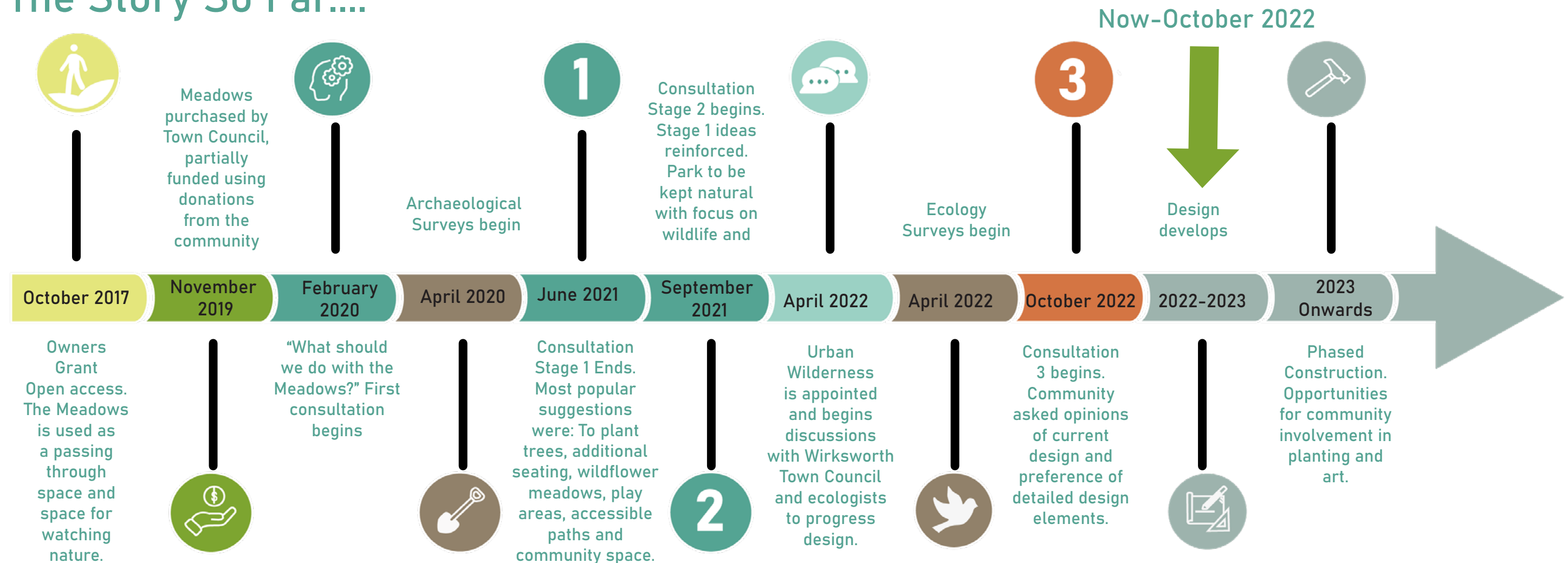


The Meadows-Consultation 3 Review-Next Steps

Two 'in person' consultations were held at the Wirksworth Farmers market and Tuesday market on the 2nd and 4th of October. The boards were then moved to the Town Hall for the public to view and upload online. A take home A4 sheet was also produced. The response to the design proposed at consultation 3 was overwhelmingly positive. The vast majority of people engaging in discussion were enthusiastic about the sentiment of developing the space and shared the vision portrayed within the consultation. Suggestions were relatively minor and did not conflict with the fundamental aspirations and arrangement of the design.

