

The Meadows

CONSULTATION STAGE 2: SUMMARY, RESULTS, ANALYSIS

WIRKSWORTH TOWN COUNCIL

The Meadows

Executive summary

The second public consultation about the Meadows was carried out by Wirksworth Town Council between 1 October – 15 November 2021. 330 responses were received, over a third more than were received during the first consultation. This second stage aimed to identify priorities for the space and clarify residents' opinions on specific topics. Using the results of this research, the council will take the project through to the design stage, where the public will be consulted a final time before plans for the space are finalised.

Overview

This consultation took the form of a survey¹. Firstly, respondents were asked to put ten items into a hierarchy with 1 as their favourite and 10 as their least favourite. The ten options given were the most popular suggestions for inclusion in the redesign as received via the first consultation. Other questions included whether dogs should be kept on leads, whether there should be picnic benches, what type of planting there should be and finally a request for additional comments.

The survey was created on SurveyMonkey, and links were shared on the Town Council website and on the Facebook page. In turn it was shared across the Facebook pages of the town and local interest groups. During the period the consultation was open, the survey was re-shared regularly to remind residents to take part. For those without access to a computer, paper copies were available. These could be found in the Town Hall, Ken's grocers and the library (the latter also hosting a post box where completed forms could be posted). Posters were put up across the town to make residents aware of the survey and the available methods of completion.



During the final week of the consultation the council took a stall on the Tuesday Market and surveyed residents in person. Manned by the Project Officer, this resulted in 40 completed surveys and also raised awareness of the project. Many also took surveys away to complete or committed to complete it online.

Results

The majority of responses, 251, were received via the SurveyMonkey online survey (76%), while 79 paper forms were returned. Overall residents responded very positively; the responses generally followed the same priority order as seen during the first consultation.

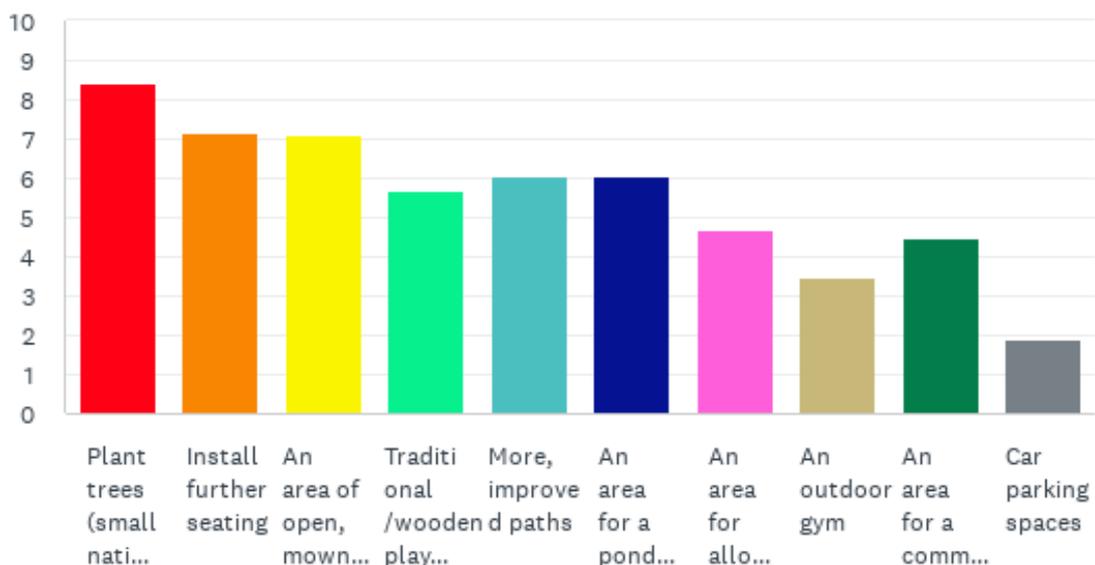
- Questions

Question 1: Please number the below list 1-10 with 1 as the option most important to you and 10 as the least. Please only use each number once.

- Plant trees
- Install further seating
- A wooden play area
- More, improved paths
- An area of open, mown community space
- Allotments
- An area for a pond, bog or wetland
- An area for a community vegetable garden
- An outdoor gym
- Car parking spaces

Though it was one of the ten most popular options from the first consultation, the subject of picnic tables was moved into its own question in order to clarify the relationship to general seating. Similarly, wildflower garden was taken out and put into a standalone question. These two options being removed meant that the options of outdoor gym and car parking (the 11th and 12th most popular suggestions previously), were incorporated.

