

JUNIOR PLAY AREA FOR EASTFIELD PARK
Consultation Report – November 2015

1. Consultation in 2011/2012

Informal and formal consultations were carried out by the Friends of Eastfield Park (FoEP) during 2011 and 2012 concerning possible developments to Eastfield Park. During the informal consultations members of the public attending events organised by the FoEP were invited to list improvements they would like to see in the Park. Their ideas (Appendix I) were added to a list of ideas already being considered by the FoEP and this list formed the basis for the formal consultation during 2012.

The formal consultation in 2012 took the form of a questionnaire (Appendix II) that people were invited to complete at the FoEP AGM and subsequent meetings of the local Residents Associations. A version was also made available through the FoEP website. In addition to the open ended question, “What would make you want to visit Eastfield Park more often?” people were presented with a list of possible developments and asked which should have the highest priority, which should be favourably considered and which should not be considered.

Only 26 completed questionnaires were returned, some residents complaining that the survey served no useful purpose and that its results would be ignored! Nevertheless, the results obtained (Appendix III) showed a clear preference for improving the drainage within the Park, followed by the provision of cross-park pathways (North to South and East to West) and play equipment particularly for the 3 to 7 age group but also for those aged 8 to 13. These suggestions all had a high degree of support with no detractors. Other suggestions (sports facilities, a graffiti wall, park art and a car park) had some support but also some opposition.

Consequently, the FoEP requested NBC to use S106 funds to improve the Park’s drainage and, when this was rejected by the S106 Committee as not providing sufficient benefit in relation to costs, to construct a north-south cross-park pathway from Eastfield to Lakeview. This request was accepted and the pathway (Mallard Walk) was completed in the first part of 2014 (following further consultation by NBC assisted by the FoEP).

The FoEP Committee were then considering requesting the creation of an east-west cross-park pathway but instead gave priority to the construction of a junior play area following a request from local MP, Michael Ellis, who had received letters from constituents requesting greater play provision in the area.

The play area, additional pathways and various other developments were included in the five-year Management Plan for Eastfield Park produced by the Eastfield Park Management Committee. This Plan was presented to the public at the FoEP AGM in February, 2015, and made available on-line and in local libraries. Comments from the public were invited and an undertaking given that all major developments would be subject to further consultation.

2. Consultation in 2015 - Phase 1

The first phase of the 2015 consultation began at the FoEP’s AGM on Monday 16th February. Preceding the AGM, Dr Vic Smith who chairs both the FoEP and the Eastfield Park Management Committee, gave a talk (*Eastfield Park: The Future*) in which he presented an outline of the draft

Management Plan for the Park. The Plan, among many other things, includes the proposal for a new children's play area within the Park.

Hard copies of the Plan's five-year objectives were given out to those attending the talk and people were invited to read the full Management Plan and submit comments about it to the FoEP or EPMC via the Internet or by regular mail.

Printed copies of the full draft Plan were made available in the Abington, Weston Favell and Town Centre Libraries, during normal library opening hours, and at the St Alban's Church Drop-in on Friday mornings. People could submit comments online using the 'Contact' page on the FoEP website or by writing to the EPMC c/o NBC at the Guildhall. The draft could also be down-loaded from the 'Welcome' or 'Downloads' pages of the FoEP website: www.foep.eastfieldward.co.uk.

People were informed that comments received before 17th March would be reflected in the final version of the Plan. Further periods of consultation about play equipment and possible new pathways had already been incorporated into the Plan.

The talk had been advertised on-line through the FoEP and NBC websites and the FoEP Facebook page, and in print in the *Chronicle and Echo* and the *In & Around NN3 (Parklands, Boothville & Westone)* community magazine. The Chronicle & Echo included information about the talk on two consecutive weeks, first with just a short insert containing basic information but then following up with a 400 word article accompanied by a colour map of the Park taken from the Management Plan (www.northamptonchron.co.uk/news/local/public-meeting-to-launch-plans-for-play-equipment-in-northampton-park-1-6551304).

Flyers advertising the talk were delivered to newly built houses in the Eastfield area and given out from a stand in the entrance to Morrison's supermarket on the Kettering Road for several hours on Thursday 12th February.

