Ponderosa Park: Consultation Report 2018

Sheffield City Council recently carried out consultation in the local area to ask for views on potential improvements to Ponderosa Park. The completed surveys help us understand local people’s priorities for the Ponderosa, and guide decisions on how funding should be invested in the site.

This report gives a summary of the consultation and results, and outlines what we plan to do next.

CONSULTATION METHODOLOGY – HOW DID WE CONSULT?

- Survey available both online and via paper copies
- Posters and flyers publicising the consultation were distributed locally
- Survey circulated to community organisations and contacts in the local area
- Paper survey and collection boxes were placed at Zest, Upperthorpe

The consultation was open between the 21st August 2018 and the 24th October 2018.

CONSULTATION RESULTS – WHAT WAS THE FEEDBACK?

A total of 352 survey responses were returned online and through the completion of paper copies. Of the 287 respondents who provided their postcodes the majority came from the communities surrounding the Ponderosa in S6 (48%) and S10 (20%).

How people use the Ponderosa

96% of respondents had visited the Ponderosa Park before, over half, 52%, had visited within the last 2 weeks. 11% visited the park daily, and a third of those asked visited the site at least once a week.

Ponderosa is used predominantly for Walking (53%) and as a Green route/cut through (51%). Respondents also highlighted the site being used for Relaxing, enjoying nature & wildlife and for attending Events.
Further comments highlighted the use of the site for **School trips, activities & events**, the **Outdoor gym equipment**, and for **Food through foraging/fruit picking**

**Satisfaction with the Ponderosa**

Over **half of the respondents were satisfied** with the Ponderosa, and **17% were unsatisfied** with the site. When asked to comment why they were unsatisfied the main complaints were around the amount of **litter on the site, concerns around safety**, that the **playground needs improving**, and **drug use and the associated detritus**.
Reasons for not visiting the Ponderosa

When those who hadn’t visited the Ponderosa before or don’t visit very often were asked why they didn’t visit they responded that; the site is unwelcoming and didn’t feel safe, the facilities weren’t good enough, and that the entrances and paths are too dark and poorly lit.

Further comments provided as reasons for not visiting the site were around the fact that people lived further afield, and there were better parks elsewhere. Site safety concerns were also mentioned several times along with the feeling that the Ponderosa had poor facilities and there was nothing to do.

Entrances & Accessibility

Respondents overwhelmingly supported plans to improve entrances and accessibility to the Ponderosa with 81% agreeing with the idea. 7% disagreed with the planned entrance improvements, whilst 12% didn’t know – subsequently in the comments section a number of respondents mentioned the need for more detailed “plans” to make a decision on their support for the improvements.
The Crookes Valley Road/Mushroom Lane entrance was highlighted by respondents as a major entrance in need of improving, with a number of comments referring to the need for tree/vegetation thinning around entrance and boundaries. Further comments highlighted the need for entrance improvements which make the site more welcoming.

Paths & Connectivity

Again respondents overwhelmingly supported plans to raise the quality of the footpath network in the Ponderosa, with 82% agreeing with the need for improvements.
Many respondents mentioned the need to upgrade the existing footpaths which were often, wet, muddy and eroded. A number of respondents felt that the existing paths were fine and met their requirements. The need for lighting on the path network was also pointed to in the comments section for this question – and throughout the survey’s comment sections – as a much needed improvement.

**Other improvements to encourage use of the Ponderosa**

61% of respondents felt that Café & toilet would encourage them to use the Ponderosa more. Over half (53%) supported the idea of providing Lighting on entrance and paths, and seating and socialising spaces. Just under half of the respondents felt Improved links to other parks (48%), Maintenance improved (45%), and Selective woodland thinning around entrance and paths (43%) would also encourage use of the Ponderosa.

Other suggestions received for how to encourage further use of the Ponderosa included a need for the playground to be improved, that the litter problem on site should be tackled, and that toilets would be beneficial. 12 respondents were against any form of tree removal.
Improving the play & sports facilities

The majority of respondents felt that that Play equipment was the priority, with 54% supporting play equipment for older children, and 53% for younger children. Nearly half (49%) felt that improving the Multi-Use Games Area should be improved.

