

## **FREEMANS MEADOW**

### **Summary of the Local Residents Survey - January 2018**

**Prepared for Henley Town Council - Open and Green Spaces Sub-Committee meeting  
on 19 January 2018**

#### **Introduction**

The Friends of Freemans Meadow (FFM) conducted a survey of local residents' views on Freemans Meadow to assist the members of Henley Town Council - Open and Green Spaces Sub-Committee (OGSS) to develop their plans for the Meadow. 515 questionnaires were delivered to residences surrounding the Meadow in November 2017 and 62 replies were received. 12% represents an exceptionally high response rate for surveys of this nature and demonstrates the interest which local residents have in the area. Responses received from each side of the Meadow were:

Luker Ave/Badgemore Estate	21 (out of 300 = 7% response rate)
Northfield End/Fairmile/Bowling Court	14 (out of 100 = 14%)
Leicester Close	11 (out of 16 = 69%)
Other Henley	9 (out of 70 = 13%)
Pearce's Orchard/ Fairmile Court	7 (out of 30 = 23%)

The responses have been collated. A summary of all the responses is attached under the topics addressed in the survey. The number of responses in favour of or opposed to a proposal is indicated, generally in numerical diminishing order, so that the more strongly supported proposals can be readily identified. (Note each recipient could send in multiple recommendations and so responses detailed may not be limited to 62.)

More detailed summaries of responses collated by residential area together with the original responses are being passed to the secretary of the OGSS at the Town Hall for reference.

#### **Results of the Survey**

The principal results of the survey are set out below.

- 1) The survey supports the OGSS policy that Freemans Meadow should be maintained as an area of tranquility with its rural ambience. None of the responses recommended any significant development of the site.
- 2) The survey also confirmed strong support (21) for removal of the shelter with only (1) for retention
- 3) There is strong support for refurbishing/maintaining (43) and supplementing (47) the play area with (7) against
- 4) There is strong support (48) for more benches/seating, on the Pearce's Orchard side and both in and near the play area.
- 5) There is strong support (36) for the grass to be mown more frequently with (4) against.
- 6) There is strong support (36) for more landscaping with (4) against.
- 7) There is strong support (37) for better placed litter and dog-poo bins with (6) already adequate.
- 8) Opinion on signage for restrictions and litter etc. was more divided with (24) for and (14) against.
- 9) In addition, an encouragingly strong (31) offer of support with the upkeep of the Meadow with (6) declining/unable. Most of these respondents stated they already pick up litter voluntarily while in the park.

More information can be gleaned by studying the attached collated responses and are not detailed here.

## **Summary of matters for consideration by OGSS**

To assist OGSS we have set out below, in summarised form, the matters which we suggest should be considered. These are addressed in the order of the questionnaire and not necessarily the order of greatest interest.

The **play area** is very much used and appreciated by residents for children and grandchildren of all ages. Equipment needs to be maintained. Some equipment and flooring should be refurbished as planned. There is a wish for more toddler and young children equipment, in particular replacement swings and the addition of a slide as a minimum. This should be accommodated without extending the existing play area extensively.

**Other equipment** requested is for **benches/seating** (wooden with backs and arms) on the sunniest side of the Meadow being in front of Pearce's Orchard and also near and within the play area for supervising adults. The design and precise location needs to be determined although 'seats' are favoured over 'benches' to prevent them being slept on.

Under **Cleanliness** and **Health and Safety** it is suggested that litter and dog-poo bins are located at each of the exits where there is not already one. Consideration is given to making the play area more wheel-chair accessible. Consideration is given to some signage at the entrances without detracting from the rural nature of the Meadow.

There is a clear majority wish for **landscaping** to enhance the Meadow including **tree** management and some planting of trees, shrubs and hedges along the boundaries. A scheme needs to be devised which is sympathetic to the surroundings while improving the attraction of the site. A landscaping and planting plan is required and the Friends of Freemans Meadow core group would like to liaise directly with the Parks Dept in order to convey the wishes and suggestions expressed in the survey.

There is a strong desire for **grass mowing** to be carried out more frequently to make the park more attractive and user friendly.

There is confirmation that the **shelter** should be removed.

With the exception of the grass mowing and shelter removal which are relatively straight forward decisions we recommend that one or more working parties are set up to consider and make recommendations on the other matters listed above. FFM ask that OGSS keeps us informed on its progress and allows us the opportunity to participate in and comment on your proposals for FM before final decisions are taken. We would be happy to assist you further with representation on the working parties if you wish.

