

# Furzedown Recreation Ground

Full Site Refurbishment  
Consultation Feedback  
September 2023



Lead: Enable Parks Development



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# Project Overview

£684,459 has been secured from Wandsworth Council to refurbish Furzedown Recreation Ground.

The refurbishment will include a new bespoke landscape that meets the needs of the local community and is resilient for the future.

We will support people to be healthier and happier through improved accessibility to a variety of passive and active recreational opportunities, and we will change the look and feel of the place to be welcoming to all.

The project will also see us design a new playground for children aged 0-14 with an increased capacity to allow more children to play concurrently.

We will also provide diverse equipment that is accessible to all children, and which provides opportunities to develop fine motor skills and encourage active lifestyles.



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# Consultation details:

The phase 1 was an online consultation which started 13th June and closed on 8th August.

2 drop in sessions were held for the Furzedown refurbishment:

- 17th June 2023 11am – 3pm (weekend daytime)
- 13th July 3pm – 7pm (afterschool evening)

This first round of consultation was very broad, and asked questions about what the best facilities are at Furzedown Recreation Ground, and what respondents would like the opportunity to do but don't currently.

We wanted to know why Furzedown Recreation Ground is important to respondents, and how we can make it better for the local community.

In total 460 people responded, with 98% of them living locally to Furzedown Recreation Ground.

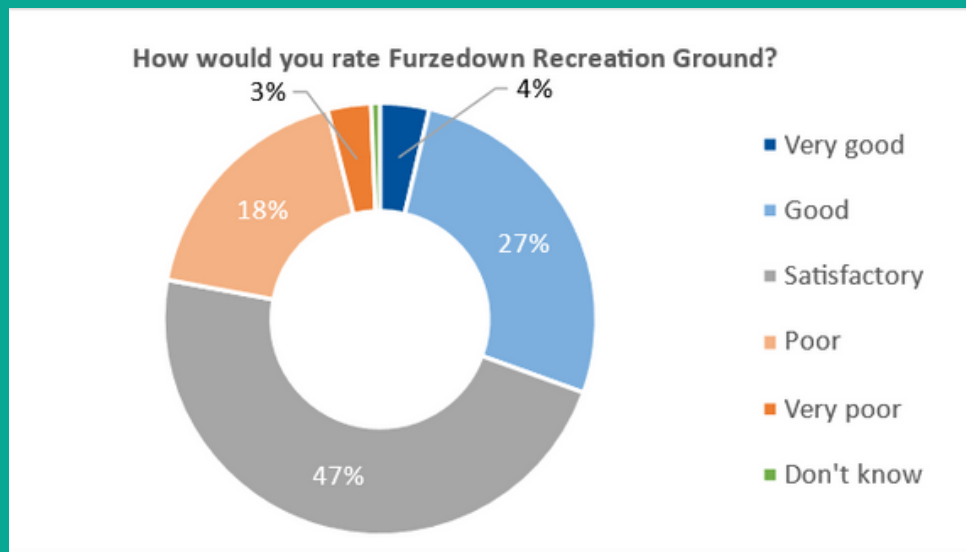


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# Current thoughts on Furzedown Rec?



Furzedown Recreation ground is clearly in need of improvements. Only 31% ranked the facility 'good' or 'very good' - which demonstrates the need for this investment.



In response to this question, there were also some of comments about the ping pong table (6+), trees (3+) and wildflower meadow (3+). The bowling green and pavilion were also mentioned, although all respondents felt that these facilities needed serious improvement. Most notably, 8+ respondents commented on the removal of the mosaic. It may be a good idea to include some work by local artists in the new improvement.

We will aim to consider these preferences when constructing the three design choices as the next part of the project.