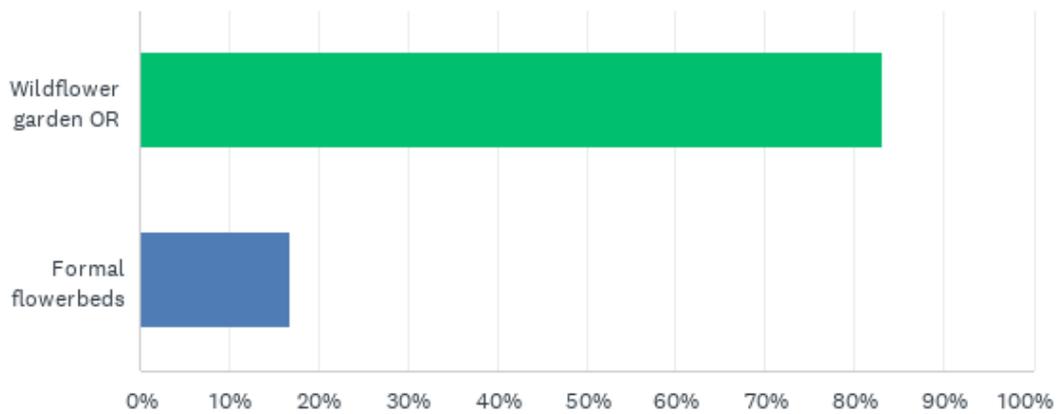
Results chart:



The resulting rankings are as follows (their previous rank is in brackets)

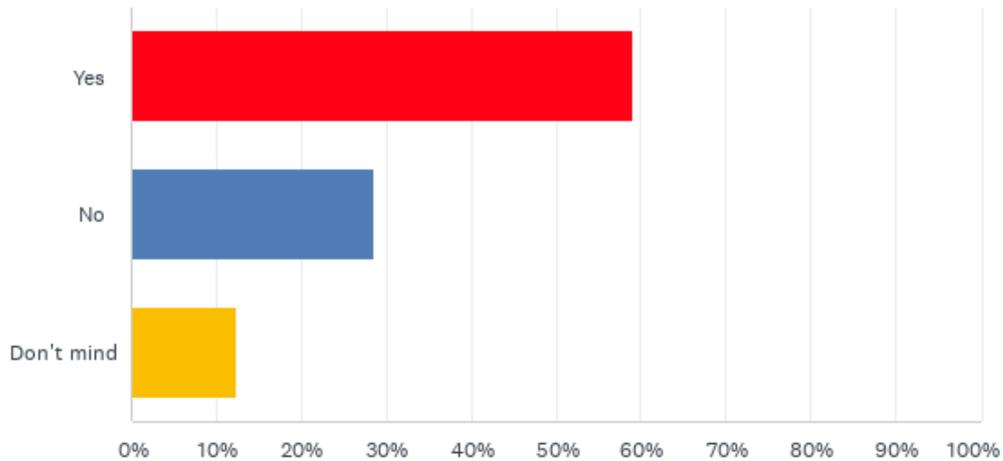
- 1. Plant trees (1)
- 2. Install further seating (2)
- 3. An area of open, mown community space (6)
- 4. More, improved paths (5)
- 5. An area for a pond, bog or wetland (9)
- 6. A wooden play area (4)
- 7. Allotments (7)
- 8. An area for a community vegetable garden (10)
- 9. An outdoor gym (11)
- 10. Car parking spaces (12)

Question 2: Would you rather see an area of Wildflower garden OR Formal flowerbeds?



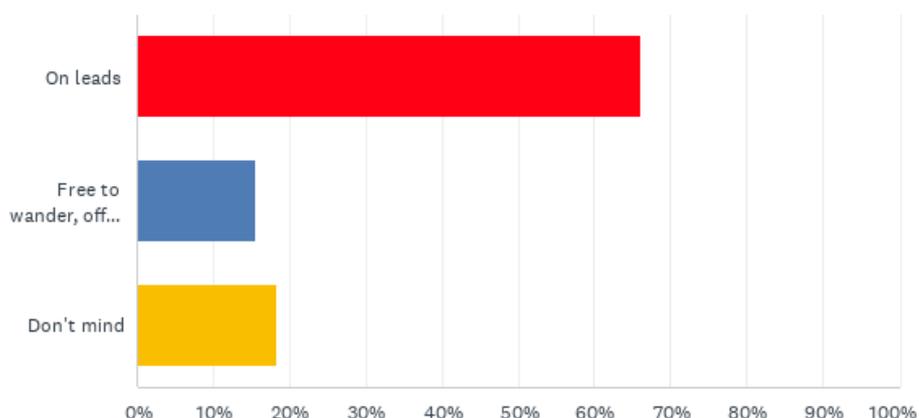
83% of respondents preferred a wildflower area over formal flowerbeds in the Meadows.

Question 3: Should seating include the provision of picnic tables?



59% of respondents would like to see the inclusion of picnic tables.