45% felt that the Playing pitch should be improved, whilst 44% supported the idea of adding Parkour – agility equipment, closely followed by Park Gym equipment (42%).

15 respondents left comments supportive of establishing Disc golf on the Ponderosa with a practice target being installed. Several comments were provided expressing the need to retain the green grass areas on the Ponderosa, whilst a number of people referenced the interest in additional seating being provided.

Green Space, Health & Wellbeing

It’s widely recognised that access to high quality green space in urban areas has a positive impact on the health & wellbeing of people. As Parks & Countryside has received Public Health funding to make improvements to parks and green spaces across the city, including the Ponderosa, the survey asked a number of health and wellbeing questions.

Three quarters of the respondents felt that their general health and wellbeing was good. 44% felt access to the Ponderosa is important to their health and wellbeing

Further comments

Respondents were given the opportunity to leave further comments regarding the survey or the Ponderosa. Of the 90 comments that were provided of them were supportive of the plans to improve the Ponderosa. 7 respondents specifically mentioned their support for a Café on the site, whilst 7 people again mentioned the need to improve the feeling of safety on the site. 6 people expressed the need to retain the woodland and natural parts of the site which many people appreciate and value.
CONCLUSION

The large response to the Ponderosa consultation showed overwhelming support for improvements to Ponderosa date back to site masterplans produced for the site several years ago. The consultation shows that there is significant support from the local community to progress with developing and delivering improvements which aim to raise the quality of the site. This can be partly achieved through making much needed improvements to the infrastructure and facilities of the Ponderosa whilst also ensuring that the site becomes more welcoming, safer and accessible for both current and potential users.

WHAT DO WE PLAN TO DO NEXT?

Parks & Countryside Services have a limited pot of funding to undertake improvements to the Ponderosa and which can be spent on a certain improvements to the site. Section 106 funds are viable to undertaken

Following the feedback received through the consultation with the local community and users of the Ponderosa we intend to focus on developing and delivering the following improvement priorities.

- **Phase 1: Woodland Improvements** – thinning and selective felling around entrances and paths in order to improve sight lines and passive surveillance into the site and around path network, opening up key entrance points and path intersections. *Works planned for February 2019*

- **Phase 2: Paths & Connectivity** – Upgrading existing non-tarmac paths and creating new paths to increase the connectivity of the park and surrounding communities as well as providing an accessible circular route through the park for all. *Works planned Summer 2019*

- **Phase 3: Entrances & Access** – Improving the entrances and access to the park through physical improvements to their design and layout alongside new infrastructure such as paths, seating, fencing, signage, lighting etc. *Further consultation Spring 2018 / Works planned Summer 2019*

- **Phase 4: Playground Improvements** – improving the play provision on the site for all ages and abilities through both the renewal of existing equipment and the addition of new equipment. *Further consultation Spring 2019 / Works planned for Summer 2019*

The delivery of these project elements are split into phases due to the nature of the improvements, the need for further consultation, design and development, and the available budget.

Parks & Countryside have access to £87k Section 106 funding (planning obligations) which can be spent on access, woodlands, entrance, play improvements and general site uplift. In
addition to this we have £100k of Public Health funding available to the project which can be spent on improvements to the green space with the aim of encouraging its use for health and wellbeing benefits.

Alongside delivering the above improvements, we will continue to work with stakeholders and partners to develop solutions and identify funding towards delivering the further improvements supported and identified through the consultation.

FURTHER INFO

If you any comments on the above proposals please put them in writing to: Parks and Countryside, Level 3, Moorfoot, Sheffield, S1 4PL or email parksandcountryside@sheffield.gov.uk by Thursday 31st January 2018.

If you would like any further information on the consultation or the proposed improvements please contact Parks & Countryside on 0114 2500500 or email parksandcountryside@sheffield.gov.uk

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