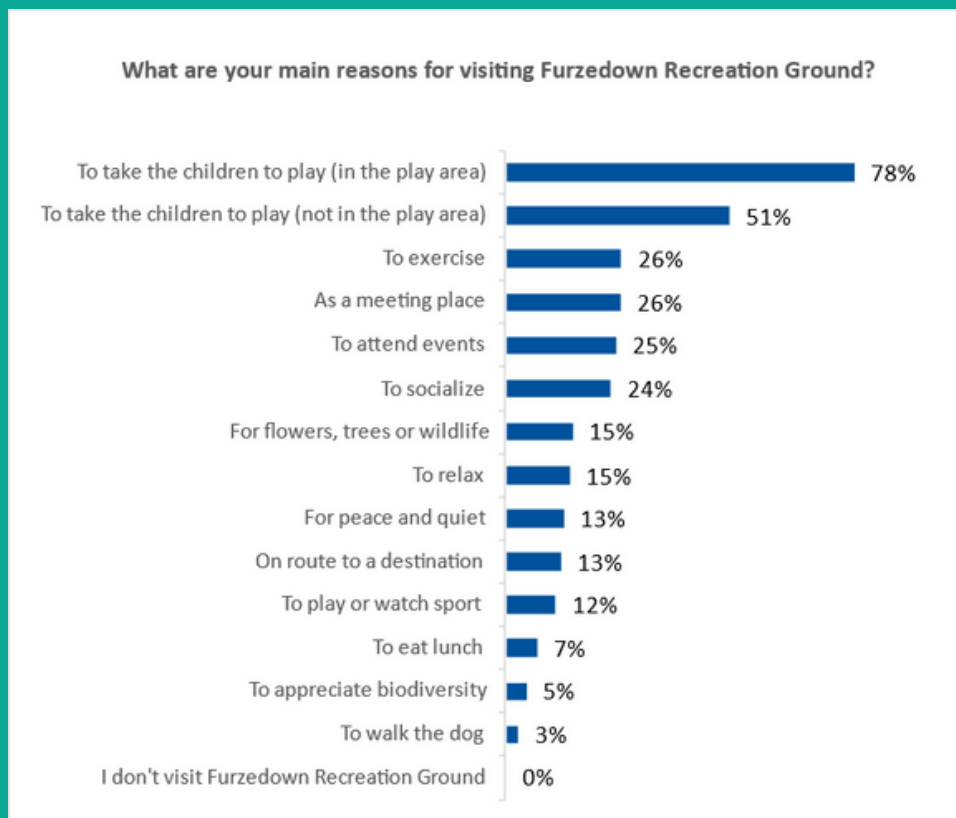
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# What do you like to do at Furzedown Rec?

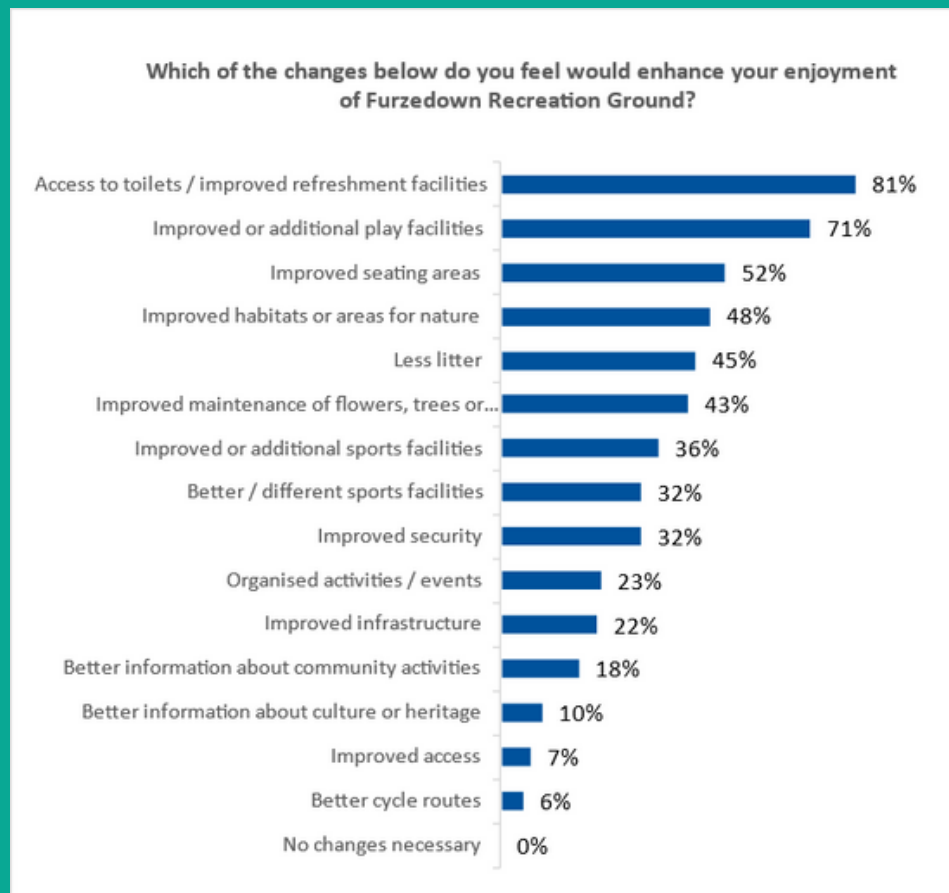
We asked respondents what they like to do at Furzedown Rec. They answered with the following:



In response to this question, people also mentioned using the skatepark (4+ times) and roller-skating (1+ times) as well as tennis (4+), football and basketball. It was also mentioned that the site was used as an area to socialise and feel a sense of community (5+ times).