In view of all this publicity the public response was rather disappointing. Only 24 people attended the talk although a few others called in to see a display about the Park and the Management Plan that was on show before the talk. Apart from very general comments and comments from FoEP Committee members, only one realistic and specific comment was received about the Management Plan.

Phase 1 Results

Claire Walton commented via Facebook: *"Will you be considering some disabled access equipment for the disabled children around Northampton? An accessible roundabout or swing for example? So far the disabled children around Northampton are denied the access to inclusive play with their peers."*

Although this idea was not mentioned specifically when play equipment was first discussed, it has always been a priority of Friends of Eastfield Park to open up the Park to disabled people. This is one of the reasons why the FoEP wanted more all-weather pathways in the Park and why in 2013 they supported the Phoenix Wheelchair Basketball Club at their Easter@Eastfield event. It is therefore a priority when planning and seeking funding for the children's play area to take this suggestion into account and incorporate one or more pieces of equipment specifically for disabled children. Other equipment should also, as far as possible, be 'disability-friendly'.

3. Consultation in 2015: Phase 2

Phase 2 consisted of a questionnaire (Appendix IV) that was circulated at the 'Eastfield Celebrates' event on July 4, 2015, and subsequently made available through the FoEP website. The questionnaire was first tested at the St Alban's Church Women's Fellowship on June 30 and found to be suitable for purpose. The version available through the FoEP website asked exactly the same questions as the paper version but was not available to mobile phone users. A Survey-monkey questionnaire was therefore created but, to save cost, had to be shorter than the paper questionnaire. Nevertheless, this questionnaire covered the same ground as the earlier versions and was available for use with tablets and mobile phones.

The surveys were kept open until the end of October although most responses were received during July and August.

Phase 2 Results

A total of 49 paper questionnaires were returned, 5 at the St Alban's Women's Fellowship, 43 at the 'Eastfield Celebrates' event, and 1 subsequently. Eighteen people submitted the on-line version of the questionnaire via the FoEP website (but one was excluded because of duplication) and 32 completed the Survey-Monkey questionnaire - a total of 98 response. The distribution of respondents' postcodes (where provided) is shown in Figure 1 below.

