

REPORT TO LONGHOUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL



16.10.17

Recreation Field, Beach Lane, Longhoughton
Consultation Report

1. Background to Report

On 11th May Longhoughton Parish Council received a collaborative letter signed by 38 residents (children and adults), the majority of whom live within the immediate environs of the recreation field next to Beach Lane, Longhoughton.

The letter urged the parish council to consider the following:

- Servicing of the existing goal-posts
 - More frequent grass cutting
 - Address the mole issues damaging the surface
 - Reinstate access from Eastmoor to allow a safer route for children to school via the back gate and access to the field.
2. On 16 May Cllr Eleanor Phillips emailed County Cllr Wendy Pattison to arrange a site visit with residents. As Cllr Pattison had only just been elected and had a busy diary, the site visit was organised for 2nd June.
3. **Site visit 2nd June**– Cllrs Pattison and Phillips met with a small number of residents. Cllr Pattison was briefed on the history of the village's use of the field and the current state of the field and residents aspirations for it. A number of areas were raised for the PC to consider.
- The current positioning of the **goal-posts** was raised and the idea noted that the goal posts could be moved closer together to allow 5/7 football, possibly width-wise across the field to allow continued access for Longhoughton Primary School sports days without a goalpost positioned in the middle of the field.
 - The number of **grass-cuts** in the year was discussed and Cllr Phillips noted the request for increasing their frequency.
 - General discussion ensued about **zoning** the field – guerilla gardening was raised by one resident, although her suggestion was that this be undertaken with the full knowledge and support of the parish council by a group of residents – this might include raised beds or a sensory garden.

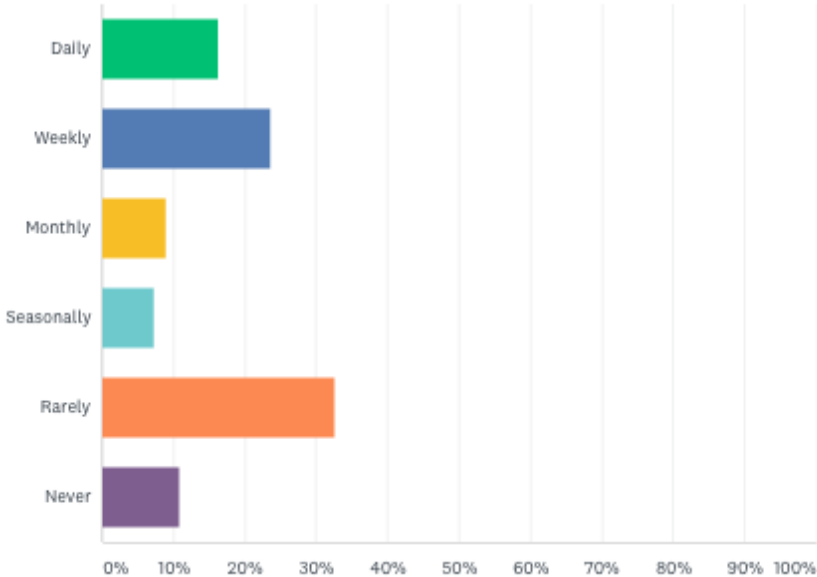
- **Dog fouling** was raised – the whole field is used by dog walkers currently. The majority of dog walkers are responsible and pick up after their dogs. However it just takes one act of dog fouling to spoil the enjoyment of children playing and it is a potential health hazard. One suggestion was to zone an area to the south of the field for dog exercise – this may be a fenced area as in many other recreation areas.
 - The possibility of placing **seating** in the field was also mooted for supervising parents and others.
 - The final area raised was **access** from Eastmoor which required further investigation given that Northumberland Estates had re-fenced the gap in the fence which was used by children to go to school and to play in the field and access the beach lane.
4. **Survey undertaken** – an online survey was undertaken by Cll Phillips week beginning 3 July – the consultation was advertised through posters, speaking with parents out of school and via social media. The survey was still underway at the 17 July parish council meeting with a view to finding being reported to the September meeting. Due to the survey being undertaken online and using a free service, the extrication of the data analysis was trickier than expected and it was agreed that the report would be tabled at the November meeting.
5. **Survey completion numbers** – the total number of villagers' responses was 55.
6. Survey Questions and outcomes – see below:

Q1

Customize Export

How often do you or your family use the football field?

