



Barnet Open Spaces Strategy

St Mary's High School

Student Workshop

18 June 2015

1. Introduction

As part of the Stage 2 consultation on the Barnet Open Spaces Strategy, a one hour workshop was held with 16 Year 10 students at St Mary's High School, Hendon.

The objectives were that, by the end of the workshop, students would have had the opportunity to discuss:

- How young people and their families use parks and open spaces in Barnet
- Their assessment of the quality of the spaces and facilities provided
- Their views on what would make parks and open spaces more attractive to young people and their families
- Thoughts on how open spaces and parks can be used for educational activities
- Their priorities for the future

2. How parks and open spaces make us feel

Students were asked to pick a random image postcard that reminded them of how they felt when they were in a park or open space they liked. They said the following :

- A dazzling night I had at the park (Alexandra Park). It was a night where every year everyone in the area would gather around. Even in a huge park a small area full of people were linked together
- A beautiful park I used to go to when I was younger in Paris. It was sunny with leaves, kids equipment and many flowers with many trees
- Sitting and enjoying nature. It was relaxing and an escape from troubles
- I love to know what is happening around me. A park is a place where people of the community get together and things happen
- It makes me feel very happy and creative, especially in my younger years as I was aiming to become a footballer. I started playing football in a park and it reminds me how fascinating the park was
- Hot spring weather in Hyde Park. It made me feel relaxed and it made me stop worrying about life too much
- Every time I go to the park there are blue skies and kids having fun and playing around
- Many different stalls and stages in the park. Able to experience many different activities and taste food from all over the world

- Flowers and trees emitting joy and showing how much they enjoy the sun
- I went with my family to Goa, India. In the evening the trees stood tall and black. It reminds me of the amazing time I had with my family
- Freedom and happiness. Feel accepted and love. Everyone out and free to do what they feel, just like me and my friends in the park
- The last day of school last year and my friends and I had a water fight in Hendon Park!
- Food. Picnic in the park. Having fun with my family
- Positivity surrounding the area and filling the atmosphere

Students identified positive experiences in parks and opens spaces, largely connected with friends, family and the community coming together. They identified there best experiences of these spaces as being happy, relaxing and fun.

3. What works and what doesn't?

Students were asked to think about local Barnet parks and identify what worked well and less well at present. They were asked to be as specific as possible and to name parks they thought had particularly good or bad features. They said the following :

What works well?	What works less well?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great views • Pleasant places to be • Good facilities (Hendon Park's basketball and tennis courts) • Some repairs have taken place in the parks • Park gyms • Healthy trees • Park Rangers (they do a good job)/ Kind workers • Not much animal waste • Variety of fruit trees • Different flowers • Rubber safety pads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not enough bins and benches • Unsanitary bathrooms and the lack of them in some parks • Not enough parks like Golders Green Park • No enough bins for dog poop • No enough parking or the prices are too high • The state of the floor (concrete) in certain places such as basketball courts (Hendon Park, Montrose Park, Mill Hill Park) • Safety of children • Animal wildlife is very rare

- Feel free with nature
- Grass is always in healthy condition
- Brings everyone together as a community
- Allows everyone to have open spaces (some people live in flats and don't experience wide spaces)
- Interesting plants
- Animals (Golders Green Park)
- Clean
- Kids areas/ Playgrounds for children
- Benches
- Fountains
- Cafes and shops nearby
- One park – different areas within it
- A place in which people come together – a happy community
- Active cafes
- Beautiful areas – nicely trimmed grass
- Wide variety of areas and sports places
- Freedom
- A positive atmosphere
- Scenery
- Good flora and fauna/ Healthy plants/ Beautiful flowers
- Many trees, which are good for the environment
- A place for people to gather
- Hendon Park has a gym and playground, a café and basketball and tennis courts. It has variety and is versatile
- Café facilities (Golders Green Park)
- Ducks
- Quiet areas

- Too little green area around basketball/football courts
- Not enough learning happening in the parks
- Not enough community gatherings
- Not enough medical support to ensure safety
- No views/too boring (Victoria Park)
- Not many facilities
- Litter
- Not enough directions in big parks
- Need more and different sports facilities such as skateboarding and roller skating
- Need more rules to stop intimate interactions/public displays of affection
- Rusting children's play facilities are unsafe
- Cafes are too expensive
- Smokers
- Unsafe at night
- Dogs
- Not much to do for older children
- Too much graffiti
- No fountains

4. When we use the parks and open spaces

Students were asked their preferred time to use the parks, and who they would wish to be with. They said the following :

