

Results of Emsworth Skatepark Youth Consultation February 2005

Frances Jannaway

An overwhelming majority of young people who completed a skatepark questionnaire in February think it is a good idea to improve the skatepark facilities on the Horndean Road Recreation Ground.

A questionnaire was compiled by members of the skatepark task and finish team on the Emsworth Community Board as part of the youth consultation process for the Liveability Scheme funding of the proposed skatepark in Emsworth. In cooperation with the project officer at Havant Borough Council, one thousand questionnaires were copied and sent out to the following target groups: both local Primary Schools (only the upper 2 years), 6 Secondary Schools (in Havant, Southbourne and Chichester), 2 local Youth Clubs and approx. 320 residents (part of Horndean Road, Cold Harbour Farm Road and Spencer's Field).

Response rate

333 (209 male, 124 female) people filled in the forms giving a response rate of 33.3%. Boys between the ages of 10 and 14 accounted for the largest number of returned forms (73%) with 64% of all respondents living in Emsworth. However, only about 10% of those residents who were sent questionnaires responded.

Large YES vote for skatepark

When asked whether they thought it was a good idea to improve the skatepark facilities in Emsworth, an overwhelming 87% said "YES", and only 13% said "NO". At 76%, the largest number of people who said "YES" were in the 10-14 age group (both boys and girls). With a higher proportion of respondents in the older age groups saying "NO". It is interesting to note that quite a few young people thought a new skatepark was a good idea even though they indicated later in the questionnaire that they would not use it themselves.

Current level of wheeled activities

83% of young people responding to this questionnaire already take part in skateboarding, rollerblading and/or BMX riding and have their own equipment. Not surprisingly, quite a large number of girls prefer rollerblading to skateboarding or BMX riding. When asked how often they take part in these wheeled activities,

the frequency of use was fairly evenly split between occasional users (less than once a week), moderate users (once/twice a week) and frequent users (more than 3 times a week) - with far less girls being frequent users.

Places where wheeled activities are carried out

Skateboarding activities and other wheeled activities are carried out at a large variety of places, including other skateparks in the area such as Chichester, Hayling Island and Portsmouth, car parks, local parks, streets near home and anywhere. With Horndean Road Recreation Ground marginally coming out top for those who live in Emsworth.

New Emsworth Skatepark will almost certainly be well used

When asked how often they would use the new Emsworth skatepark, 30% said "weekends only", the rest being more or less evenly divided between "less than once a week" (15%), "weekly" (15%), "more than twice a week" (12%), "daily" (13%) and "never" (13%). This indicates that there could be as many as 30-40 users at peak times and probably more as the skatepark develops its own atmosphere.

Alternative youth facilities in Emsworth

A variety of suggestions were made for other youth facilities in Emsworth. The vast majority requested improved outdoor sports facilities, especially improvements to football pitches, basketball and tennis courts. A fair number requested improved indoor youth facilities such as a youth café. Other realistic suggestions were: climbing frames, assault courses and monkey bars.

What happens next?

Several skatepark contractors have been asked to come up with a design that is within the Community Board budget and meets the approval of the task and finish team. A small users group is being set up who will be involved in deciding the final design. Other factors like lighting, landscaping, seating and drainage are being dealt with by the Project Officer at Havant. Construction will take about 6-8 weeks and must be completed by the end of summer 2005.

News from Winchester

Councillor David Gillett

New Grant Scheme for Community projects

Last year, Hampshire County Council created a new Havant Area Committee, which consists of the County Councillors in the Borough of Havant. We have £100,000 a year to support small initiatives and schemes for community groups. Havant was chosen as one of two such pilots in the county and it is working very well. If you are involved in a community group and required some additional support for a one-off project then please contact me for an application form.

Support for Voluntary and Community Sector

Following a recent review of support for the Voluntary and Community Sector, a new website has been constructed which gives information about all grants to Voluntary and Community Organisations available at HCC. The website can be found at www.hants.gov.uk/grants. This area of support operates independently of the area committee grants mentioned above.

HCC launches Accredited Community Safety Officers scheme

In November, HCC launched the above scheme to help address concerns over community safety, the officers, known as ACSOs patrol the streets and issue warnings and advice to those they catch carrying out acts of anti-social behaviour. They now have the powers to issue fixed penalty notices of £50 for littering, graffiti, fly-posting, dog fouling and for offences that cause injury, alarm and distress to another person or damage property. They will also be confiscating alcohol and cigarettes from young people who are under the legal age.

Havant Borough is one of only four areas where these have been introduced. They are not there to replace the police but to try to deal with the low level nuisance that causes distress for so many residents. Initially based in Warren Park they will be operating across the Borough, including Emsworth.

Market Town Initiative

People cannot be blamed for being confused about the various attempts by local government as a whole to increasingly engage with residents. Havant Borough Council currently runs "Community Pulse", a panel of about 1,500 residents of all age groups across the Borough. The six Community Boards are delivering the Liveability projects and will eventually form the main consultative link for the Havant Community Partnership. Add to this, the Market Town Initiative, (Editor's note: see report on page 7 of the January 2005 issue of The EMS), and we have the potential for a tangled mess. Running parallel to all this, are two other consultations in tandem - the Regional Assembly's (SEERA) Regional Spatial Strategy - the South East's regional plan which replaces the old County Structure Plan, and the Havant Borough Council's Local Plan which will define development and land use up until 2011.

If we are not careful the two that have the most potential to clash are the Market Town Initiative and the Community Board. I have specifically asked for the work on the Market Town Initiative to take a back seat for a few months whilst the Community Boards complete the main thrusts of their work.

Neighbourhood Watch in Emsworth

Ray Drewett - Havant Neighbourhood Watch Association

Neighbourhood Watch is the largest voluntary organisation in the UK, with about 6 million households taking part in over 160,000 schemes. In Emsworth there are currently 83 schemes, with 1771 member households. That is about 42% coverage - considerably higher than the national average of 25%.

The aims of Neighbourhood Watch are to reduce crime and the fear of crime, and promote a sense of community. The reason that it is so popular is very simple - it works. Of course it does not guarantee a zero crime rate; no scheme could do that. What it does do is reduce crime by making members more aware of the risks and what to do to reduce them, and by fostering closer links with the Police. Many insurance companies offer a discount to Neighbourhood Watch members - claim statistics show that they are a much better risk, especially for burglary and car crime.

Another aim, to promote a sense of community, has a number of important facets. If you know your neighbours, you are more likely to recognise someone who should not be there. You are also more likely to know about vulnerable people in your vicinity and to offer them support. By talking to your neighbours regularly you are more likely to find out about a threat such as cold callers targeting the area.

Information is the key to effective policing, and Neighbourhood Watch members are more likely to report crime and suspicious behaviour to the Police. In return, the Police pass information to members to give them a better understanding of crime in the area, and to keep them alert to the risks. This is achieved using newsletters, telephone, and email.

Another important means of communication with the Police is through their local surgery, which is run by our beat officer, PC Nick Humphreys. He is available on the first Wednesday each month, 11am to 12noon, in the Pastoral Centre in the Square. Nick is very active on our behalf and is always keen to hear about any crime-related matters which are of concern to residents. If you cannot make the surgery, then leave a message for him and he will contact you. Just ring 08450-454545 and ask for the Force Enquiry Centre.

Running a Neighbourhood Watch scheme is neither onerous nor time-consuming, so if you are not currently in a scheme and would like to find out more, please leave a message on 023-9289-9061. Someone will contact you within a few days.



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