

Suffolk Road Recreation Ground

Information sharing consultation on Design of Sensory Garden

Summary of Results

1. Background

As part of our commitment to improve our parks and open spaces, we have been working with the Friends of Suffolk Road Recreation Ground to develop the second phase of improvements for the recreation ground – the installation of a sensory garden.

Working with a local landscape designer and Friends Group, we have developed an artistic impression of the new sensory garden for the recreation ground. You can view a copy of this [here](#). We plan to include little steppingstones made of different textures, similar to Heathfield Recreation Ground [sensory trail](#).

The sensory garden is to be installed in the dog free area of the Recreation Ground, on the righthand border of the playground, when facing from Suffolk Road.

This information sharing consultation asked for comments on the garden design took place between 15th September and 13th October 2020.

2. Summary of Results

21 people responded to our information sharing consultation but only 20 left comments on the proposal. Of these 20 comments 11 respondents were in favour but some queried if it could be re-located in the dog use area so as not to use up the available space that is currently used for ball games. Of the 11 who responded positively, one questioned if it would be suitably maintained.

In response to these requests, it is not possible to locate the sensory garden in the main field as the garden forms part of the second phase of improvements which stated that it would be positioned within the dog free area of Suffolk Road Recreation Ground. There is enough space in the dog free area to accommodate both a sensory garden and ball games.

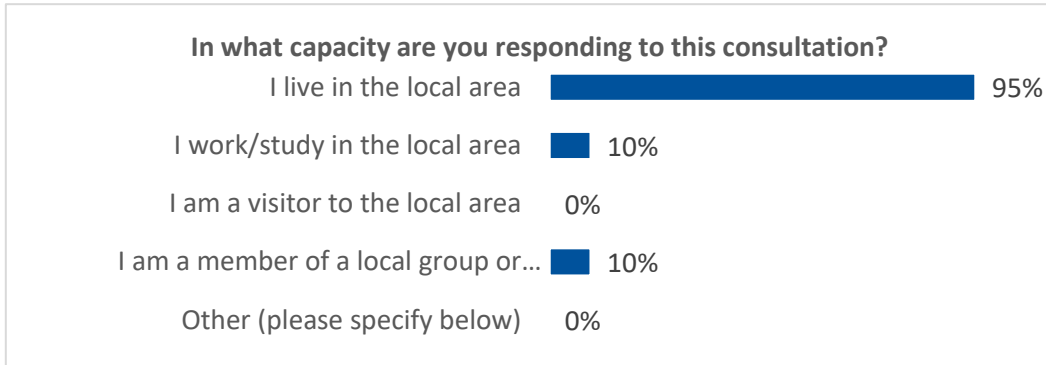
5 of the 20 respondents raised concerns with the proposal as it was felt that the installation would be a waste of money as placing it adjacent to the playground will prevent the sensory garden from being a calm place. Other respondents were concerned about the impact of additional noise of people being in the garden, particularly two visitors of the adjacent Baptist Church on Lonsdale Road who voiced concerns that the playground and extra noise already impacts on their sermons and prayer services. The other concerns focused on where visitors will park and the pressures that this will have on the local community and that it may encourage youths to congregate and cause ASB.

For issues such as late-night disturbance, the Council can request that their enforcement contractor attends to manage any disturbances. However, to date no complaints of disturbances being caused by young people have been submitted to the Council. The positioning of the sensory garden could be reviewed but it is of the opinion of the Parks Team that the current location would impact the least on neighbouring properties and would not impact on the available space for ball games.

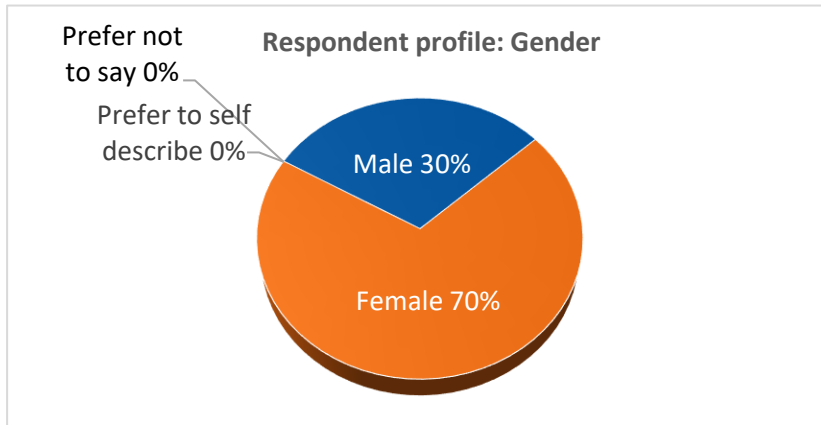
Lastly, four respondents submitted more neutral comments requesting that more seating is provided, and we should consider including a water feature and the planting of dahlias as they provide sensory benefits. The other comment focussed on tree pruning by an adjacent property which is not relevant but will be reported to the tree team for their consideration. The inclusion of a water feature would not be possible due to budget constraints and the issues with ongoing maintenance, but additional seating and the inclusion of dahlias would be considered when the final design is confirmed.

2.1. User information

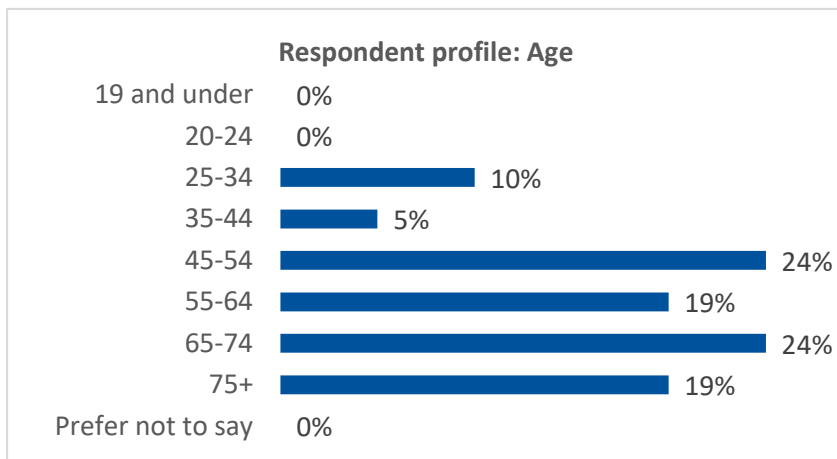
The majority of people who responded, 20 people (95%), live in the area.



20 respondents supplied their gender: 14 (70%) people female and 6 people (30%) male.



21 respondents gave their age as below:



3. Next steps

The Parks and Open Spaces Team plan to:

- Share the report with the Friends of Suffolk Road Rec and ward Councillor's for comment and feedback.
- If approved, we will work with the Friends group to finalise the planting list confirm orders through our grounds maintenance contractor for planting.
- Seek quotes for the project build and award to the successful supplier
- Aim to complete the build and planting by spring 2021 for an official opening.