

Autumn 2003

6

Winchfield Recreational Area Project

I'd like to thank Creative Rural Communities and the residents for their co-operation in this community project. It was encouraging to receive such a high response rate from the questionnaires. The meeting attendance at the village hall on 6th September was very good despite the adverse weather conditions. For those who did not attend, a full list of comments and suggestions made by residents were displayed. For the benefit of the newsletter I have summarised the majority of people's feelings and concerns about the Winchfield Recreational Area Project. Residents were passionate about the Winchfield and their responses were valuable in assessing how people felt about the proposals.

One of the major concerns for residents it appears is the fact that the existing field as it stands is under utilised at present. However most residents welcomed change to the field believing that it will create a focal point. The most popular proposal was the multi-purpose track for running, cycling and walking. This was followed by some sort of seating or picnic area which is complimented by a barbeque facility. The outdoor gym trail proved popular, however some questioned how much the equipment would be utilised. A considerable number of residents requested some sort of shelter or pavilion on the field. Many offered different uses for such a shelter e.g. to protect from the rain, to use at village events, or as a changing facility.

A substantial number of residents did not feel the need for a full sized football pitch. It was suggested by other residents that a half sized pitch would be more appropriate. Both adults and children were keen to have a pitch that was multi functional, an area that will support rugby, basketball, football and cricket. People were keen to have the activities centred in one area. This allows the remainder of the field to be open space and not overdeveloped, therefore still in keeping with the village. The 'forest play' area for the younger children did not meet much objection. But, families with older children requested some sort of activity that would also suit the older children. Requests like a skateboard area, BMX track or climbing wall were made. This however, was not wanted by all residents as they feared that such an area would encourage anti social behaviour by youths and a noise nuisance.

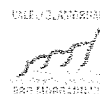
There was conflicting views on the wildlife area. There was support for such an area; however, it was argued that we already have the use of the parish field and woods nearby. Lots felt that this area would not be a priority and were concerned about its upkeep. Residents living close by were also concerned about the banked grassland obstructing their view of the field. Many did not want the area overdeveloped and suggested the planting of some trees and landscaping which would add to a more "park like" appearance. Again there were mixed views about a pond. Some people including children were positive. However, a substantial number of parents were concerned about the safety implications.

An overwhelming complaint was the inadequate grass cutting of both the field and play area. This in itself appears to have contributed to the poor usage of facilities. Many residents have valid concerns about the maintenance of any future project which is something that the residents association must consider. As we know the Local Council has limited resources and therefore any maintenance tends to fall short of standards. However, many residents who have supported the project have volunteered to assist in maintaining the area. Many have offered their services and suggested that a timetable and roster that shared out responsibilities such as grass cutting over a 6 month basis would assist. Alternative funding and grants to support the maintenance will also be looked into.

(A)

As people will appreciate any decisions about the field will be in consultation with the Residents Association Committee. They will take into consideration cost, maintenance, and the visual impact on the village. Any change will depend on the availability of funding and grants.

Melanie Treadwell



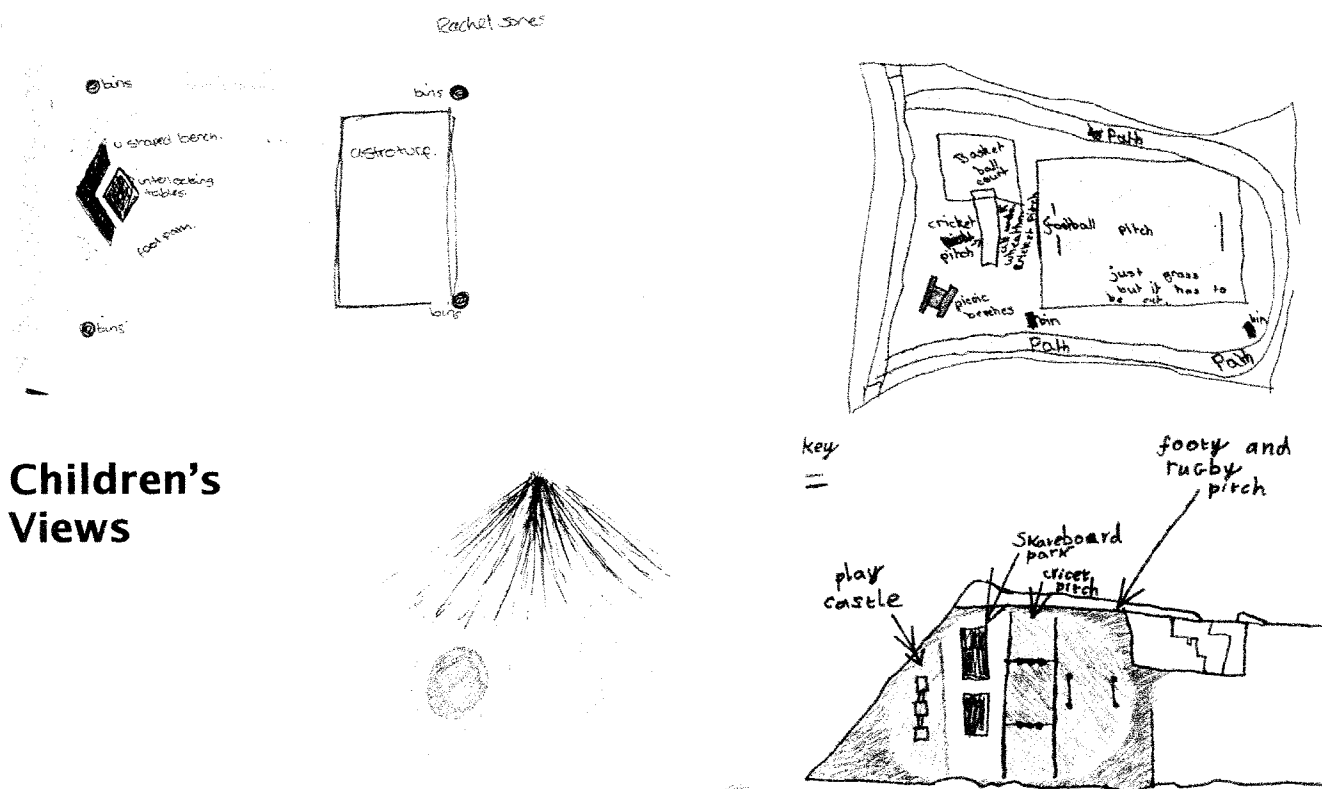
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Creative Rural Communities

Creative Rural Communities, the Vale of Glamorgan's Rural Regeneration Partnership helped to facilitate the Winchfield community consultation event on Saturday September 6th. Despite the dreadful weather there was an excellent turnout. Phil Chappell of Creative Rural Communities said "I was really pleased with the turnout at the event and was happy to be able to act as an impartial facilitator. The excellent turnout from both adults and kids showed how much interest there is from the community in the development of the Winchfield."

Phil is keen to hear from any community groups in the area who may need advice on funding or developing project ideas. Please feel free to drop him a line on 01446 772548 or email prchappell@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk
Phil Chappell, Senior Rural Regeneration Officer, Creative Rural Communities



Children's Views



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