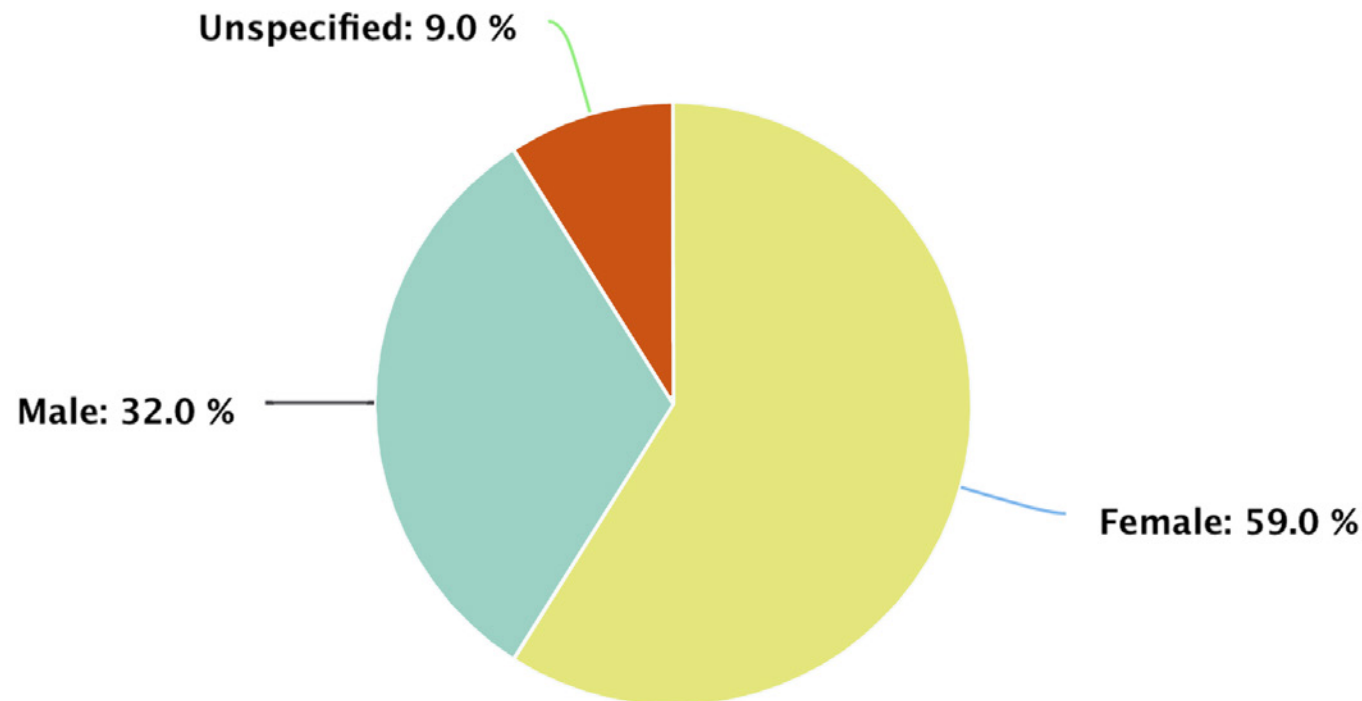


The Story So Far....

