

The PC has no preferred outcome on this proposal. It is an opportunity which is presented to the community to determine the appetite of the community for it.

The online Survey Monkey was answered by 65 users in total with 63 answering most of the questions. In addition, five other responses were received via email and Royal Mail.

The overall response was positive - 70% support or strongly support the proposal compared to 22% who oppose or strongly oppose.

There was a lot of support from horse riders who would like to extend bridleways to include the edge of the open space. On talking to an officer from RBWM this may be possible if it was just to connect other bridleways but if it was to turn the space into a circuit with horses exercising around the edge it would ruin some of the special features of the site. There would be additional fencing costs if this were incorporated.

It was noted that responsible dog walkers can be an asset as they are they notice and report issues quickly – including antisocial behaviour by other dog walkers. However, the waste products can be a problem and even a dog bin will lead to extra maintenance costs.

Further, families with young children are often wary of dogs when walking and having picnics. A dog exclusion zone could be considered around the play area and picnic tables.

The inclusion of a safe footpath from the centre of Shurlock Row was seen as essential by many.

Further discussion is needed about play facilities. An email was received questioning the validity of the results of the online survey given that there may be some confusion over different terms used – children’s play area v natural play area/feature with a newt theme. Nothing is decided, everything is up for debate. BUT the natural play area/feature on a newt theme could be similar to one in Allens Field, Ascot on a butterfly theme. That feature incorporated grass mounds, wood steps, rocks, wood sculptures, log rounds and wild flowers providing a setting for developmental and imaginative play for young children. The theme was suggested given the newts reported in the area.

Our site would not be appropriate for a mound given the drainage problems. However, it could incorporate wooden stepping stones, wooden sculptures, wildlife themed benches, maybe a woodland style swing, rubbing posts with wildlife engravings placed around the walking area etc. Here are a couple of photos of equipment options.





Other points raised included: -

- Paths to be accessible for wheelchairs and buggies. (This may be difficult given that the paths would be merely mown paths and the area is known to be boggy.)
- Ensure ragwort and other pests are destroyed by RBWM before committing. (Ragwort need not be fully exterminated from the site if horses are not being kept in the field. There are some moth caterpillars which rely on ragwort.)
- The location is on a dangerous road.
- Proximity of unauthorised travellers' site might be intimidating.
- Used by outsiders (e.g. professional dog walkers) but funded by residents.
- Fly tipping and other unauthorised access.
- Car park and playground would lead to urbanisation.
- There are already enough footpaths for walking. It is an unnecessary expense and there will not be enough volunteers to maintain it.
- Other issues should be given priority, e.g. affordable housing, litter collection, ditch maintenance, more pavements in the area especially from Shurlock Row to the school, hedge cutting etc.
- A pond area would be a danger.
- Litter.
- Fear of attracting drug users at night.
- Inappropriate to cover greenbelt in hardcore.
- Site is always waterlogged.
- General waste of money in difficult times.

In addition to the online survey the details of the proposal were published on the WSL Twitter account, Facebook page, website pages, in the Lychgate (Feb. 2016 edition) and posted on all three notice boards. Additionally, there was a facility to organise a viewing of the documents in person with K. Sarsfield.

The Facebook posting on 16th Jan 2016 had over 600 people reached. There were no comments made, other than a confirmation that someone had filled in the online form!

Our Twitter feed has 254 followers.

The Chairman of the PC will follow up with RBWM to supply more detailed options and costings based on the comments received.