- Early morning (weekdays)
- In the morning by myself or with a couple of friends
- In the morning with friends or by myself
- In the morning or in the evening (especially in Summer when it is cooler then), with friends
- Midday – afternoon, with friends
- Weekend afternoons with friends and family
- Afternoon (weekends)
- 2pm on weekends with family, friends or by myself
- 3pm onwards with friends and family
- 3pm after school, with friends
- 3pm onwards with friends and family
- 4-9pm with family friends and youth club
- 5-6pm with family
- 5pm with friends and family
- 6-6.30pm with fiends or by myself
- 6-8pm with my brother to experience the sunset view

It is interesting to note that the students expressed a variety of preferences throughout the day. In discussion it was agreed that some liked to visit in the morning, others in the afternoon or evening. Some liked to be with friends and family while others preferred to be alone if they were, for example, training or practicing for sports. Students said it depended how they felt as to when they would want to use the parks, but agreed that the spaces should be available all day and with a good balance of activities and facilities to meet their needs.

5. Making it better

Students were asked for their 'big ideas' as to how the parks in Barnet could better meet their needs. In discussion, the following ideas were generated and each student was given 3 votes to prioritise the ones they felt were most important. All were felt to be important, but the list below is ranked in order of votes received :

- An area for outdoor learning with WiFi/interactive zones (10)
- Better/more CCTV for security (6)
- More facilities and variety of activities for young people (basketball/football/festivals/youth events) (6)
- An outdoor gym in every park (5)
- Mini theme parks (5)
- A range of places which cater for different interests of adults and children (4)
- Affordable cafes and kiosks (4)
- More animals and wild plants (4)
- A talent concert – could be used to build community relations (2)
- An outdoor library (1)
- A better variety of sports provision (skating and skateboarding for example) (1)
- Childcare – volunteers who can watch younger children to give parents time to relax
- Talent scouts in parks – recognising the talents of young people
- More educational information/interactive display boards in parks
- Specialist sports courts for tennis/basketball/football
- Seating areas which are more durable and could be used for study
- More/cheaper car parking close by
- Availability of drinking water in all parks

6. Conclusion

The students valued the parks and open spaces they used and felt they provided a sense of freedom and calm, and a place to meet with friends, family and community. Their priorities reflect their wish to have a range of facilities for all age groups from young children to teenagers and adults. They particularly liked outdoor gyms and sports facilities, and wanted themed areas and events that met a variety of needs. Affordable cafes and kiosks, and a good range of plants and animals were seen as important.

While they mentioned security as important, and saw CCTV as a benefit in parks, they did not generally feel unsafe at the times they used the spaces. Interestingly their top priority was for more opportunities to learn outdoors in parks. They felt the availability of WiFi in open spaces would facilitate this in school time, and would be a benefit for when they were socialising in the parks.



Barnet Open Spaces Strategy

Brunswick Park Primary School

Student Workshop

16 September 2015

1. Introduction

As part of the Stage 2 consultation on the Barnet Open Spaces Strategy, a 45 minute workshop was held with seven Year 5 students at Brunswick Park Primary School.

The objectives were that, by the end of the workshop, students would have had the opportunity to discuss:

- Their assessment of the quality of the spaces and facilities in local parks
- Their views on what would make parks and open spaces more attractive to young people
- Their priorities for the future

2. What we like and don't like

After introductions, pupils were asked to discuss what they liked and didn't like about their local parks and to agree pros and cons in each of their small groups. They said the following :