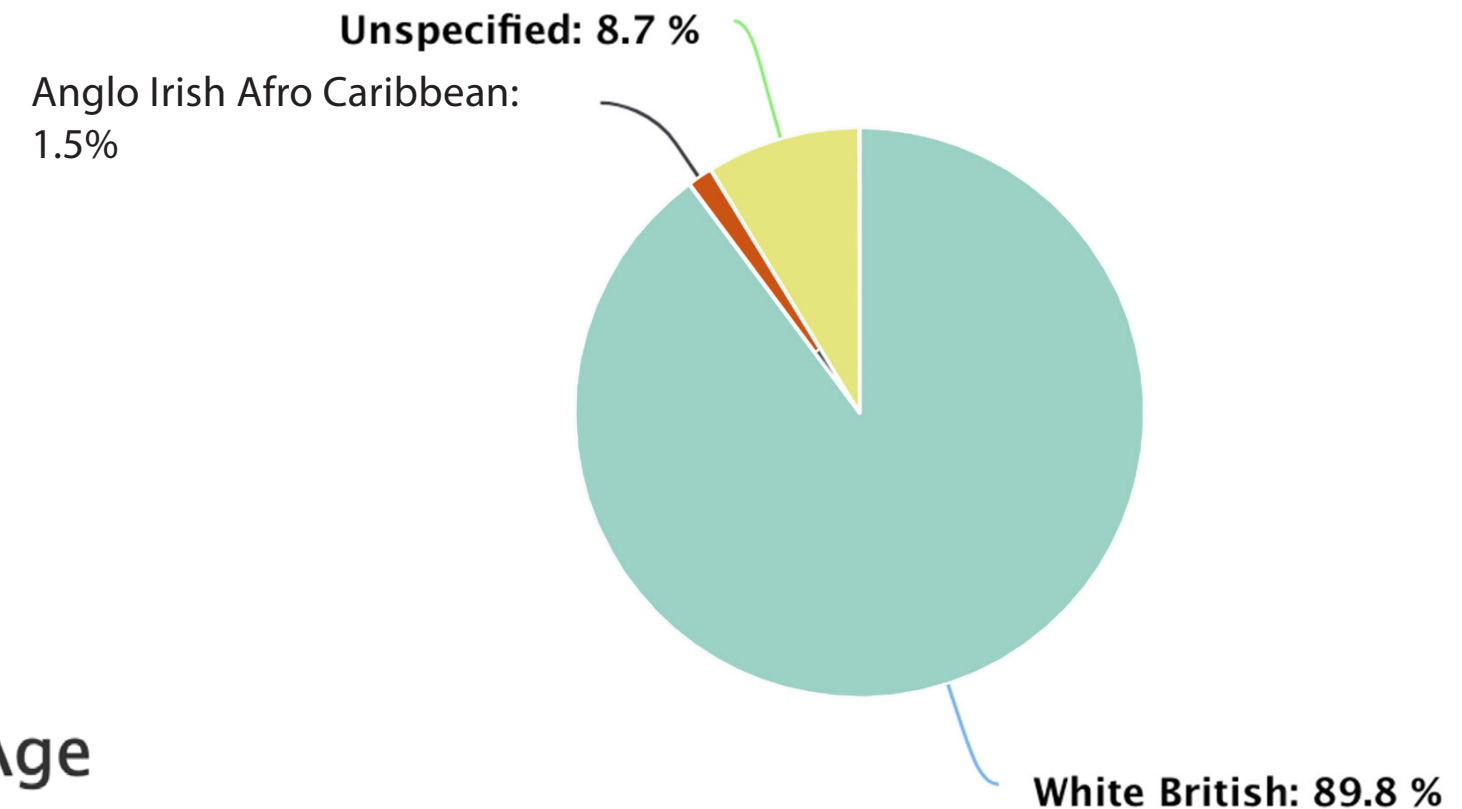


Over 70 people filled out the questionnaire in addition to many others who left comments in person on the day

