

COYCHURCH LOWER COMMUNITY COUNCIL

RESULTS OF THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION

February – March 2024

COYCHURCH PLAYING FIELD DEVELOPMENT

1. Background

This consultation was the third such exercise to canvas the views of the residents of Coychurch as to the future of the Coychurch Playing Field.

The first consultation in April / May 2021 was concerned with the future of the field under the Community Asset Transfer process. In this the residents voted (82.5% of the returns) with a return rate of 44.6%, for the Coychurch Lower Community Council to apply for the CAT and manage the field going forward. As a result of this outcome, the Coychurch Lower CC put a proposal together and submitted it to Bridgend County Borough Council's CAT committee. This consultation also gathered data about what residents would like to see / do in the field and this was incorporated into the concept design presented in the 2nd consultation.

The second consultation in October 2022 was designed to gather residents' views on what they would like to see in the field and the possibility of changing the use of the field to provide benefit for residents of all ages in the community. Bridgend County Borough Council's Local Places for Nature team had proposed the development of a nature, leisure and learning space in the field. The concept plan was put to residents and again, a majority of the returns were in favour of the idea.

As the research and fact gathering took quite a time the CAT Committee having agreed the plan in principle, asked that we reconfirm the residents' view while making it plain that there would not be room for a full-sized football pitch. This we did, both on the plan and in the specific question (number 3) in the consultation document.

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2. Results

It is generally considered a good result to have a 10% return of public questionnaires, and though the return percentage this time was not as high as the first consultation they do represent a cross section of the views of residents in Coychurch. The return rate was 20%

Question 3: Do you agree, in general, with the landscape plan for the field? (Please note that this does not include a full-sized football pitch.)

In favour of the BCBC Local Places for Nature Plan – 84% of returns, against the plan – 15%

Question 1: Do you prefer the modular pavilion? Yes, 15%

Question 2: Do you prefer the log cabin? Yes, 78%

Question 4: Items to add (not including items that are already on the plan)

45% of responders replied with ideas for items to add which included such things as:

- a drinking water fountain,
- a boules area,
- a 400m running track around the field,
- further seating/tables,
- bicycle rack(s) in the parking area,
- disabled parking,
- more litter and dog waste bins, etc.

The community council will be including some of these in the project going forward.

Questions 5: Items to remove or relocate

29% of responders identified items that could be removed or replaced, such as:

- the 60m track,
- Area 5 on the map,
- pond by the entrance.
- planting berry shrubs rather than fruit trees.

Others suggested that the 5-a-side pitch be moved to the west end of the field. This will be investigated with the landscape architect.

A few others wanted restrictions placed on who could use the field, such as no dogs, no cycling.

The community council will take some of these up with the LPfN team as they may affect the ability of the planned layout to help prevent surface water overspill into the gardens in Park View.

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3. Questions

As with the previous consultations there were some general questions raised. These covered the following:

Dogs.

There is no intention to ban dog walkers from the field though some areas will be fenced initially to allow planting to become established. At this time there are no plans to establish a separate area for dogs. Further dog bins will be installed and dog walkers will be asked to act responsibly and put the dog poo in bags in the bins.

Water Safety.

The ponds on the plan are sited to contain the excess rainwater within the field with the necessary raised ground levels along the Park View boundary to direct the water into the wet areas rather than to allow it to continue to run off into residents' gardens.

The required safety measures will be put in place around the ponds.

Gates.

Residents' requested gates at the pedestrian access points to secure the area for dogs and small children.

There is history of misuse of the field when the vehicle gate has been unlocked so arrangements will need to be made to secure the gate at night.

4. Summary

During this nearly 3-year process, Coychurch Lower Community Council have sought and acted on the views of the residents of Coychurch Lower. The Community Council has as its goal to provide as many of the facilities requested in the second consultation as are feasible and affordable. The council has also taken on board safety and security concerns expressed during this consultation and will do all it can to address these issues.

The Community Council is aware that some children in the village play sport nearby in Brackla so has not prioritised a regulation sized football pitch above providing a space for whole families and adults of all ages to exercise in and enjoy. This area will complement the playground in the middle of the village which was designed for children up to 14 years old.

It is our understanding that the BCBC Local Places for Nature works will begin in September/October 2024 and the planting should be completed by the Spring of 2025. Following the completion of the groundworks the best site for the 5-a-side size pitch will be identified.

In conclusion, the community council would like to thank all those who have taken part in the consultations and helped to form the plans for the future of the field.