Answered: 55 Skipped: 0



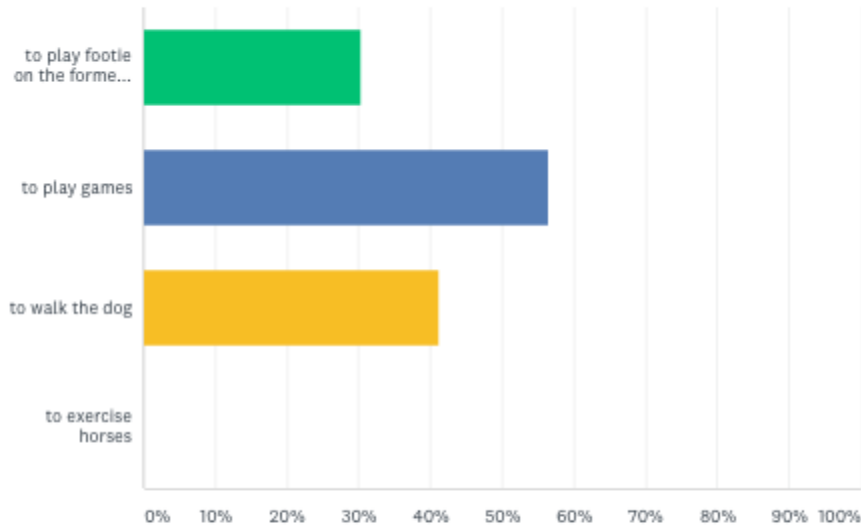
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ Daily	16.36% 9
▼ Weekly	23.64% 13
▼ Monthly	9.09% 5
▼ Seasonally	7.27% 4
▼ Rarely	32.73% 18
▼ Never	10.91% 6
TOTAL	55

Q2

Customize Export

For what purpose(s) do you or your family use the football field?

Answered: 46 Skipped: 9



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
to play footie on the former pitch	30.43% 14
to play games	56.52% 26
to walk the dog	41.30% 19
to exercise horses	0.00% 0
Total Respondents: 46	

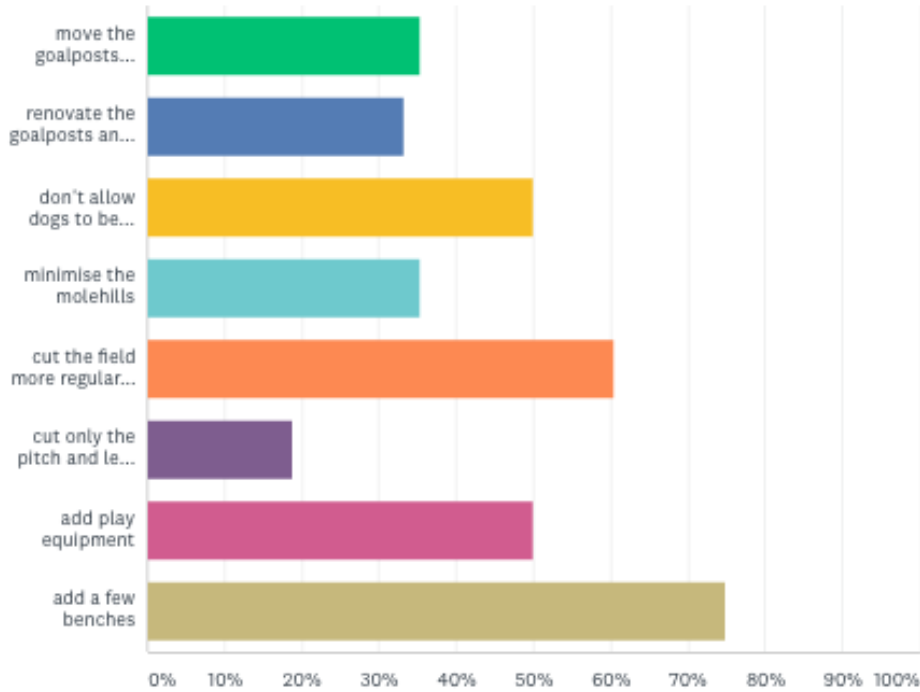
[Comments \(12\)](#)