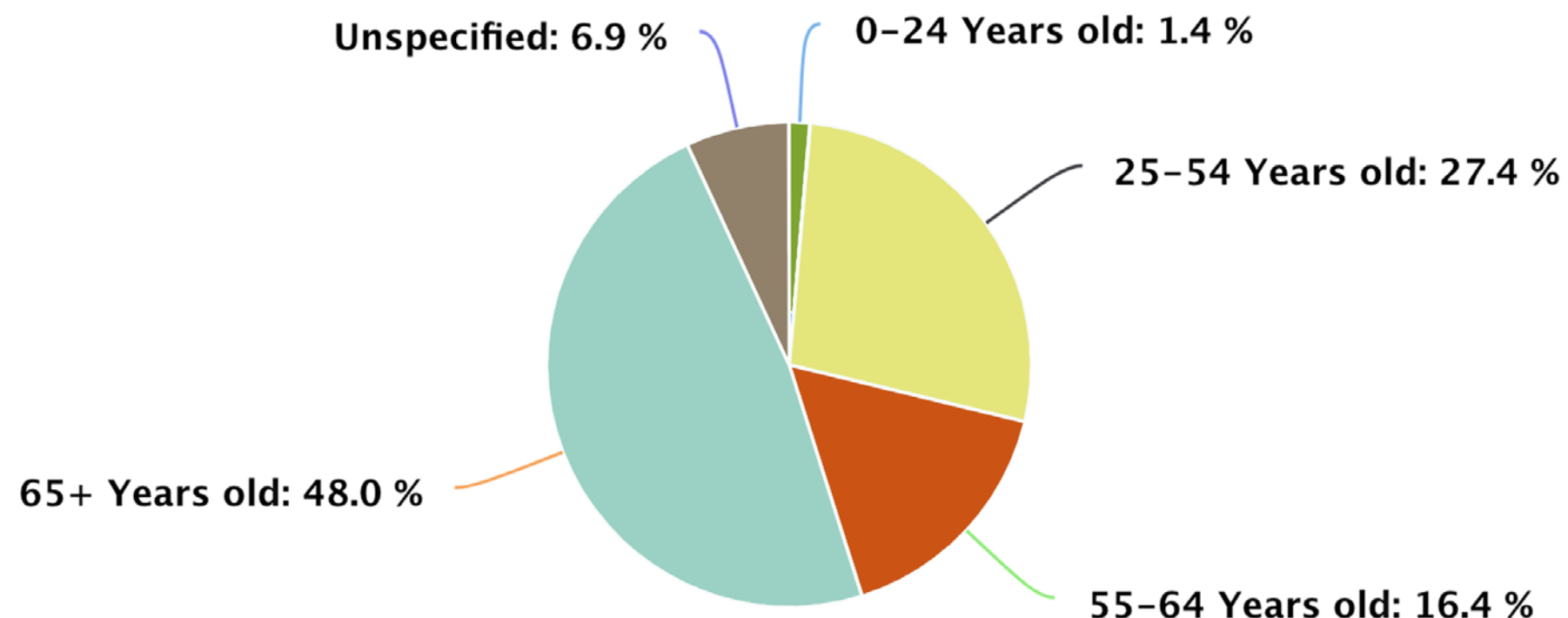
Gender



Ethnicity



Age



Generally respondents were roughly representative of the community of Wirksworth.

The under 25's, were the one group obviously not represented in the feedback. This is a space we want to be inclusive of all age groups and represent what they would like to see in the Meadows. This could be rectified at a later design stage by directly consulting school aged people to understand what they would like to see in the space.

By creating a space where young people feel included, ownership of space may foster and help alleviate any anti-social behaviour in the space (a comment that was repeatedly raised in the consultation).

"What about teenagers? I'm a secondary school teacher, so I've done a lot of informal consultation over the years. Teenagers like spaces to hang out which don't prescribe activities. What about a big rock / sculptural feature which many teenagers could sit on and convene. Sometimes something weird / interesting draws teenagers in! I like the idea of involving school children. Especially if you involve primary school children, for example in creating mosaics, then they will be less likely to vandalise the area when teenagers as they take ownership of the space. There are residents of Wirksworth with mosaic skills / experience."

Feedback Highlights:

Generally positive reception with the public very enthusiastic and excited about development of the Meadows.

Some repeated themes were:



"In terms of play equipment, I like #20 and #24 as they are a bit different to what is on offer elsewhere and are in keeping with the area."



"Activity spaces - all look good, less keen on 14 and 18 as good to keep area natural and landscaping 'soft' Play - having children in Wirksworth we have a good selection of traditional children's play areas so think good to offer something different"

Incidental, natural play

"My lovely peaceful back garden backs onto the western side of the Meadows (Yokecliffe Crescent) and I am worried about noise from the play area marked on the map. I feel it would ruin the proposed natural meadow area, which is used by a lot of wildlife as cover - birds, newts, frogs, field mice etc."

"Will the council have enough funds to maintain it, If it goes ahead, to keep it in a good state of repair, stop potential vandalism able to monitor the site 24hr for the good of the residents without putting up council tax?"