Question 4: (please select one) Would you rather dogs were: a) on leads b) Free to wander, off lead c) Don't mind



66% of respondents would like dogs to be kept on leads.

Question 5: If you have any additional comments, please note them here:

A selection of representative comments are shown below:

"[We] wish to see Meadows being used by all community age groups."

"We should be discouraging cars and concentrating on low carbon community friendly options. Please not a car park."

"Sections of wildflower and woodland playground and picnic areas combined."

"Currently the Meadows are beneficial to wildlife. I think they should continue to be so."

"Incorporating managed wildflower areas would be wonderful. Also allotments are too big for most families so I would say that smaller e.g. 2m x 2m raised beds that people adopt would be preferable and more accessible than traditional allotments. We don't need more tarmac."

"Dog poo is still a big problem for young and old people using the paths on the Meadows."

"Lots of people contributed, making allotments gives land to a few people rather than open space for many to enjoy. Solving the dog poo on the paths would enhance the walking / buggy / wheelchair experience."

"Provide litter / dog bins and empty regularly."

Analysis

Overall, the results of the survey reinforce and substantiate the information gleaned from the first consultation. Tree planting, wildflowers and seating remain priorities. 'An area of mown, community space' and 'An area for a pond/bog/ wetland' were both more popular

this time round, with the former the third most popular choice for the space. The allotments remained static as number seven and though several respondents noted their support for allotments, they suggested at the same time that full sized allotments would not be appropriate for this space. Others commented on their support for allotments generally but not on the Meadows. Car parking was bottom of the list and 10% of the comments left were against the idea of car parking spaces.

There is a strong theme for keeping the space natural, as a historic green space within the town, rather than create a formal municipal park. This point is reinforced by the large majority who would like to see wildflowers rather than formal flowerbeds. The respondents are concerned with biodiversity and the need to assist the environment and wildlife and reduce carbon.

Two thirds of respondents would like to see picnic tables installed and comments suggested that at least some of these be wheelchair accessible. Alongside the boosted popularity of the 'mown, community area' this suggests people would like an area to 'dwell'. The need for litter bins alongside the tables was also widely commented on, litter and upkeep being a concern to many respondents.

The issue of dogs is divisive with regards to the Meadows. Two thirds of respondents felt dogs should be on leads, while a third thought they should be allowed off or did not mind either way. There were many comments upon dog mess and the need for enforcement and bins. There were also several suggestions for a fenced dog area.

Conclusion

This second consultation has helped to sharpen focus on what residents see as the key elements of any revamp of the Meadows. These results throw up some challenges for the town council, around the need to produce a plan which both restores and improves the site for wildlife and residents alike, while being low cost and low maintenance. Complexities will lie around the potential inclusion of a play area, pond/wetland, table seating and bins and how these features can be part of an ongoing maintenance plan to ensure enjoyment, safety and cost efficiency. These matters will need to be resolved before a final design and plan is approved along with final decision regarding a policy on dogs. The next stage will therefore be to resolve these issues and to appoint a designer, before moving forward to a final public consultation upon draft designs.

Appendix 1

Front



The Meadows

Consultation Stage 2

Rate your top ten: Below are listed the most popular suggestions received in the first consultation regarding The Meadows. The Town Council is now looking to refine these ideas.

1. Please number the below list 1-10 with 1 as the option most important to you and 10 the least. Please only use each number once.

- ___ Plant trees (small native, fruit, nut)
- ___ Install further seating
- ___ Traditional / wooden play area
- ___ More, improved paths
- ___ An area of open, mown community space
- ___ An area for allotments
- ___ An area for a pond, bog or wetland
- ___ An area for a community vegetable garden
- ___ An outdoor gym
- ___ Car parking spaces

2. Would you rather see an area of: (Please tick one)

Wildflower garden OR Formal flowerbeds

3. Should seating include the provision of picnic tables? (Please tick one)

Yes
 No

Further questions overleaf >>>

FILL THIS SURVEY IN ONLINE: www.wirksworthtowncouncil.gov.uk/meadows-survey.html

Back

4. Would you rather dogs were:

- On leads
- Free to wander, off lead
- Don't mind

If you have any additional comments please use the space below:

Please complete:

Surname:

Postcode:

Email address:

(Optional: Please complete if you would like adding to the Town Council's mailing list)

Thank you for your submission.

Please return your form, labelled 'Meadows' to the post box at: Town Hall, Coldwell Street, Wirksworth DE4 4EU (next door to the library).

FILL THIS SURVEY IN ONLINE:

[www.wirksworthtowncouncil.gov.uk/
meadows-survey.html](http://www.wirksworthtowncouncil.gov.uk/meadows-survey.html)

Keep up-to-date with latest news about
The Meadows:

[www.wirksworthtowncouncil.gov.uk/
meadowsnews](http://www.wirksworthtowncouncil.gov.uk/meadowsnews)