Q3

Customize Export

What changes/improvements would you like to see in the football field?

Answered: 48 Skipped: 7



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ move the goalposts closer together, more in line with a 5 aside size	35.42% 17
▼ renovate the goalposts and make them safe	33.33% 16
▼ don't allow dogs to be exercised on the field to ensure children don't come into contact with dog excrement whilst playing	50.00% 24
▼ minimise the molehills	35.42% 17
▼ cut the field more regularly in the summer	60.42% 29
▼ cut only the pitch and leave an uncut area to grow wilder	18.75% 9
▼ add play equipment	50.00% 24
▼ add a few benches	75.00% 36
Total Respondents: 48	

[Comments \(21\)](#)

Q4

Please make any further comment or suggestion you may have.

- Answered: 17
- Skipped: 38

All typos from respondents have not been corrected below.

• a village fair?

7/20/2017 2:19 PM

There should be access from Eastfield - this would provide a safe walking route to the school and encourage more parents to leave their vehicles at home and create a safer and more considerate environment for people that live in the roads around the school Not completely opposed to play equipment and benches but their location within the field would be important. As not all residents use Facebook will the survey be circulated throughout the village?

7/13/2017 7:50 AM

We seem to be losing all the green areas to housing developments, lets try to keep this one safe.

7/10/2017 6:14 PM

It was great to access this from east moor offering a safe access for children without going near main road

7/10/2017 9:20 AM

How about a skate ramp for the older children ? There's plenty of play parks but not much as they get older

7/9/2017 10:27 PM

The kids really need a play park on the field. For children that live on the east side of the village it would mean not having to cross the main road. And with a walk way from the estates of Eastfield and Eastmore that make it even safer.

7/9/2017 9:44 PM

Re-open access between eastfield / eastmoor and the field to allow children to play and safer route to school

7/9/2017 6:44 PM

A natural play area, picnic benches - no dogs allowed, a meadow area where the grass is not cut to allow wildlife,

7/9/2017 2:29 PM

It's a great piece of recreational land which we absolutely must fight to retain as such. The suggestions already made which i have ticked on the survey are great but here are some additional thoughts: Utilise S106 monies (either the ones the PC currently holds from many yrs

ago or new ones from Chancel Place or combination of both) to provide play equipment and seating but ensure the play equipment reaches a wide age range and not only 3-9! Such as: zip wire type equipment as can be seen in Swarland and Embleton. As westfield park appears due largely to LHRFC and the original funding sources to be struggling to embrace other sports such as cricket nets, tennis courts Rugby. See Rock Cricket clubs small and very simple but functional pavillion)another potential source of income for PC to maintain the area too). Cramlington Rockets are looking for space and have money available for example. Alnwick Rugby Club have a growing Girls team who need training space. With the new housing i believe the village would undoubtedly benefit from improved facilities on the recreation field.
7/9/2017 1:53 PM

When my children were smaller they used it for football quite regularly.
7/9/2017 1:04 PM

There was a tennis court there when I was young : please don't let anymore houses be built here :the village is no longer a village it's ruined :(let's keep one part of the old happy place !
7/9/2017 12:58 PM

Is there any requirement for additional land and dual use of the site in support of the school now it has two more year classes? There are other edge of settlement sites with development potential around the village which a major landowner could seek to bring forward. Not all development is bad, after all many of the village residents live in houses which have been built in the last 20 years and these all contribute to the village and support its facilities, but the PC need to be switched on and get the best for the village out of any development opportunities as they arise.
7/9/2017 10:04 AM

