

Summary of the 'Open Spaces Survey' Results (October 2020)

During October 2020 a survey was conducted to determine the improvements that the people of Fordingbridge wish to see within the town and to set additional targets for the council. The feedback from this survey, to which there were 430 respondents, and a meeting held by Fordingbridge Town Council (FTC) on the 29th November has highlighted several points of importance: the addition/repair of benches and the number of bins in the town, access to streams and rivers, maintenance of overgrown hedges, trees and pathways, parking, lighting, concerns about the road in the High Street, as well as points about Bishops Pond, Roundhill, the new open area by Whitsbury Road and the Trailway; the following is summary of each of these points and how FTC believe we should approach each of them.

Benches

. These are the areas in which the survey has highlighted a need for additional benches:

- The Recreation Ground (preferably a picnic bench)
- Packham Hill (halfway up)
- Allen Water Drive open space (by the railway bridge)
- Waverley Close open space
- Parsonage Park (preferably 2 additional benches, including a picnic bench)
- Allen Water Drive enclosed area (preferably 2 additional benches, including a picnic bench)
- Sweatford Water Meadow

Additional Bins

The survey has emphasised the need for additional bins in the following areas:

- Outside of Burgate School
- The passageway between Burgate and Pennys Lane
- Ashford Road (although it was difficult to find a location to site)

Access to the Stream/River

The survey has highlighted a need for better access to the town's streams and rivers:

- Parsonage Park – this area is in a very poor and overgrown condition
- Recreation Ground Jetty – this area is overgrown with nettles; will need to be cleared to meet Health & Safety standards
- Sweatford Water Meadow -

Overgrown Hedges on the Towns Footways

Unfortunately, no one has specified where this is occurring, so it is down to us to keep our eyes open, speak to the public, and report overgrown hedges to the office.

The SANG Whitsbury Road Open Space

A request was made for spring closures to be put on all gates Very overgrown during the summer.

Trees

The results of the survey implied that residents of the town would like to see more trees planted.

Footpaths (Public Right of Way)

The survey highlighted concerns with the footpaths in the following areas:

- Avon Valley Footpath
- Falconwood

Footways around the Town

The survey has highlighted that a number of people feel very unsafe whilst walking on the footways around the town.

Parking

Possible traffic measures were discussed during the meeting, including the possibility of making a clearway from Parsonage Park Drive to Normandy Way and concerns about the entrance to Roundhill. This was due to the parking at the end of Normandy Way and the entrance to Roundhill is considered to be dangerous for both pedestrians and motorists.

Lighting

The results of the survey have identified certain areas where respondents believed that lighting needs to be improved:

- Station Road – trees from the back gardens of Victoria Road are surrounding the streetlights
- Footway between Parsonage Park to Sweatford Water Meadow – overgrown trees belonging to NFDC
- Footpath from Sweatford Water Meadow to Meadow Avenue – overgrown trees belonging to a private house
- Waverley Road – overgrown hedges and trees belonging to a few houses
- Station Road – seems to come up a lot, there does not seem to be enough lights

Heavy Lorries in the High Street (condition of the roads in general)

During the meeting a 20MPH speed limit in the high street was discussed, as well as a weight restriction. Traffic around Fordingbridge with new developments

Bishops Pond

During the meeting different opinions on lining the pond completely, or possibly just half of it, were discussed

Roundhill Concerns

Concerns about traffic and the general speed limit at Roundhill have been raised. Signage here has also been discussed, and it was suggested that we just need one sign here that tells drivers that there are pedestrians.

Whitsbury Road New Open Area (Site of Alternative Natural Greenspace)

There has been a request for spring catches on all the gates and concerns have been raised that this area has become very overgrown this summer.

The Trailway

During the meeting, it was discussed that the trailway should be 3 metres in width with the possibility of having gym equipment placed along the trailway, and it was felt that the trailway would join the north of the town to the south.

It was also felt that land should be given and funding should be provided by developers. As NFDC is against the Northern Relief Road, it was discussed that they may contribute towards the trailway instead. This would encourage walking and reduce car journeys

The results of the survey confirm that a large number of residents are in favour of The Trailway (82% of respondents agree with the construction of the proposed trailway), however there are some concerns, such as the behaviour of cyclists and the loss of privacy in Avonmeade.

Additional Wish List

During the meeting, Open Air Gym Equipment was discussed, although no specific locations were decided (possibly at Allen Water Drive along the Trailway), as well as the possibility of smaller play areas which could include gym equipment for new developments; funding could possibly be obtained through CIL.

Conclusions

FTC needs to provide a better means for residents to inform us of concerns. Maybe we should have a specific link on our website or Facebook messenger. Walking environment should perhaps be an issue on an agenda at present we only have footpaths as an agenda item. Could this be broadened? Do we need the lengths man to tidy up more pavements? Could we ask our ground staff to note any pavement issues when they inspect benches around the town? Councillors should discuss this.

We as a town council have the closest link to the community. As such we are best placed to contribute to the long term vision and the priorities of New Forest District Council and Hampshire County Council. Throughout our community there is a considerable amount of dissatisfaction with the condition of pavements and roads. FTC have tried to encourage our residents to report defects directly to the relevant authority online. There is too much confusion about which council to report to and people seem reluctant to report problems. Especially problems with pavements. FTC need to develop a more productive and responsive relationship with both the principle authorities. FTC need to arrange a meeting with the representatives of the two other councils to find a way forward

Review

FTC should review this before the Annual Town Assembly and report to that meeting