# Improvement Suggestions



- 81% of respondents mentioned wanting improved toilet facilities or a café - lots of respondents also mentioned using the pavilion to provide this. 17+ respondents requested a cafe to be installed, and a few suggestions asked for this to be a community run cafe.
- Better use of the bowling green and pavillion was mentioned 16+ times.
- Shade was mentioned 12+ times in the open text responses to this consultation, and this was also mentioned frequently throughout the drop in sessions. This should be prioritised, particularly around the play area.

# Improvement Suggestions

- An outdoor gym or area to exercise was mentioned 10+ times. An anti knife crime charity called Steel Warriors were mentioned, who are worth investigating and potentially working with. They use street workout to transform the lives of young people affected by crime, violence and social exclusion, giving them the skills and confidence they need to create positive futures.
- Trees were also mentioned frequently and there was a strong feeling that any damage to trees as part of the refurbishment would be seen very negatively. There were also lots of comments about not adding more concrete into the mix or taking away from the existing greenspace.
- Seating was mentioned 49 + times in response to this consultation. Respondents express a desire for benches that are comfortable, and several responses mention the need for benches with backrests or back support. Some respondents mention the need for picnic tables, more typically for families and groups. Shade is also mentioned as a preference, so it's worth looking at seating options that are shaded or located in areas with natural shade. Additionally, a few responses suggest the need for benches at different height levels, possibly to accommodate adults of varying heights and provide clear sightline. One response mentions benches with arms to support breastfeeding.
- 5+ respondents mentioned wanting water fountains.
- 9+ respondents mentioned a need for there to be more facilities for older children and teenagers. More details are given on this in the next section.



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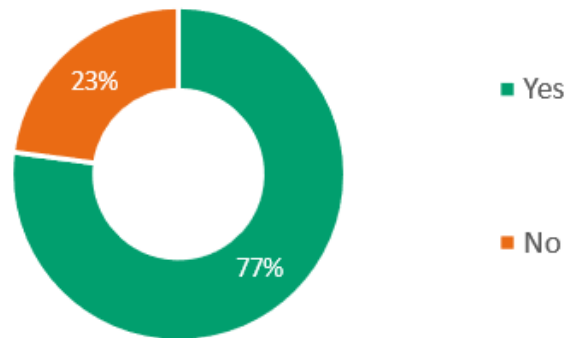
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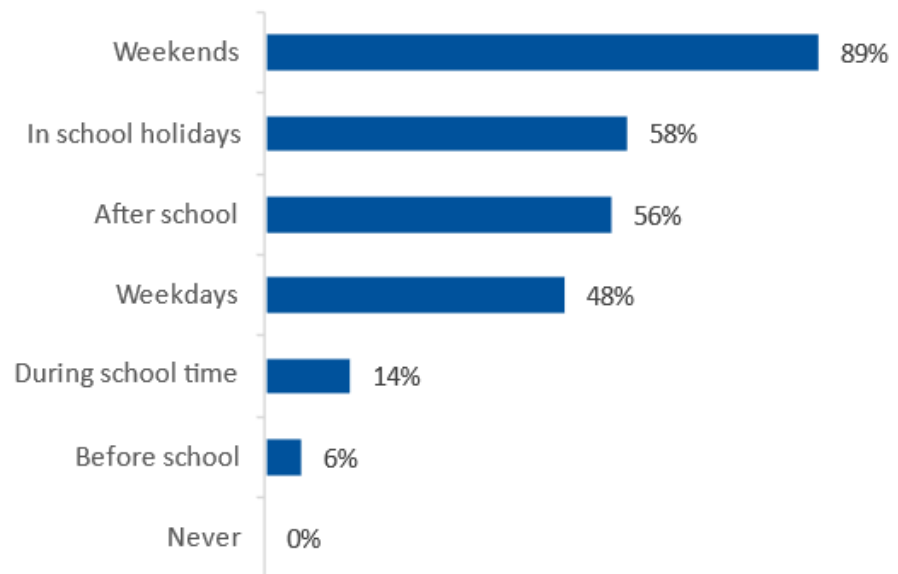


# Play Area:

Do you use the play area at Furzedown Recreation Ground?