The village needs something different for the kids. There's 3 play parks, lots of football space. With the exception of Westfield car park there is nowhere available to teach kids to cycle, scoot, skate with smooth tarmac. A skatepark, BMX area would be great for kids to be in a safe environment. It could be located nearer the road end and the other end could be a community garden/veg plot with benches and shaded areas. Perhaps even a pop up cafe location The space has so much potential, is easily accessed and has good views.
7/9/2017 8:50 AM

Obviously we have football facilities but they are often out of use to children who want to play a casual knockabout
7/9/2017 8:50 AM

Neglected for to long. It should of been the main place and never wasted the money on the new site. The tennis courts used to be tremendous.
7/9/2017 8:48 AM

The village has 3 parks and ample football areas, we need something different!!!!!!
7/9/2017 8:40 AM

Create better access.
7/9/2017 2:22 AM

7. Parish Council suggested response to above suggestions which require full council agreement:

Other sports/developments within the village

There are a number of comments made above which are based on lack of knowledge of recent developments such as the MUGA using Section 106 monies and grant funding and the recent development of children's rugby classes at Longhoughton Community & Sports Centre. Also a pop-up café is in the plans with LCSCT to develop a warm hub. Can we suggest the parish council make these news items a priority to share this information with the community in the first edition.

Develop it into a playpark for children on the east side of the village

There is already a small playpark in Cunningham Drive. At the time when Eastfield and Eastmoor estates were being built, the occupants expressed a view that they did not want a playpark next to their houses thus the reason the parish council is currently holding the Sect106 monies which is earmarked for the MUGA development – again, worth highlighting in the newsletter. Of course it is their prerogative to change their mind!

Add a skate ramp for older children

A possible site was earmarked to the north of the village on MOD ground about 3-4 years ago but permission could not be given for this to happen. Given that the decision has been taken to pursue a MUGA using the Section 106 monies it is unlikely that the parish council could fund such a project.

Use it for a village fair

There are more suitable places for a village fair e.g the village community centre where all the facilities for catering, toilets and car parking are situated. The field could be used for a smaller event such as kite flying competition, rounders etc and will continue to be used by the school for sporting activities.

Picnic benches and seating

Attracting youths late at night was one concern of neighbours. The positive aspect of the field is it's pitch dark at night so may well not attract the older children in the village to congregate preferring instead the Co-op or the community centre where there is light and shelter.

The field has an amazing view to the sea but only if the seating was placed on a raised area to see over the hedge e.g. nearer the rear school gate where it is banked - we feel this would significantly increase the chance of anyone wanting to go into the field solely to sit other than supervising children. The field as it is at the moment is attractive per se by the very nature of it being a very large open green field with established hedging, bushes and trees.

Picnic benches offer dual function, seating and eating.

Access from Eastmoor

Residents living in Eastmoor stated at an earlier parish council meeting that there could be no reopening of the fence to enable the children to access the field and rear schoolgate due to no right of way.

Zoning a dog area or dog ban

This consideration is linked to the re-organisation of the goalposts and the use of the space at the north end of the field which is usually left as longer grass. A complete dog ban would be for the parish council to consider further in the context of what is finally decided on a number of issues above.

Develop a meadow area

The most appropriate area for a wild meadow would be the north end of the field - however further consideration needs to be given dependent on decisions made on the other areas highlighted above.

8. Recommendations:

Establish a recreation field action group

The 55 respondents who took the time to make their views known in this consultation see the potential in the field to be developed further to meet the needs of more of the community.

We highly recommend we recruit some of those respondents and others to join a representation of parish councillors to develop an action plan based on the findings in the survey.

We also recommend that the parish council place this report on the website and advertise its existence in the usual social media pages and posters following the November parish

council meeting. This may well generate further villagers ideas or interest in joining any action group the parish council decides upon.

Cllrs Eleanor Phillips and Autumn Rabitts