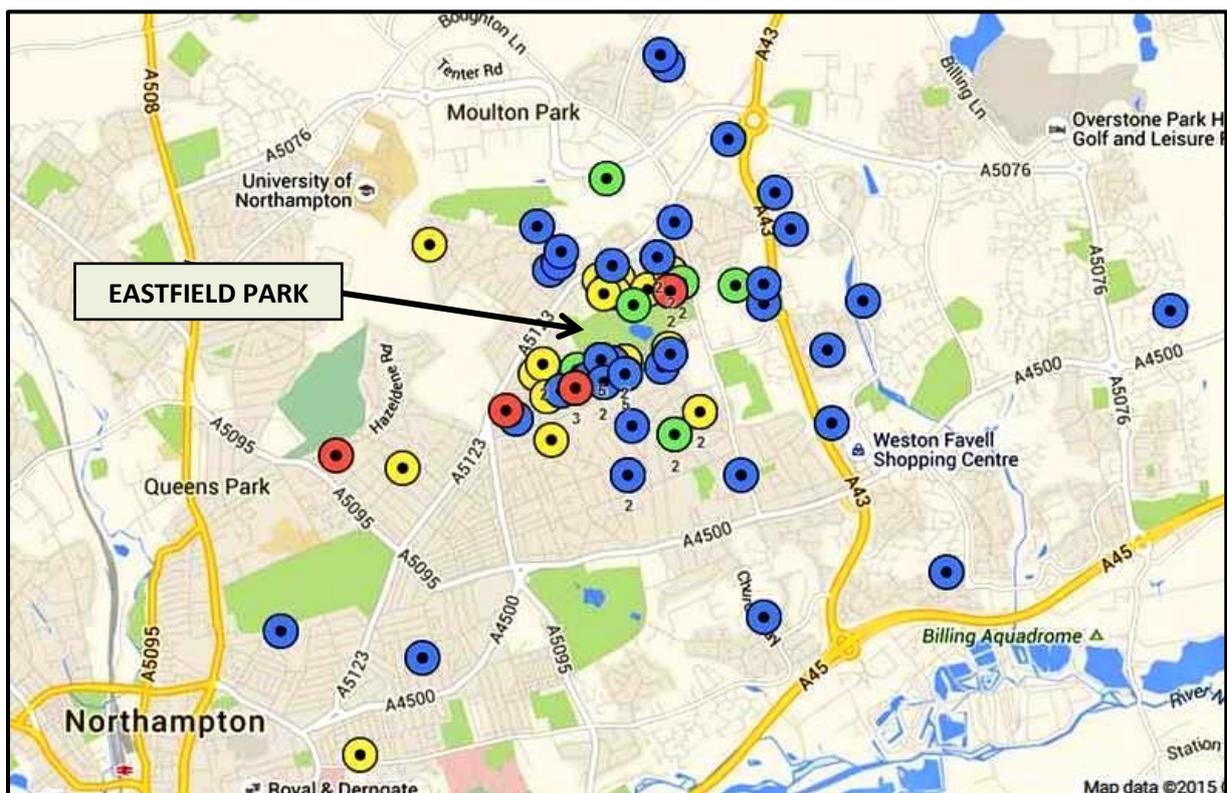


Fig 1. Distribution of respondents' postcodes (where given). Red circles: St Alban's Women's Fellowship; Blue circles: Eastfield Celebrates; Green circles: On-line via FoEP website; Yellow circles: On-line via SurveyMonkey. (Numbers refer to multiple responses from same postcode; some markers may be obscured by other markers in the Lakeview & Eastfield areas.)

Visit this link for a scalable map: <https://batchgeo.com/map/f29eef638fb80bd8ce78fb41ede5e659>

The vast majority of respondents thought that the play area was a good idea and that the suggested location was suitable (Table 1). The majority also agreed that the play area should be fenced and that 3-8 years was a suitable age range. However, those who did not agree with the suggested age range all suggested a wider range such as 3 to 12. The FoEP considered that the range could be extended without compromising the benefits for younger children. It is significant that the majority of respondents said that they would visit the Park more often if it had a children's play area.

Table1: The play area concept	Percentage of all respondents who answered 'Yes'	
	Paper and Website	Survey Monkey
Is play area a good idea for Eastfield Park?	99	97
Is it location good (off Mallard Walk between Lake & Greenside)?	94	
Should area be fenced?	89	84
Is 3-8 correct age range?	77	74
Would you visit Park more often if play area was there?	62	76

The scores given to the various items of play equipment (Question 5) were adjusted (-2 to +2) so that negative scores indicated a preference against, and positive scores a preference for, a particular type of equipment, with zero representing 'uncertain'. Very few negative scores were given and mean scores for all items (Table 2) were positive. The rank order of the scores is shown in Table 3.

Table 2: Weighted scores for different play items from -2 (definitely not) to +2 (definitely, yes) through zero (uncertain). The closer to 2.00, the more positive the response.	Weighted Score	
	Paper and Website	Survey Monkey
Adventure Trail / Balance Walk	1.28	1.38
Seesaw / Rocker	1.26	1.16
Climbing Frame	1.26	1.07
Slide(s)	1.60	1.52
Roundabout	1.37	1.39
Swing(s)	1.76	1.71

Table 3: Rank orders of weighted scores for different play items	Rank Order of Score	
	Paper and Website	Survey Monkey
Adventure Trail / Balance Walk	4th	4th
Seesaw / Rocker	5th=	5th
Climbing Frame	5th=	6th
Slide(s)	2nd	2nd
Roundabout	3rd	3rd
Swing(s)	1st	1st

All items had some degree of support from respondents but swings were the most popular in both surveys, with slides second and roundabouts third. Although the full results were not available until November, sufficient results were in by the beginning of August to send to NBC for incorporation into the brief for quotations for the Play Area.