Maintenance

"This site under current proposals would be higher maintenance than Stoney Wood for example -consider paid roles in any funding bid to support volunteer groups develop."

"I hope there will be enough money for after-care and good maintenance- have often seen good schemes like this deteriorate after a few years because of lack of funds."

Biodiversity Focus

"Biodiverse and edible space."

"Looks great. Really pleased about the natural biodiverse feel to attract wildlife."

"I liked all of the ecological features (pictures 1-6) and would like to see them all included. Encouraging and retaining biodiversity in the area is key"

"Some teenagers do use this as a gathering point which is positive but less so when they sit and smoke/ drink alcohol or leave litter."

How to address conflicting users e.g.. cyclists, dog walkers, perception of noisy groups

"Would like to see cycle stands, to encourage travelling to the Meadows by bike"

Access

"Better footpaths and keep the area maintained. Not become another overgrown eyesore like the bit off the Avenue and drive has become."

"I am overall very pleased with the design and think the extra surfaced path diagonally across the site is a very good idea. I love the idea of extra meandering mown paths and Think that there will be many funds we can tap to pay for the improvements envisaged."

"Please enhance accessibility for those with reduced mobility -surface covering."

"Please install CCTV to help protect the area and mitigate any anti social behaviour."

Security

"I live quite close to the Meadows and have notice that small groups of teens often gather and engage in anti social behaviour and think that these options may give them the perfect place to do just that. If that were the case, it would be quite intimidating for older visitors, people that are vulnerable or those with small children and discourage them from using the site. That would be a real shame."

Using local companies

"TDP and Doyen Products- Outdoor Seating"

"Please use local businesses-such as local stonewallers."

"White Peak Design and Build Ltd recommended"

"Earthed up! Can help design and supply plants"

"Wilder Wirksworth."

"A science garden within Alvaston Park in Derby. They recommended whispering dishes as the most successful play feature"



Most liked:

Natural and promotes biodiversity.



All ecological/ biodiversity images well received.

Disliked due to hard surfacing and perceived cost of furniture pictured.

Least liked:

Maintenance issues, worries about being slippery when wet.



Equal amount of likes and dislikes. Disliked due to potential short life span, liked due to unique nature.



Disliked due to being unnatural.



Disliked due to being expensive and "over the top".



Conflicting views. Majority like to it being natural, but some dislike due to being high maintenance and looking messy.



Attractive and promotes biodiversity.

Idea of a storage container in general controversial with 20 disliking the idea, 10 liking the idea and 3 positive but with security concerns.



Attractive and promotes biodiversity. Mown grass strips are a natural way to create paths.



Maintenance issues, worries about being slippery when wet.

Minimal and natural play features preferred. Some prefer one single condensed area of play, some prefer spread incidental play.



A review of Precedent feedback:

Responses overwhelmingly supportive of principles of the park and overall, show the preference for natural, sustainable and robust features that maximise biodiversity. Whilst this is positive that we are designing an appropriate scheme, there is no consensus of strong views. Responses imply that there is no consensus regarding many of the aesthetic details, quite a few responses had a similar number of likes and dislikes showing opposing views. It is clear though that there is a general dislike for unnatural elements e.g.. the steel bench. We recognise that the contradictory response could also be the result of the template for the consultation e.g.. appears that many have liked/disliked an image for attributes/criteria outside of the question e.g.. appears some liked Wirksworth bench as by a local company and has a robust character. It is not possible to determine whether they additionally liked aesthetic, or just the attributes mentioned. It may have been useful to show very contrasting images rather than images with a similar theme to ascertain stronger views.

As we refine the design both the positive and negative responses to the precedents will influence the choice of materials, planting typologies, characteristics and nature of the space. We will endeavour to consider all views raised, but where these views are contradictory we will make choices which best reflect the overarching ambitions



The Meadows
Wirksworth



URBAN
WILDERNESS

Consultation 3 Review
November 2022

SAFETY

Comments: Many stated that the existing light colour of the pathways provide some visibility at night. A couple in favour of low level solar lighting at key areas (by existing notice board). A few concerns about secluded areas attracting anti-social behaviour and suggested CCTV as a way of discouraging such behaviour.

