and problems with public transport or parking which could have the effect of limiting visits particularly if your nearest park was not within walking distance or on a bus route. It is difficult to find parking spaces near parks. We also discussed whether people would visit parks that were not very local to them. The volunteer thought that this was very unlikely because of a lack of familiarity and because people were focused on their local neighbourhood rather than on what was available more widely. She suggested that all parks in the borough should be dementia friendly parks so that everyone had an equal opportunity to enjoy them.

Finding information about activities in parks is a problem especially as the information can be in lots of different places. The group felt that they did not know that there are activities which they could attend and we talked about some of the opportunities that were available, including walks and talks and conservation work. The group was not aware of these opportunities. FB will send details of local environmental listing services and look for a way to include information in the Alzheimer's Society listings of events.

### **Have memory problems made it more difficult to use parks? Please tell us why it is more difficult.**

We talked about the possibility of getting lost and how a park keeper would once have been the obvious person to help support people with memory problems as they often got to know park users. As there are not any park keepers in borough parks one member of the group said that she thought that there might be safety issues for people with dementia and that she would lack confidence in visiting parks. We discussed whether Friends groups might be able to provide volunteers to help people with memory problems use parks. We also talked about the role of Dementia Friends in the wider community.

The group said that they felt that lighting in parks was important so that you could orientate yourself at night. FB talked about the importance of dark places and corridors for biodiversity and security issues of lighting parks as it might encourage people to make use of them and feel that they are safe rather than using the local road network where there will be more people.

### **What could be done to make it easier for you to visit parks?**

Seating to take regular rests was thought to be very important, it should not be too far to the next bench. We talked about the idea of volunteers taking on the role of park keeper to help the local community and whether that might work. We also talked about the need for more cafes in parks as this would have the effect of attracting people to the park.

The group thought that walks of varying lengths with colour guiding around the park would be a positive step. Each walk should include an accessible toilet and include points of interest that break up the walk.

### **What sort of activity would you like to take part in when you visit a park?**

We discussed the idea of activities especially designed for people with dementia or if the group would prefer to be included in activities for the wider community. The group thought that they would prefer to be included in activities

for the wider community, but that those people organising the activities should have some understanding of the problems that people with dementia face.

There was little interest in physical activities other than the Health Walk programme and other walking activities, there was no interest in keep fit equipment, Park Run or cycling.

**What sort of support would you need to do this? What do you need to make this happen?**

The group thought that more information about parks and the activities that are available in local parks would be very useful and might encourage people with dementia to make more use of their parks. The support group leader thought that it was important to have people who understand how to support people living with dementia available at activities. We also discussed a possible role for volunteers or friends groups in supporting people with dementia.

**Are there any other improvements that you could suggest for making parks more dementia friendly?**

Providing accessible facilities (café, toilets, seating, and pavements) were thought to be a priority. Improved signage and creating meeting points were also thought to be useful improvements. Labelling transport links at park entrances and exits were also suggested as a useful improvement.

**Do you agree with this statement? *“Regularly taking part in outdoor activities and visiting nature is beneficial for people who are living with dementia”* Why do you think this?**

Most of the group agreed with the statement and thought that there were benefits to your health from being outside. It was also an opportunity to meet other people. One group member said that he preferred being indoors and would not make use of a park.

Frances Bennett

13 September 2016



### Discussion at FiSH Retrocafe Barnes

Barnes 23<sup>th</sup> September 2016

### What is a “dementia friendly park”?

Frances Bennett (FB) attended the Retro café for people with dementia in order to discuss how individuals in the group used parks and open spaces, what they enjoyed about parks, what they did in parks and what the barriers were to using parks. We also discussed some of the proposals for Barnes Green Friendly Park. This consultation will feed into the main online consultation *Friendly parks for young and old (Barnes Green)* which will take place between 31<sup>st</sup> August and 25<sup>th</sup> September.

