



people spaces places

Cassiobury Park & Whippendell Wood

Collated Consultation Report

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Appendices – Full Consultation Reports

1 Summary

Watford Borough Council and the Friends of Cassiobury Park have worked together with local residents since 2011 to submit a Round One Parks for People bid under the Heritage Lottery funding, seeing a successful Round One pass and working through the development stage through to submitting a Round 2 bid.

We have reached a wide range of audiences and the level of interest in Cassiobury Park & Whippendell Wood has grown throughout this process. This project demonstrates the community's proposals which have been fine tuned during the development stage following the advice from the appointed consultant team and further developed following the undertaking of specialist surveys and investigations. The outcomes of this is that we now have a well informed, well supported, comprehensive, cohesive and collaborative set of proposals of which many people such as the Friends Group, community representatives and other groups and the wider community have had an input in.

This document collates the previous reports that have been produced during the development stage of the Cassiobury Park & Whippendell Wood Restoration Project. The scope and focus of consultation during the development stage has been on the proposals contained within the Masterplan and the consultation has informed and influenced the detailed design work as well as the development of a programme of revenue activities during the delivery stage and post restoration.

1,248 people have engaged in a range of different consultation exercises with the results of these summarised below.

1.1 Visitor Survey

Between April and June 2013, a visitor survey was conducted in Cassiobury Park & Whippendell Wood and hosted online. A total of 640 people completed the survey. It emerged that the majority of respondents regularly, visiting the park on a weekly or more frequent basis. The most popular reasons to use Cassiobury Park & Whippendell Wood emerged as 'to take a form of exercise' and many respondents also indicated that they like to use the Park to relax, with the large proportion of respondents remaining in the Park for between 1 and 2 hours.

Overall, the majority of respondents were either very satisfied or fairly satisfied with the Park, with Whippendell Wood regarded as the most valued heritage feature. Most respondents regarded the open space as being the main reason as to why they are satisfied with Cassiobury Park & Whippendell Wood with a lack of toilets emerging as the main cause of the limited dissatisfaction reported.

1.2 Exhibition Proposals Survey

As part of the early development of the Round 2 proposals to restore and conserve Cassiobury Park & Whippendell Wood, an exhibition was held across Watford at 5 different venues so that members of the public could reflect upon the emerging draft proposals.

A total of 233 surveys were completed and there was strong support for the range of options shown, including extending and improving the Cha Cha Cha Café, providing refreshment provision in a new park hub building and improving the pools area. Respondents also reported that they preferred the Rickmansworth Road Entrance to be developed in a way that recalls the footprint of the former 'gates'.

Based on the proposals shown, this round of consultation reported that around three quarters of respondents would be encouraged to visit Cassiobury Park & Whippendell Wood more often.

1.3 Community Group Survey

The community group survey was hosted online and responses were received throughout May, June and early July 2013. A total of 30 responses were received from 24 groups located across Watford and neighbouring areas. The majority of groups responding to the consultation indicated that they used the Park, bringing between 1 and 400 users (Watford South District Scouts) into the Park. Outside of the groups that stated they visited Cassiobury Park & Whippendell Wood 'less often', a large proportion of groups indicated that they visit on a weekly basis.

The survey was able to show the various reasons why different groups use the Park, as well as detailing the barriers to use reported by 2 in 5 groups and the improvements that could be made.

1.4 Consultation with local schools

49 schools across Watford and Hertfordshire were contacted by Debbie Brady, Cassiobury Park Community Ranger and meetings with 6 schools were visited between March and May 2013. Schools where visits took place included:

- Francis Combe Academy, Watford
- Nascots Wood Primary School, Watford
- Orchard Primary School, Watford
- Radlett Preparatory School, Radlett
- Rudolf Steiner School, Kings Langley
- Watford Boys School, Watford

This information has been used in conjunction with the work carried out with schools at Round 1 to inform the development of proposals and the Activity Plan.

1.5 Stakeholder Consultation

A number of semi-structured meetings or telephone conversations have taken place throughout the development stage with local organisations. Watford Borough Council and the consultant team have had engagement with and had ongoing dialogue with following organisations:

- Marion Birch – Age UK Hertfordshire
- Arthur Reed – Croquet Club
- Leigh Hutchings – Disability Watford

- DRUM Members
- Rob Hopkins - Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust
- Peter Wright - Herts Valley Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)
- Noel Acres – Holywell Community Centre
- Carol Syms – Mind
- Hamzah Achta – Multicultural Community in Watford
- Rabina Malik – Muskaan Pakisatanis Womens Group
- Emma Brown – Watford and District YMCA
- Gordon Kirkpatrick – Watford Bowls Club
- Cheryl Horton – Watford Centre for Voluntary Services (CVS)
- Peter Hodges – Watford Community Garden
- Vanessa Wright – Watford Community House Trust
- Kate Jenkins – Watford Cycle Hub
- Ruth Murray – Watford Mencap
- Jeff Price – Watford Miniature Railway
- Sarah Priestley – Watford Museum
- Paul Humphrys & Martin Renshaw – West Herts College

The various one to one meetings and contact with local organisations such as these have been used to inform the development of the detailed proposals, Activity Plan and Management and Maintenance Plan.

1.6 Stakeholder Workshop

Two participatory workshops were on held 26th March and 8th April 2013 with a range of stakeholders to seek out feedback and any emerging issues arising from the round 1 proposals in addition to carrying out community network mapping. Stakeholders offered their opinions as to how the Rickmansworth Entrance could be improved and discussed the proposals for reinstating the bandstand, improving the Cha Cha Cha Café and improving the pools area.

1.7 Our Big Gig Consultation

During the Our Big Gig events that were held on 13th July 2013 in Cassiobury Park and outside of Watford Town Hall, consultation was carried out that allowed members of the public to have their say on the latest proposals. A total of 83 people were consulted and 33 surveys were completed.

There was a strongly level of support for the proposals shown, where on average, only 6.0% of respondents were either strongly against or against the proposals shown. The highest levels of support were for proposals to reinstate the Bandstand.

1.8 Design Feedback Survey

Watford Council and its partners exhibited plans for the restoration of Cassiobury Park and Whippendell Wood at the Inland Waterways Festival over the weekend of 19th to 21st July, across Watford at various locations from Monday 22nd July to Sunday 27th July and online between Wednesday 22nd August and Friday 6th September 2013. 200 surveys were completed and respondents were invited to make specific comments regarding the designs of the different elements. Through this exercise, specific quantified data on key issues was gathered which illustrated support for extending cycle paths across the Park, bringing back the bandstand, raising issues related to car parking and demonstrating support for the hub building.