Design Response: Explore opportunities for solar bollard lighting alongside main surfaced routes and access points. Ensure that the lighting strategy is developed in conjunction with recommendations from ecologist. In addition, surface material to be light buff in colour to increase visibility at night.

STORAGE

Comments: Concern that the storage container will promote antisocial behaviour and reduce foraging opportunities (blackberries). Suggestions for a water source for maintenance (watering).

Design Response: Explore different locations and design options for storage container.

GATHERING SPACE

Comments: Majority wanted the community gathering space to be designed to facilitate a variety of activities for a range of different users. Activities suggested include picnicking, play and performances. A few people suggested a purpose designed feature or a covered space, but there were also concerns over large gatherings / use at the Wirksworth Festival.

Design Response: Ensure the central gathering space is well defined, whilst being open, accessible and simplistic in nature to facilitate a range of different activities throughout the year.

SCHOOLS

Comments: Aspiration for school involvement.

Design Response: Explore opportunities for school groups to get involved with elements such as seating and or public art.

SEATING

Comments: Many comments received about providing seating in both shady and sunny areas, within the centre of the site (where paths cross) and alongside main surfaced routes. A few people suggested the inclusion of different forms of seating, such as picnic benches and seating with backrests and armrests to cater for people of varying ages and physical abilities.

Design Response: Consider a range of seating situated throughout the whole site, focused alongside main routes and key gathering points. Seating to be robust yet naturalistic in nature, and sourced / designed locally.

PLAY

Comments: Majority in favour of naturalistic 'wild' play features such as boulders and balancing logs, in comparison to metal / plastic 'man made' equipment. Preference by many to locate the play features at the north of the site, close to where adults can sit and chat, and away from areas of high habitat and ecological value. A few people wanted the play features to provide play opportunities for adults and young people, as well as children (e.g. whispering dishes). In addition, the inclusion of spaces for quiet and calm were mentioned.

Design Response: Locate play within the northern section of the site, away from areas of high ecological value. Play features to be comprised of natural materials and non obtrusive in nature. Features should provide opportunities for physical, social, imaginative and constructive play for a range of ages and children with varying needs and abilities.

BINS

Comments: General concern about dog fouling and rubbish / litter.

Design Response: Ensure that dog waste bins are maintained and signposting encourages care for the space.

PLANT SPECIES

Comments: A desire for the inclusion of species suitable for a changing climate, native species, wild-flower meadows and blossoming trees.

Design Response: Develop a planting palette which is robust, resilient, beneficial to native fauna and provides interest all year round (visual, smell, sound, touch, foraging opportunities).

ACCESSIBILITY

Comments: Many voiced a need to remove the bollard in Fog's Entry to allow pushchairs and mobility scooters through. Alongside this, lots stated that the path behind Waltham House requires a better surface & lighting due to existing muddy, dark condition. Improved access and drainage at low point along footpath at Yokecliffe Crescent also voiced.

Design Response: Explore the opportunities for altering the two access areas to the south and northeast of the site, which currently sit outside of the Site boundary.

INTERPRETATION & SIGNAGE

Comments: Some voiced a desire for interpretation to take a public art approach and which also encompasses both ecological and archaeological information about the site.

Design Response: Develop an artist-led signage and interpretation strategy for the whole site. Interpretation should provide information about the sites history, archaeology and ecology in creative ways (not text boards). Signage should aid navigation, prioritise pedestrians and encourage stewardship of the landscape.

WATER

Comments: Lots of aspiration for a wildlife pond, wetland area, daylighted / re-introduced stream to the west of the site, as an essential ecological feature.

Design Response: Due to budget and health and safety concerns, explore opportunities for the creation of seasonal marshland areas / swale network without standing water, which would still provide ecological enhancements. Investigate whether the re-introduction of the historic culverted stream along the western boundary is possible within this scope of works.