## **Conclusion**

FFM would like to record their thanks to all the individuals who distributed, collected and collated the survey questionnaires and to the residents for their time completing and returning the questionnaires.

Friends of Freemans Meadow  
8 January 2018

## OVERALL SUMMARY (62)

– Freeman's Meadow Canvassing –

November 2017

### Collated Responses - PLAY EQUIPMENT

<b>General comments re. Play Area &amp; Equipment:</b>		
Equipment needs to be properly & regularly maintained		21
Playground site should be improved as suggested		17
Please make existing roundabout rotate (new rubber flooring should help this, gets jammed by bark)		5
No more equipment needed		5
Toddler equipment in a separate area to the existing large equipment		2
Move existing raised roundabout to corner of play area where sun reaches		1
Wheelchair access to play area appreciated (new rubber flooring should also help moving around play area)		1
Existing ball chute never used		1
Turn football pitch 90 degrees at Pearce's Orchard end		1
<b>Specific Play Equipment Suggestions:</b>		
Existing swings need replacing with new, particularly swings suitable for toddlers in addition to those for older children		10
More equipment suitable for very young/toddlers/pre-school 2 – 5/7 yrs		8
A decent slide / small slide	/	8
Adult green gym equipment		4
Monkey bars		2
Small climbing wall & balance beams		2
Basketball / netball hoop		2
Tennis court, Half basketball court		2
Seesaw		1
Small tunnels for children to climb through		1
Large wooden climbing structure with rope wall, slide and fireman's pole		1
Learning equipment (train)		1
Nets in football posts		1
Crazy golf		1
Shallow children's paddling pool		1
Timber steps to a wobbly bridge to a slide		1
Keep fit trail		1

### Collated Responses – OTHER EQUIPMENT

More wooden seats*/benches/with backs/arms at prominent points in the sunshine / dotted around/Pearce's Orchard & Fairmile Court side. The general consensus is for 'seats' rather than 'benches' to prevent them being slept on		30
Remove Shelter as it is misused and attracts ASB & litter		21
More seats/benches (with backs) both inside and near play area for adults accompanying children		18
Metal benches (prevent vandalism)		1
Picnic tables – YES		1
Picnic table – NO		1
A light or two in the playground corner		1
Do not remove shelter		1

### Collated Responses – CLEANLINESS / HEALTH & SAFETY

Yes to signage re. litter, dog fouling, asb, excl. motor cycles etc		22
No to signage re. above		14
More waste bins required		11
More doggie bins near Luker Avenue entrances		10
One waste and one doggie bin by each park exit (5 or 4 minimum)		9
Rat problem		7
Bins sufficient and positioned correctly		6
Rubbish bins with tops / lids		3
Not enough bins at entrance on Fairmile		2
Bins INSIDE play area		2
Signs for who to contact re. park related issues		1
Litter warden or camera		1
Positive/welcoming signage at each entrance		1

### Collated responses – LANDSCAPING / MAINTENANCE

Grass mown more frequently? Yes		36
More landscaping – YES eg. trees planted or shrubs along the boundary/perimeter, a group of silver birch or low shrubs, not specified but to give a natural feel		15
Maintenance of the landscape very important		12
Perimeter track (whether 'natural', 'mown' or 'created' for dog walking, walking, cycling, running, scooters, roller skates		5
More landscaping – NO		4
Grass mown more frequently? No		4
Entrance pathways need to be improved/firmer with a dressing/hard-core/gravel/bark topping, too muddy & cleared of overhang/cut back		4
Replace trees along Luker Avenue side where mature trees have been felled		3
Maintain undergrowth for wildlife, more rural		3
Flower beds created*		3
Wild flower planting / natural		2
Monitor re. illegal fly tipping, especially Pearce's Orchard corner		1
To be kept looking neat & tidy but natural, eg. like St George's Field, Twyford		1
Cut back undergrowth on boundaries		1
Ongoing planting elsewhere		1

### Collated Responses – OTHER MATTERS

Prepared to assist with upkeep – YES		31
Visit daily (or more than, dog walking or other)		16
Visit regularly (dog walking or children)		12
Visit occasionally / infrequently /rarely		7
Prepared to assist with upkeep – NO		6
Visit weekly		5
Overlook, enjoy the open green space		4
Visit monthly		4
Use by 'Boot Camp' exercise groups		1
Hold annual fetes/BBQs		1