

Stakeholder Engagement Workstream Project 4

NEW COMMUNITIES

Final Report

Futurebright Solutions
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CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH FUTURE PARKS



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CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH FUTURE PARKS



BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

The co-design phase of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Future Parks aims to explore the opportunities to sustainably manage and fund parks and open spaces in the future. One of the projects in the **Stakeholder Engagement** workstream is focussed on understanding how **New Communities** (around 10 years old or less) use and value their local community parks and green spaces which were created as part of the development that they live in.

At the start of the work the scope for this project had not been defined and work took place with the Stakeholder Engagement Task and Finish Group (SET&FG) during Phase 1 to explore the requirements and identify the communities of interest to sample.

Four communities were eventually identified:

1. Hampton Vale, Peterborough – 2,000 properties
2. Northstowe, South Cambridgeshire – 750 properties
3. Trumpington Meadows and the Southern Fringe (Glebe and Clay Farms), Cambridge City/South Cambridgeshire – 1,200 properties
4. Kilkenny Avenue*, East Cambridgeshire – 92 properties

**During the engagement phase, discussions with managing agents made it clear that this community was not suitable to sample. The space was not a new development but had been refurbished and had no provision for parks or green spaces as part of this refurbishment. Therefore this community was removed.*

Waterlees (Wisbech, Fenland) has also been added as an area of interest to give balance, due to the socio economic status and health outcomes¹ experienced by the communities of interest. There are approximately 5,000 older properties (>10yrs), and following discussions with local partners (Clarion Housing, Oasis Centre, I Love Wisbech Partnership) an alternative engagement strategy has been proposed. In addition, Liminal Labs in partnership with Clarion and Iceland undertook a consultation with Clarion residents at the beginning of 2021 and have agreed to share their findings. Appendix 2 provides the detail on this work.

METHODOLOGY

A mixed methodology was used to build up background knowledge, sample and engage areas 1, 2, and 3:

- Desk research to identify relevant plans and reports.
- 1-2-1 discussions with service providers and local authority teams.
- Focus groups with each community of interest.

¹ [Cambridgeshire Insight](#)

- Presentation and discussion at forums and networks – Community Connectors, Northstowe Partnership, Regional Housing Board, LNP Developing with Nature Forum, C&P Community Resilience Group.
- Ward Councillors were contacted, with only 2 (both Northstowe) engaging in the process.
- Workshops with SET&FG plus scoping paper presented to Project Team.
- Bespoke survey sent to all properties in communities of interest promoted through residents associations and local community groups, Future Parks networks, communications and community engagement teams, and social media.

SURVEY FINDINGS

The survey was live for a limited period of four weeks. This was due to delays in publishing including final sign off on content, purdah, and complications in timing with one community. As an incentive, a £100 voucher was offered to all residents who completed the survey. Equal effort in communication was used for all areas, however, response rates varied across each.

	Properties	Responses	Rate
1. Hampton Vale*	2,000	74	4%
2. Northstowe**	750	72	10%
3. T. Meadows***	1,200	43	4%
Total	3,950	189	5%
Outside of Sample Area	N/A	25	N/A

* Includes 13 responses from Hampton Water residents

** Includes 8 responses from Longstanton residents

*** Includes responses from Glebe Farm (3) and Clay Farm (17) residents

Demographics and Background Information

Around 80% of responses came from residents with ‘white’ background (English, Scottish, Welsh, Irish, European). In addition, responses were received from the following:

- Hampton Vale (HV): African, Asian, Bangladeshi, Chinese, Indian
- Northstowe (N): Asian, Chinese, Indian
- Trumpington Meadows (TM): Asian, Chinese

Responses were received from all **age ranges** with most responses received from 35-49 age range, then 25-35 age range.