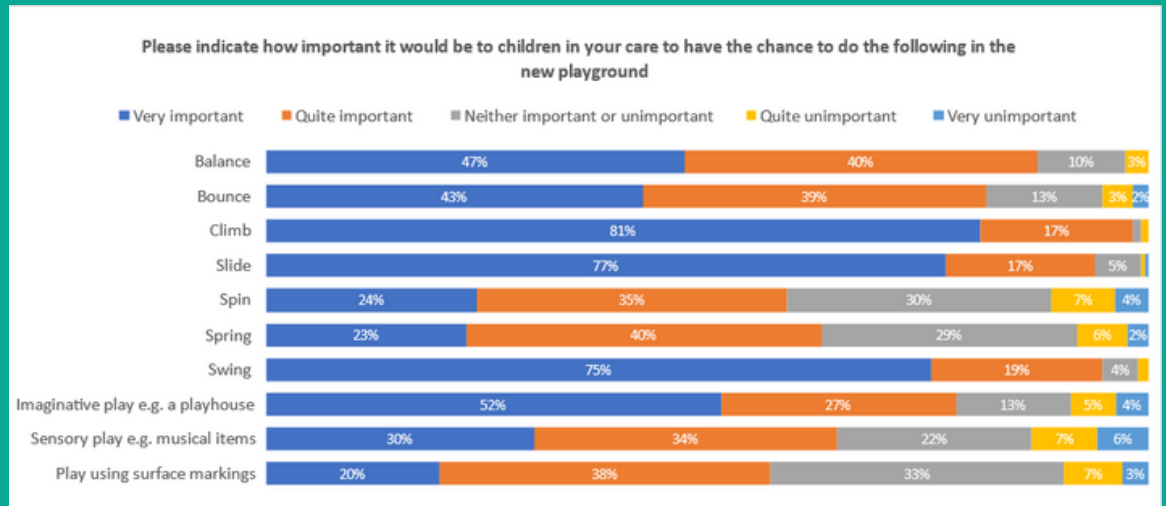
When do you visit the play area?



The above questions tell us a little about how visitors are using the play area.

# Play Area:

**Play Equipment:** Play was mentioned 92+ times, and is further broken down here:



**Skate Park:** The skate park seems to be a hit among older children, even if they are not skateboarding. They use the ramps and open spaces in the skate park for running and playing games. Use of the skate park was mentioned 44+ times, showing that it is an important resource.

**Running and Exploring:** Several responses mention that children like to run around the park, explore the grassy areas, and play games like hide and seek. This indicates a desire for open spaces where kids can engage in unstructured, free play. This type of imaginative, free play was mentioned 36 times.

**Climbing Trees:** Some children are drawn to climbing trees, suggesting that it would be a good idea to include some natural play elements in the park. This was mentioned 15+ times.

# Play Area:

**Football and Basketball:** The football cage and basketball court in the park were mentioned 18+ times.

**Picnicking:** Families enjoy having picnics in the park, which highlights the importance of having suitable seating and picnic areas. This was mentioned 10+ times.

**Desire for More Variety:** Some responses mention that while children enjoy the existing facilities, there is a desire for more varied and adventurous play equipment. Suggestions include additional climbing features, monkey bars, and other modern play structures. This was mentioned 12+ times. Respondents mention the need for age-appropriate equipment, with play facilities catering to both younger and older children. This was mentioned 9 times, and comes up frequently in other questions throughout the consultation.

**Shade and Seating:** Some respondents express a desire for more shaded areas and seating options for parents and caregivers to relax while watching their children play. This was mentioned 7 times in response to this question.

**Socialising:** The park also serves as a place for children to socialize with friends and meet other members of the community. This was mentioned 5+ times in response to this question, showing the importance of having a space where this can happen.

# Play Area:

**Inclusivity:** Many respondents emphasise the importance of inclusivity, ensuring that the equipment caters to children of all abilities and needs, including those with physical disabilities and sensory disabilities. This was mentioned 17 times. The accessibility of gates and entrances was also mentioned 3+ times.

**Age-Appropriate Equipment:** Respondents mention the need for age-appropriate equipment, with play facilities catering to both younger and older children. This was mentioned 9 times, and comes up frequently in other questions throughout the consultation.