Over 75% of respondents thought it was slightly or very important that the play area should blend in with the natural setting of the park (Table 4). For this reason the FoEP recommends that, if possible, the equipment should be painted in subdued colours: greens and browns, rather than reds and yellows. Additionally, it is intended that the play area should be surrounded by a narrow garden including wild flowers closest to the lake and sensory plants (plants that stimulate children’s sense of smell, touch and vision) nearest Mallard Walk. Bee and butterfly friendly plants will be planted in that part of the garden facing away from the lake and path.

Table 4: How important do you think it is that the equipment blends in with the natural setting of the Park?	% giving particular answer	
	Paper and Website	Survey Monkey
No answer	12%	3%
Unimportant	11%	22%
Slightly important	27%	31%
Very important	50%	44%

A breakdown of respondents by age group is presented in Table 5. Although the majority of replies came from middle aged people, some children responded to the Survey Monkey questionnaire and a few folk over 80 submitted paper returns. (This information will be useful to the FoEP when preparing future consultations.)

Table 5: To which age group do you belong?	% of those answering in age group	
	Paper and Website	Survey Monkey
5-12 yrs	0	7
13-17 yrs	8	17
18-29 yrs	9	7
30-49 yrs	32	55
50-65 yrs	11	7
66-80 yrs	14	7
80+ yrs	5	0
% who did not answer question	23	10

Other data collected from the questionnaires are not presented here in detail but, as expected, the majority of respondents were parents or grandparents of teenagers or younger children. However, around 20% were not in one of these categories and did not take care of other people’s children. This group were, nevertheless, with one exception, supportive of the play area.

Other comments received have been kept on record for future use.

Police consultation

Before detailed consultation with the general public, the FoEP Chair discussed the proposed site for the play area with other members of the FoEP Committee, Councillors, Park Rangers and, most importantly, Sharon Henley, the Crime Prevention Design Adviser for the Northamptonshire Police (Covering Northampton, South Northants and Daventry District).

Ms Henley visited Eastfield Park on 20th February, 2015, and walked round it with the FoEP Chair discussing a number of issues in addition to examining the proposed site for the play area. Following the visit she wrote:

“Thank you for taking the time to show me the delights of Eastfield Park which was a lot more interesting than I had thought. This is to confirm that I am in agreement with the proposed location for the children’s play equipment and consider the location to be well overlooked, at a suitable distance from the nearest houses to reduce noise nuisance and conveniently situated close to the path to enable pushchairs and wheelchairs easy access. I would consider it sensible to have the equipment fenced to reduce the potential nuisance associated with dog fouling especially as the children using the area may well be crawling.”

“I would welcome an input into the choice of equipment for the new play area so that opportunities for damage and vandalism can be reduced.”

Here it should be mentioned that the issue concerning dogs relates to more than the problem of fouling. Some members of the public are in the habit of letting their dogs run free in the Park and there have been instances where free dogs have attacked and even killed dogs being walked on leads. Having the play area fenced considerably reduces the chance of children being attacked by dogs running free in the Park.

There is also an on-going issue of people riding motorbikes across the Park. Hopefully, a fence will deter them from entering the play area.

Unfortunately, providing a fence increases the overall cost of the play area but the FoEP considers one to be essential considering the issues mentioned above.

Appendix I: Ideas for improving Eastfield Park (2011-2012)

Friends of Eastfield Park

WHAT WOULD MAKE YOU VISIT EASTFIELD PARK MORE OFTEN?

Some suggestions received so far.

Needs cleaning in the woods - cans, bottles, rubbish

**MORE SUN,
MORE SEATS**

Footpath from Honister to Skiddaw

Tarmac paths for walking, running, jogging

Play area for younger children as at Stanwick Lakes; Paths across the park - Honister to Skiddaw + Booth Lane to Apple Tree Walk

Younger children's play area; Footpaths

Somewhere to sit

Less rubbish; dog bin at south end of lake

Fewer louts about

If I felt safe

PCSO regular patrol

Hardcore path to lake

More seating

**Events put on by RA
(Like this one?)**

Appendix II: The 2012 Questionnaire



Friends of Eastfield Park

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARK USERS & WOULD-BE USERS (2012)

1. Name:..... 2. Phone no. (optional):

Email address (optional):