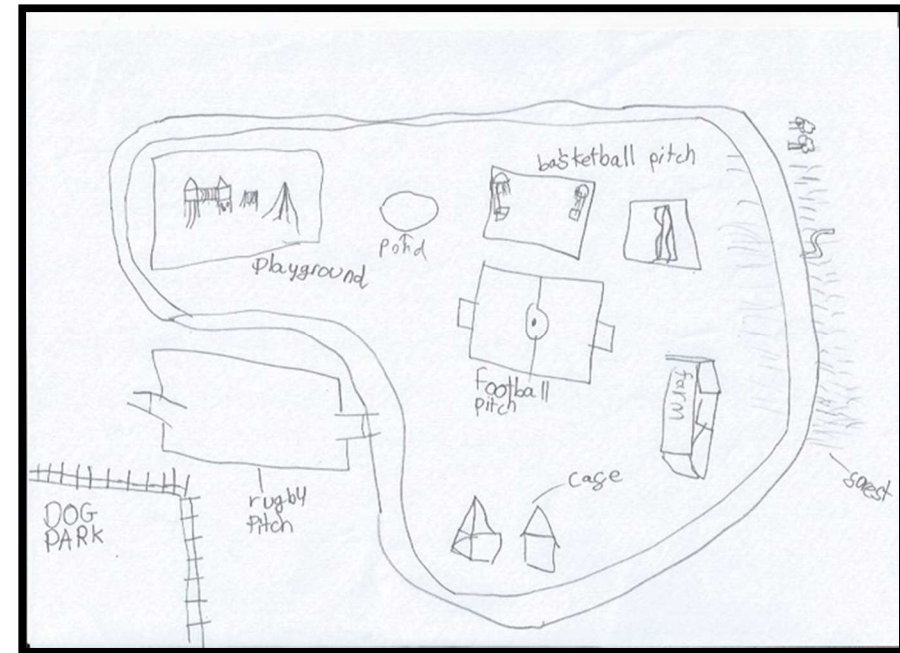
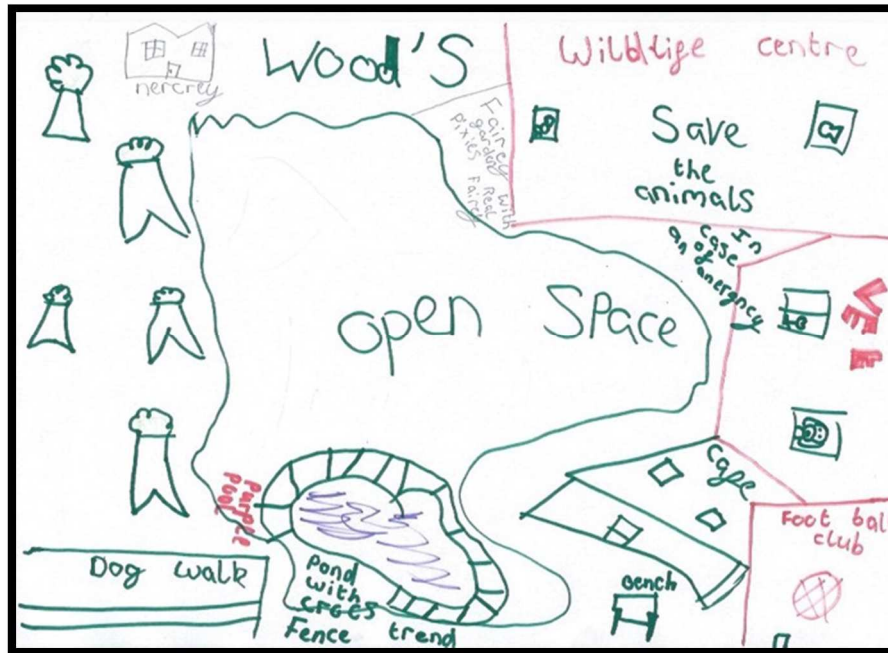
What we like	What we don't like
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woods • Lots of activities and things to do • Making new friends • Goal posts • Using the park to get fit • Playgrounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No slides – not enough to do or things to play on • Mud • No nets on the goal posts and no proper pitch markings • When the park is too small

In discussion pupils said that parks which had a variety of experiences and activities (woods, flowers, sports, playgrounds) worked well. Where parks were not well looked after or didn't have good quality facilities they didn't enjoy being there. They also identified the social side of parks as opportunities to meet new friends or play with existing friendship groups.

3. What would your ideal park look like?

Pupils were asked to consider the pros and cons they had identified and to draw their ideal park, including their 'big ideas' for what would make Barnet Parks work best for them.

A sample of their work is included below :





This is a dream park only for girls and boys
 this park will be called my dream place. It
 will be the best place anyone would
 be. Even babies would like it.
 And it has some imaginative ideas.
 Everyone will love it it will be
 near the school for that empty space
 near the other boring old park.

Pupils shared their park drawings and described their 'big ideas'. These were written on post-its and pupils were each given 6 votes to share amongst the best ideas they had heard. This produced a priority list of the most popular ideas as follows :

Big Idea	Priority
• Lots of sports facilities with proper equipment and markings	1
• Swimming pools	2
• A Wildlife Centre	3
• Wildlife ponds	4
• Places to get ice cream (preferably free!)	5

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A fairy garden • A farm • An art gallery • A dog park • A café 	=6 =6 =6 =6 =6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mini playground • Lots of clubs and activities • Open spaces to run around • A forest • Paths around the park for cycling, running and walking • A Nursery and playground for the smallest children 	=11 =11 =11 =11 =11 =11

4. Conclusion

The pupils expressed a variety of ideas about what would make a park work for children. These included a range of activities and spaces for children of all ages, and for adults. High on the priority list were high quality sports facilities that had good equipment and proper markings giving a 'professional' feel. Also important were play spaces including open areas to run around and well defined paths for cycling and walking, as well as more formal children's playgrounds.

Nature featured heavily in the discussions with ponds, animals, trees and flowers all mentioned. The children were also concerned about conservation and expressed a wish for their parks to be places where wildlife was protected and looked after.

Creative opportunities were also discussed with art gallery spaces and fairy gardens being proposed – places to let your imagination run wild and discover new things.

We are grateful to Andy Griffiths, Headteacher at Brunswick Park School, for organising the workshop, and to Year 5 pupils for their enthusiasm, creativity and thoughtfulness.