**Sensory Play:** Some respondents mention the importance of sensory play activities, including sand pits and other interactive elements.

**Other Play Items:** Suggestions include a variety of play elements such as swings, roundabouts, climbing frames, slides, and the improvement of sports facilities outside of the play area (basketball court and skatepark).

**More 'novel' play items:** Trampolines were also frequently mentioned. A desire for zip lines, water play areas and fountains, and multi-sensory play elements was also expressed. Sand pits were also mentioned. Such items were mentioned 16 + times.

**Quiet Spaces:** A few respondents request quiet or solitary spaces for children who prefer less crowded or stimulating environments. This was mentioned twice explicitly, but is also understood as an important component of an inclusive play area, according to Scope.

# Safety:

There were a number of specific comments around CCTV, lighting and more. Lighting being required to boost safety was mentioned 4 times, CCTV was mentioned 8 times, litter was mentioned 7 times and anti social behavior more generally was mentioned 8 times.

**Anti-social behaviour:** Some people raised concerns about anti-social behaviour (ASB) and safety. We will work with Parks Police to undertake more patrols to discourage poor behaviour.

We strongly encourage anyone who witnesses ASB to report this to the Parks Police patrolling mobile 07500 95 94 42 as soon as you can. All reported information helps us to build a picture of what is happening, when it happens and to get clear descriptions of those involved. This allows us to prioritize patrols and undertake specific targeted operations to tackle it.



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# Dogs:

There were lots of comments about dogs in response to this consultation. Requests to allow dogs or create a dog friendly area featured 16+ times, whilst requests to more strongly enforce the current dog free roles came up 7+ times.

Additionally, 3% of respondents mentioned visiting the site to walk their dog, despite this being an intentionally dog free space, suggesting a lack of clarity around the current restrictions.

Whilst the site will remain dog free for the indefinite future, further consultation will be conducted to better understand needs and demands of dog owners and non dog owners.

Once this is better understood, we will make practical steps towards coming up with a better solution for both parties.



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# Summary

## Full Site Summary

- **Community** is very important at Furzedown Recreation Ground, and should be embedded into the design and construction of this refurbishment. This can be achieved by partnering with the community, whether this is through a new art installation to paint the mosaic, or community run sessions to facilitate enjoyment of the refurbished space.
- A new **café** should be considered as part of the design - making use of the pavilion. Toilets will also be very welcomed.
- **Additional seating** is very important, as is the type of seating and the location. Shade should be provided, whether this is through trees or a physical cover.
- A new **outdoor gym or exercise area** is needed.
- Investment should be put into the **skate park**, as this is an important resource that is lacking in other parts of The Borough.
- The new design should avoid paving over any additional green areas, leaving green space for free play, picnics and socialising.
- **Facilities** should be installed for **older children and teenagers**, as well as younger children, as this space is used by a wide age range. Consultation should be conducted with Furzedown Youth Cafe.
- **Accessibility** is very important, of both the play area and wider space. **DDA equipment** needs to be provided and integrated.
- **Water fountains** should be installed.
- There will be further consultation regarding the current understanding and acceptance of the current dog rules in place.



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# Summary

## Play Area Summary

- **Additional seating** is very important, as is the type of seating and the location. Shade should be provided, whether this is through trees or a physical cover.
- A new **outdoor gym or exercise area** is needed.
- Investment should be put into the skate park, as this is an important resource that is lacking in other parts of The Borough.
- **Facilities** should be installed for **older children** as well as younger children, as this space is used by a wide age range. Consultation should be conducted with Furzedown Youth Café.
- **Accessibility** is very important, of both the play area and wider space. This was mentioned 17+ times. **DDA equipment** needs to be provided and integrated and gates, entrances and pathways need to be accessible. Scope offer good guidance on this, which should be considered.
- Space for imaginative, free play and more 'natural' play should be left in place, as well as designated quiet areas to make the space more inclusive for children who like to engage in onlooker play or who may have sensory disabilities.
- Broadly, more **variety** is desired. Some respondents mention the importance of sensory play activities, including sand pits and other interactive elements. More 'novel' play items: Trampolines were also frequently mentioned. A desire for zip lines, water play areas and fountains, and multi-sensory play elements was also expressed. Sand pits were also mentioned. Such items were mentioned 16 + times. The current mound is enjoyed, but there is a desire for more play value to be delivered.