

East Sheen Common Playground and Nature Trail Installation Consultation

Summary of Results

1. Background

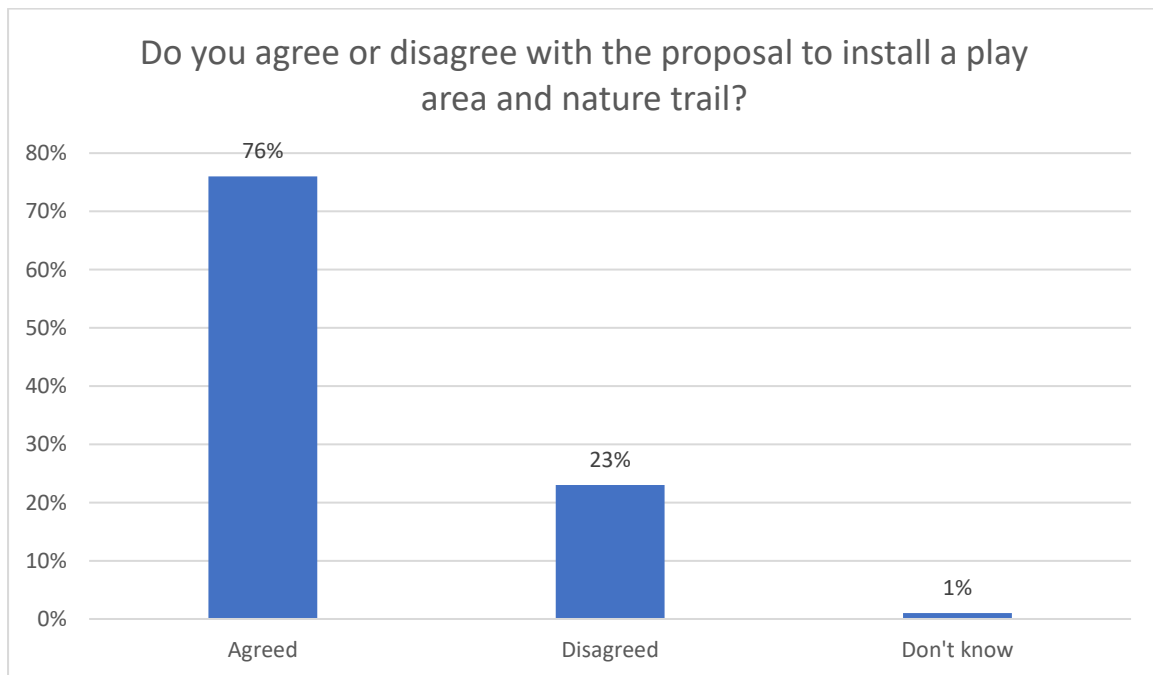
The Parks and Open Spaces Team carried out a consultation which proposed to install a new natural play area and nature trail within Sheen Common Woods. The project is based on a request for play provision at the site from the Friends of Sheen Common, consultation with Ward Councillors and following a review of feedback from previous consultation.

This consultation took place between Friday 13th September and Sunday 13th October 2019.

2. Summary of Results

559 people responded to this consultation, all of whom took part online. This is the largest number of responses to a consultation that the Parks Team have received.

Out of the people who responded, 424 people (76%) agreed with the proposal of installing a new play area and nature trail. 129 people (23%) disagreed with the proposal.



3. Comments about the proposal

Of the 559 people that took part in the consultation 342 posted additional comments about the proposals. Of these 342 comments, 186 were very supportive of the project, stating that the proposal would be a benefit to the local area and local children, that it would allow children to play within nature and play provision of this type is lacking in this part of the borough. The new facilities would bring more people into the common to play in nature, utilising an area that is less well used, with the improvements being sensitive to the natural environment.

There were 111 comments against the proposals, citing that Sheen Common is an area of natural beauty and the peace and quiet should not be spoiled to install a new playground within the woods. There were concerns that this would alienate dog walkers who use the area, as it is one of a few places where dogs can run freely and that funds should be used to improve existing playgrounds rather than damaging nature to create natural playgrounds.

Other respondents left more general comments, stating that they supported a play area but not a nature trail or vice versa. There were also concerns about ongoing maintenance of the equipment, the need for toilets, a cafe and pressures on parking due to the increased number of people visiting. Others voiced concerns about the general maintenance of the woodland and the need for further woodland management works. There were 44 comments of this nature in total.

4. Joining the Friends Group

Respondents were asked if they were interested in joining the Friends of Sheen Common and were asked to provide their contact details to be contacted by the Friends Group. 183 respondents gave their consent for their email address to be passed on to the Friends Group in order to become members.

5. Budget

The Parks Team have approved funding of £50,000 for this project. Further funding may be required so supplementary funding applications will be submitted by the Friends of Sheen Common. The Council's parks team will work with the Friends Group on these applications.

6. Next steps

The Parks and Open Spaces Team plan to refer the summary report to Ward Councillors and the Chair of the Environment, Sustainability, Culture and Sports Services Committee for a formal decision. If a decision is made to go ahead with the proposals, the parks team would plan to:

- Work with the Friends Group to secure additional funding towards the project.
- Create a project specification and work with our procurement team to publish a competitive tender process for this project.

- Aim to launch the tender in the New Year, subject to the securing of sufficient funding and invite a number of companies to submit their proposal for this project. Following a review of all tender submissions, in partnership with the Friends of Sheen Common, we will look to award the contract to the chosen supplier and work with them through to project delivery.

The Council would aim to install the new natural play area and nature trail in Spring 2020, again subject to sufficient funding. As part of the installation the Council will hold a launch event to officially open the new play equipment.