There were 3 tables each with 6-8 people this included volunteer helpers and individuals who have a diagnosis of dementia. The volunteer helpers were invited to contribute where appropriate. FB spoke in details to 2 tables and had a brief discussion with the third. The discussion followed a prepared structure but was loosely adhered to so that the conversation was free flowing. Relevant sections of the conversation have been extracted and laid out in the form of questions and answers.

#### **Do you visit parks? Can you name any parks near to where you live? How far is the nearest park from your house?**

The discussion began by talking about the parks and open spaces that the group members knew well and which were close to their homes. Some of the group lived close to and visit Barnes Green. Others live very close but no longer visit. Richmond Park, Barnes Common, Suffolk Road Recreation Ground and Palewell Common were other parks visited by the group.

#### **What do you do when you visit the park?**

Walking for pleasure and for health were given as reasons for visiting parks. One member of the group commented that she enjoyed watching people and wildlife in parks. No one in the group mentioned that they took part in any other activities organised or independently.

#### **What do you enjoy about visiting a park?**

The group mentioned that they liked the peace that could be found in parks, they also enjoyed visiting the cafe. One of the group regularly visits Richmond Park on family outings to.

#### **Is there anything that you do not like about visiting parks? Is there anything that makes it difficult to visit a park?**

A lack of seating and places to rest within parks was thought to be a major failing in some of the parks that group members visit. The group talked about the need for more benches and liked the idea of resting places between benches which they felt were too widely spaced. They also thought that even and flat pavements were important if you walked with sticks or a walker as it was easy to become unbalanced. A lack of toilet facilities was also thought to be a barrier to using parks. We talked about the fear of getting lost and the ways that a dementia friendly park might overcome this problem – meeting points, maps and signage, marked trails and other methods of orienting yourself within the park were thought to be important. The idea of carvings at entrances and exits was warmly welcomed,

The group talked about the problem of getting to parks and problems with public transport or parking which could have the effect of limiting visits particularly if your nearest park was not within walking distance or on a bus route. It is difficult to find parking spaces near parks. Parking and transport were seen to be one of the main barriers. Many of the group were elderly and frail and felt that they would not be able to enjoy the park unless there was adequate transport available to get them there. One lady said that she lived very close but by the time she reached the entrance to the park she would be too tired to continue so had not visited Barnes Green for many years. She also

mentioned the importance of benches outside the park as well as in it. Richmond Park has a bench outside Sheen Gate which she used in the past in order to rest on before going into the park.

The whole group were unaware of the activities held in parks and said that more information would be useful. We talked about some of the opportunities that were available, including walks and talks and conservation work.

**Have memory problems made it more difficult to use parks? Please tell us why it is more difficult.**

We talked about the possibility of getting lost and how a park keeper would once have been the obvious person to help support people with memory problems. We also talked about the role of Dementia Friends in the wider community.

**What could be done to make it easier for you to visit parks?**

Cyclists were thought to be a problem in parks and there was a suggestion that designated cycle paths and pedestrian paths might help to ease the problem. More seating to that allowed regular rests was thought to be very important, and there should be resting places between each bench. The group thought that walks of varying lengths and information and activities on the walks was thought to be a good idea.

**What sort of activity would you like to take part in when you visit a park?**

Many of the group were very frail so there was no interest in physical activities. Some people said that they would attend an organised walk.

**What sort of support would you need to do this? What do you need to make this happen?**

We also talked about whether activities should be for the general public and include people with dementia or whether the activities should be specifically for people with dementia. The volunteers felt that it was important to have specially designed activities, while the people with dementia thought that as long as the activity organiser was aware that individuals might have memory problems there was no barrier to them attending main stream activities.

**Are there any other improvements that you could suggest for making parks more dementia friendly?**

Improved signage and creating meeting points were also thought to be useful improvements. Labelling transport links at park entrances and exits were also suggested as a useful improvement. Providing accessible facilities (café, toilets, seating, and pavements) were thought to be a priority and the group liked the idea of carved animals at the entrances to the park.

Frances Bennett

23 September 2016