3. Do you live in the NBC Eastfield Ward?
(Underline most appropriate answer)

- Yes, on the Eastfield Estate
- Yes, in the Lakeview area
- Yes, elsewhere in the ward
- No, but in a neighbouring area
- No, elsewhere in Northampton
- No, I do not live in Northampton

4. How often do you visit Eastfield Park?
(Underline most appropriate answer)

- Most days
- Most weeks
- Less than once a week, more than once a month
- Less than once a month, more than once a year
- Less than once a year
- Never

5. What would make you want to visit Eastfield Park more often?

6. Which of the following suggestions should have the highest priority? (NB! Underline only one!)

1. More play equipment (8-13 year olds)
2. More play equipment (3-7 year olds)
3. More sports facilities for teenagers and adults
4. A graffiti wall which can be decorated by local artists
5. A hard surface path across the park from the Eastfield Estate to Lakeview
6. A hard surface path across the park from Booth Lane to Apple Tree Walk (Kettering Rd. end)
7. Better drainage of the wetter parts of the park
8. Park art - modern sculptures and other vandal-proof art work
9. A small hard surface car park built on part of the park near Booth Lane
10. None of the above! (Make your own suggestions in the box below).

7. Which other ideas on the above list should be favourably considered?
(Enter just the number/s)

8. Which ideas on the above list, if any, should not be considered?
(Enter just the number/s)

9. Do you have any comments about the suggestions above?
e.g. the type of play equipment you would like to see installed

10. What other ideas do you have for improving the park?

If you prefer you can complete this questionnaire on-line at www.foep.eastfieldward.co.uk

Completed forms may be handed to a committee member or posted to FoEP, 17 Debdale Rd., Northampton NN3 2TR

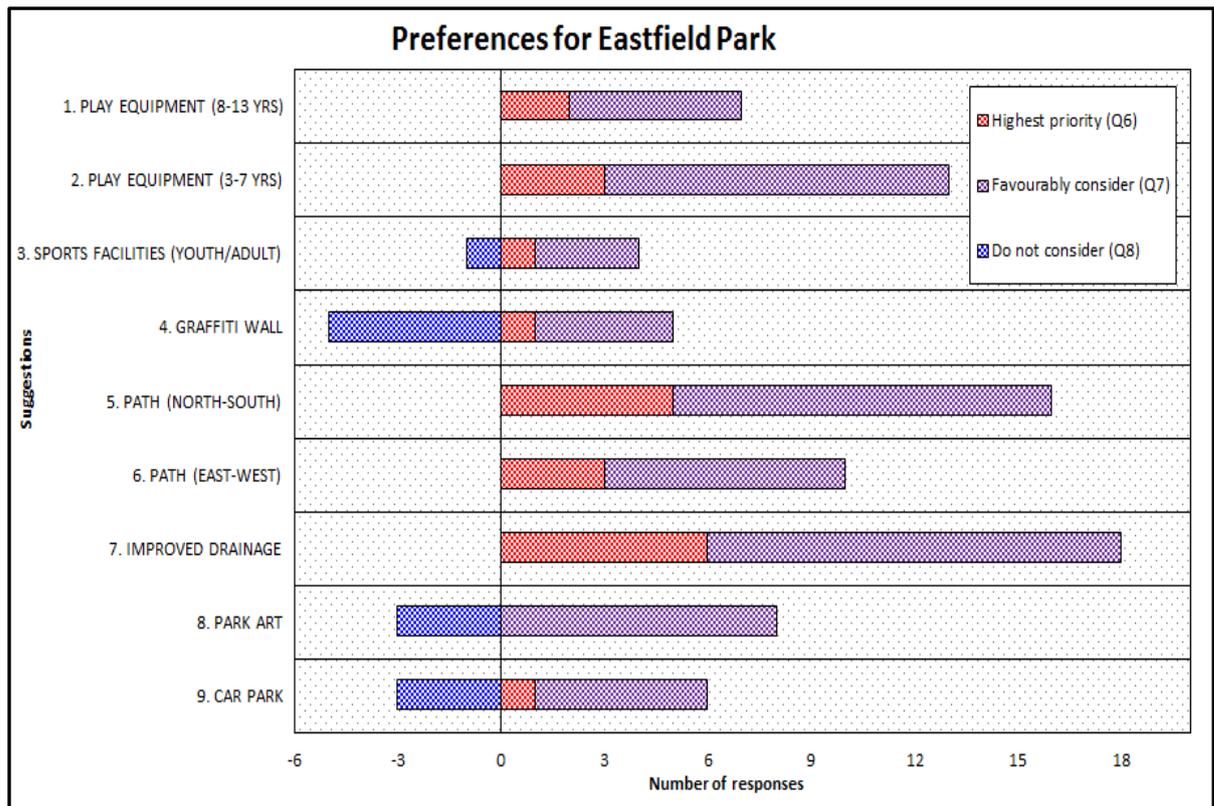
Appendix III – Results of the 2012 Consultation

