

## **Resident Views on possible improvements to the Heathpark Estate Honiton.**

In May 2009, a questionnaire was sent out to all residents living in the Heathpark area of Honiton. 21 replies were returned providing their views and opinions on proposed improvements for the estate. 74% of the residents had at least one child aged sixteen or under living in the household, with 37% of households having three or more children in this age group.

Residents were asked their opinions about living on the estate and possible improvements that could be implemented. The bolded areas detail the questions that were asked and the responses received.

<b>Do you feel that changes need to be made to the estate?</b>	
Yes 84%	No 16%

The response show that is a strong feeling that that changes needs to be made with over eight out of ten residents in favour of this.

When asked to comment on what sort of changes were needed, comments included:

- Better park for children
- Better cleaning – litter/broken glass/dog mess/graffiti
- Maintenance – eg pot holes in grassed areas
- Make it more child friendly
- More space for parking
- Need for garages
- Seating areas
- Signposting
- Communal area to dispose of rubbish
- More for kids to do

<b>Would you like to see more trees and plants throughout the estate?</b>	
Yes 53%	No 47%

The responses indicate that the need for more plants and trees is not particularly important to residents. However it may be that previous experience has shown that new shrubbery gets vandalised, with the concern being that this would happen again, so planting more trees and plants would be a waste of money.

Those who stated they would like to see more trees and plants were asked where they would like to see them planted. Suggestions made were:

- Anywhere there is space
- At borders where they won't be in the way of children
- At entrances of roads – having tall baskets
- Car park by nursery St Pauls

**Would you like to see a communal garden or allotment on the estate?**

Yes 47%

No 53%

The suggestion of a communal garden or allotment on the estate was again not particularly popular with over half of residents stated they didn't want it. Those who did were asked where it should be. Suggestions were:

- Between large play area/basket ball court and back of no's 11-20
- Anywhere there is good ground
- Only if there is waste ground and if it going to be looked after properly (ie if enough people are interested).
- Somewhere down around St Leonards Rd

The question also prompted responses that while not addressing the question of location, did show why it only recieved 47% approval. There were:

- Communal gardens for adults and kids like Manor Gardens in Sidmouth
- Feel it would suffer damage by children
- A lot of people do not tend their own gardens now
- Who would look after or manage it
- Would be a waste of money

**If a communal garden or allotment is provided would be interested in maintaining it?**

Yes 47%

No 53%

Less than half of residents would be prepared to maintain a communal garden or allotment.

**Do you feel that the estate needs a safe play area for young, pre school children?**

Yes 85%

No 15%

Over four out of five residents felt that the estate needed a safe area for pre-school children. They were then asked where the area should be. Areas identified were:

- Adjacent to community flats
- Beside 38 St Pauls and nursery
- Grassed area by St Pauls community flat
- Next to homework club
- The park in St Leonards Rd

Those opposed to the scheme took the opportunity to argue that there were already two adequate play areas, and would the children use it or be happy to continue playing on the street.

**Do you agree with suggestion for a patio outside the Community Flat?**

Yes 53%

No 47%

Nearly half of the responding residents were opposed to the suggestion of a patio outside the Community Flat. Reasons for this were:

- Waste of money – used by few paid for by all
- This could provide the extra parking desperately needed
- See no benefit to a patio and how it would benefit the estate
- No one else would use it except St Pauls residents

**Do you agree with suggestion for grassy area in front of St Mark's play area to be improved and fenced to allow ball games to be played there safely?**

Yes 75%

No 25%

Three out of four responding residents were in favour of this suggestion. The 25% who disagreed with the suggestion said their reasons were because

- It would interfere with peoples privacy
- There is already somewhere for ball games – St Marks Rd
- Some time ago there was a 'no ball games' notice put up by the council
- Residents in the area already get enough aggravation from the ball park
- Too near surrounding houses and high fences would be an eyesore
- Basketball/football are already fenced and extra fencing would not improve the look of the estate.
- We have a ball park – couldn't it be a small skatepark

**Do you think car parking needs to be improved on the estate?**

Yes 74%

No 26%

Car parking is identified as a problem on the estate by its residents. Suggestions made to improve the situation were;

- Ban on pavement parking
- Are enough parking areas but residents don't use them
- Incorporate garages behind the houses in St Leonards and All Saints. Not used as not safe
- Remove dead tree and make hard stand for four flats.
- Everyone has their own allocated place numbered
- More spaces by removing some pavements and verges
- Stop large vehicles taking up car spaces – eg work vans
- Take down clamping sign in the car park in St Pauls Rd
- Use area next to cadets hut with a walk way to the play area
- There is sufficient parking but people need to learn to walk a short distance

Would the estate benefit from a new community centre?	
Yes 56%	No 43%

Again the proposal of a new community centre did not receive strong support. The suggestions for where it should be built included:

- Adjoining the homework club
- Up by the top park
- Remove bottom park and build on top (children don't like bottom park as not much in there)
- Not in St Pauls – we won't go there
- Flats not big enough by time you have 10-15 people – maybe an extension
- Is new centre really necessary
- Around St Leonards Rd
- Rebuild old one or near St Marks Rd park
- Use existing buildings
- Unnecessary waste of money

Finally the questionnaire asks if they had any other ideas to improve the outside look of the estate. This produced a number of suggestions including

- Mural or some kind of art/seating. Involve young adults
- Rubbish areas fenced off with big wheelie bins, so rubbish can be stored till bin day – keep the cats from making a mess.
- All houses need painting outside.
- All houses should have same windows/doors. We are different and it looks terrible
- Anything that brings community together and promotes ownership of community environment
- Childrens safety and communicating with others
- Make residents responsible for cleaning up broken glass and litter from bin bags.
- Sweep pavements occasionally
- Stop cars and vans parking on pavement.

## Summary

Most agreed that changes need to be made to the estate, but the suggestions proposed in the questionnaire received mixed support. Over half of the respondents did not want a communal garden, nor wanted the responsibility of looking after it. Similarly only 53% wanted to see more trees and plants on the estate. This may be linked to past attempts to plant shrubs being vandalised.

The proposal for a patio outside the community flat only had the support of 53% of the residents. It was difficult for some to identify the benefits of such a proposal.

Far more popular was the suggestion of a safe play area for pre school children and of improving the grassy area in front of St Marks play area. This view is consistent with the

high number of respondents who had young children of their own. It was suggested that it could be like the Heavitree Park in Exeter with its slides, roundabouts and paddling pool.

Finally car parking was highlighted as a problem on the estate, with some interesting and insightful comments made, however an argument was put forward that the number of cars on the street actually has a traffic calming effect! There was a comment left about a dead tree (outside flats 8,10,12 and 14) which has not produced leaves in three years and has bark falling off. Should this be confirmed the option may be available to cut it down (if a danger) and provide a potential source of parking. Similarly there appears to be parking nearby but deemed by some residents as being too far from their homes.