EDIBLE PLANTS

Comments: General concern over community growing spaces due to management issues. However, lots in favour of fruiting trees / other edible species which could be foraged by the community.

Design Response: Devise a planting strategy which incorporates fruiting and nut bearing species throughout the whole scheme (rather than in a segregated 'community zone'), planted in areas which are easily accessible for foraging / picking.

CYCLE FACILITIES

Comments: Many voiced that there is currently a lack of cycle facilities shown on the plan, and how they would like to see bike racks at key entrance points.

Design Response: Incorporate bike stands at site access points to encourage sustainable travel.

WILDLIFE AREAS

Comments: Majority wanted large areas of the site to be maintained for wildlife. Some concerns about board-walks / paths being situated close to ecologically sensitive / vulnerable areas.

Design Response: Develop the path network so that areas of the site are safeguarded from human activity.

PATHWAYS

Comments: Majority favoured the proposed path alignment for surfaced pathways. Many voiced that the surfaced routes must be wide enough to accommodate both pedestrians and cyclists, with pedestrians having priority (use signs to encourage this). This was the preferred option, in comparison to a segregated cycle only route. A couple of concerns over desire lines, number of mown routes (too many) and proximity of pathways to back gardens.

Design Response: Ensure surfaced routes are wide enough to accommodate both pedestrians and cyclists. Include interpretation to define a pedestrian priority. Develop a clear network of mown routes which protect areas of high ecological value.

A summarised interpretation of answers to questions 2 & 3, alongside our design response.

Following an initial meeting with Wirksworth Town Council, several comments have been scoped out / deemed as not suitable for consideration due to incompatibility with the project vision, the site's existing character or available budget. For example, public toilets, car parking, enclosed dog park, allotments, parours area etc.



Stories:

It was important to us to ask for peoples stories and memories of the Meadows to understand what the Meadows means to people and understand key features and feelings. This will then give us the opportunity to embed these elements into the design and create a sense of place.

"Love the **pheasant family** who live there and around Yokecliffe for the last few years."

"The Meadows has provided a **safe and interesting path for my five children** as they've gone from baby through toddler, and school child to get to town. We've enjoyed **dragonflies, butterflies**, and recently the **pheasant family** who moved in during lockdown! :)"

"I have used the path across the Meadows for the past 38 years regularly, especially so when my two children were at nursery and infant school. I enjoy the **seasonal flowers**, the **Cow Parsley** in May reminding me it's soon my eldest daughter's birthday. However, it always seemed the space could be better used and I am delighted that the Meadows will become a more attractive space used by the community and also visitors, especially those using the train to Wirksworth."

"I've been walking across the Meadows for 50 years! -When I used to go to the Junior School from Summer Lane, I crossed the Meadows and the path was more cobbled I think (with an edging?) -For a long time you could see St Mary's, but now obscured by Waltham House. -At Well Dressing Carnival Day, I'd come down Summer Lane and cut across The Meadows to the centre of town. The **Cow Parsley** was more widespread then (half way across the Meadows?) Taller than me and with a very distinctive 'buttery' smell. For me that was the smell of Carnival Day. -It's great to have a green area in the centre of town -**a peaceful, natural area with wildlife, and seats to sit on to stop a while.**"

"The **Blackberry bushes** situated on the NW corner of the meadows, by the path leading onto the Yokecliffe estate, always give good and **plentiful fruit which is much appreciated** and well picked by local residents. They are sheltered from the north, with sunny aspect. The plan seems to show a storage facility intended to replace them. Please relocate the storage and keep the blackberries. The blackberries would be **easier to pick if a bark path was put over the nettles**. The experience of fruit picking would also be improved if the dog waste box was moved a few yards along the path to the West. Thank you!"

"Spending time and **talking to my daughters on the benches, in the sun** after church services."

"When I was little, I liked **feeling everything was taller than me** and wild plants and butterflies. Being **enclosed** in leaves and tall plants. (I'm 10)"