Friends of Eastfield Park

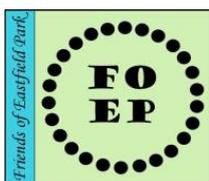
Questionnaire – 2012

WHICH SUGGESTIONS SHOULD HAVE THE HIGHEST PRIORITY / BE FAVOURABLY CONSIDERED / NOT BE CONSIDERED?

Summary of responses received (September, 2012)



Appendix IV: The 2015 Play Area Questionnaire



The Friends of Eastfield Park are hoping to secure funds to create a fenced Play Area for younger children (3 to 8 years) on the Park close to the new cross-park pathway (Mallard Walk) between the Lake and Greenside. It will help us considerably if we have public opinions regarding this endeavour. Please complete the following questionnaire whether or not you think the play area is a good idea. Alternatively, complete the form on-line at: <http://foep.eastfieldward.co.uk/#/play-area-survey-2015/4589938399>, or, for a mobile phone or tablet, <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2Q3J972>

*** Please circle as appropriate**

1	Do you think it a good idea to create a play area for younger children on Eastfield Park?			Yes* / No*
	If you answered 'No' please give a reason (or reasons) and then go to the questions on the other side of the form. (If you answered 'Yes' please continue with the questions below)			
2	Do you think a good location for the play area would be close to Mallard Walk between the Lake and Greenside?			Yes* / No*
	If you answered 'No' please say where you think it should be.			
3	Do you think the play area should be fenced?			Yes* / No*
4	Do you think that 3-8 yrs old is the correct age range?			Yes* / No*
	If you answered 'No' to Q4 please state the age range you prefer:			
5	What kind of equipment would you like to see installed? Rank 1 to 5, where 5 = 'yes, definitely', 3 = 'uncertain' and 1 = 'definitely not'			
	Adventure trail /Balance walk	* 1 2 3 4 5	Seesaw /Rocker	* 1 2 3 4 5
	Climbing frame	* 1 2 3 4 5	Slide	* 1 2 3 4 5
	Roundabout	* 1 2 3 4 5	Swings	* 1 2 3 4 5
	Other (please specify):			
6	How important do you think it is that, as far as possible, the equipment blends in with the natural setting of the Park?			
	Unimportant*	Slightly important*	Very important*	

Appendix IV: The 2015 Play Area Questionnaire cont.

Statistical Information

Please provide some information about yourself solely for statistical purposes.

All questions are optional but the answers help us to have a picture of the people who have responded to the questionnaire.

* Please circle as appropriate

Age	5-12*	13-17*	18-29*	30-49*	50-65*	66-80*	80+*
Do you have children aged from 13 to 17 inclusive?						Yes* / No*	
Do you have children aged 12 or under?						Yes* / No*	
Are you a grandparent who looks after children under 13?						Yes* / No*	
Do you regularly look after other people's children under 13?						Yes* / No*	
Are you a single parent?						Yes* / No*	
Please give your postcode (used only to see how close you live to the Park)							
Please give a rough estimate of how many times in a month you might visit Eastfield Park during summer.							
Would you visit the Park more frequently if there was a play area for children in the 3 to 8 age bracket?						Yes* / No*	
What else might we do that would make the Park more attractive to you?							

Optional Contact Information

Please provide contact information if you wish to receive regular information from the Friends of Eastfield Park:

Name:	
Email:	
Address:	
Phone:	