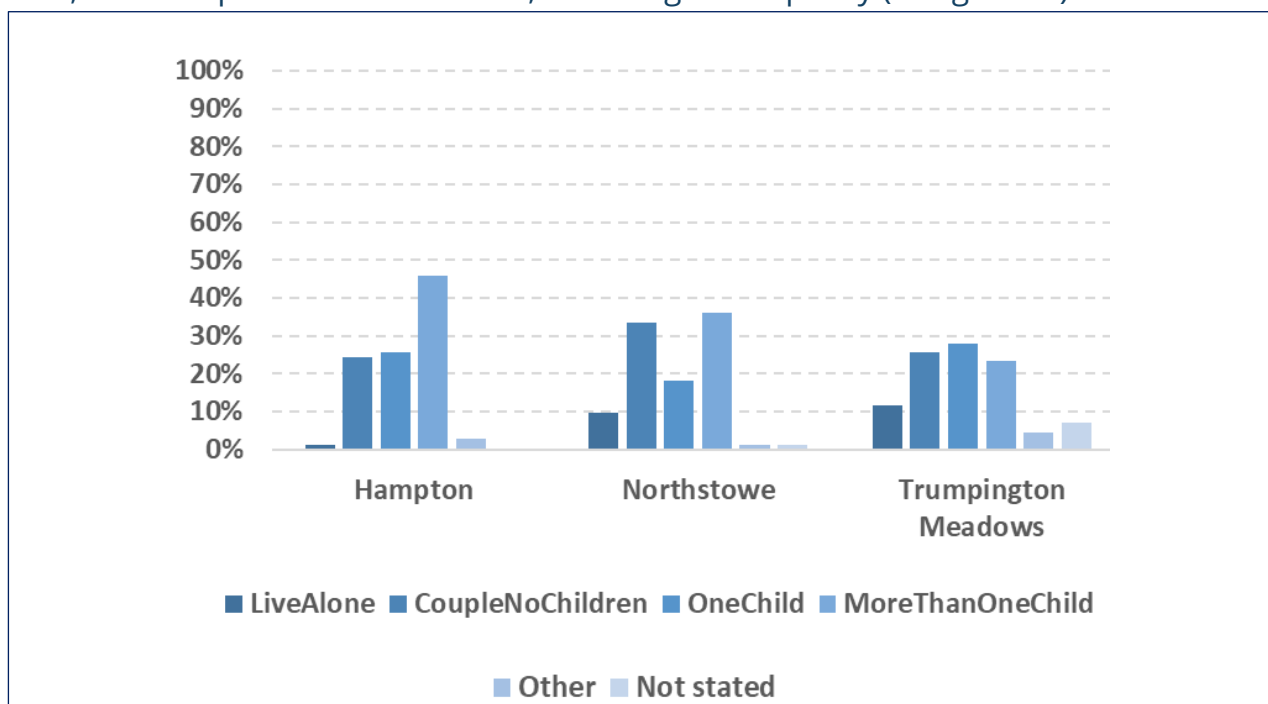
The **gender** of the majority of respondents was female (F):

- Hampton Vale – F=74%, M=22%
- Northstowe – F=72%, M=22%
- Trumpington Meadows – F=53%, M=30%, Non Binary = 2%

Some respondents reported having a **disability**:

- Hampton Vale – 12%
- Northstowe – 3%
- Trumpington Meadows – 5%

Table showing **household composition**. This varied, with majority having one or more child, then couples with no children, then single occupancy (living alone).



For Hampton Vale (95%) and Northstowe (100%) almost all respondents had their **own garden**; for Trumpington Meadows less than half (47%) had one.

By far the main mode of travel to local spaces was walking (almost 100%), then cycling (40-50%). Some people used cars, stating disability and to carry their children as the main reasons for doing so. A small number also used scooters, skateboards, wheelchairs, and horses.

Available Space and Use of Space

When asked about the spaces residents had local to them, Trumpington Meadows residents identified the greatest range of local spaces with an average of 5 types of space locally. Northstowe and Hampton Vale both averaged 3 types of space. However, from the overall response for each area we can see that each has at least six or seven types of space local to them. Therefore the responses may reflect a lack of knowledge about all that is available locally.

Table showing type of local space available that the respondent is aware of

	Hampton Vale	Northstowe	T. Meadows
Playpark	77%	81%	84%
Country Park/ Nature Reserve	74%	14%	95%
Recreation Ground	53%	58%	44%
Allotments	22%	54%	81%
Woodland	46%	13%	53%
Picnic area	27%	32%	51%
Community Orchard/ Garden	3%	15%	65%
Churchyard	0%	8%	35%

Table showing type of space, frequency of use, and popularity of use (%)

	Hampton Vale	Northstowe	T. Meadows
Playpark	Weekly (23%)	Weekly (43%)	Weekly (19%)
Country Park/ Nature Reserve	Weekly (40%)	Weekly (40%)	Daily (51%)
Recreation Ground	Weekly (36%)	Daily (36%)	Weekly (21%)
Allotments	Daily (13%)	Weekly (15%)	Daily (17%)
Woodland	Weekly (53%)	Monthly (44%)	Weekly (39%)
Picnic area	Weekly (30%)	Monthly (26%)	A few times a year (36%)
Community Orchard/ Garden	Weekly (50%)	Weekly/Monthly (18%)	A few times a year (36%)
Churchyard	-	A few times a year (50%)	Monthly (20%)

Table showing what people do when they visit (with most popular in bold)

	Hampton Vale	Northstowe	T. Meadows
Sit and relax	53%	39%	58%
Exercise	55%	42%	74%
Children and families	61%	49%	47%
Walk the dog	54%	44%	23%
Nature and wildlife	51%	31%	74%
Meet and socialise	38%	43%	56%
<i>Volunteering</i>	<i>11%</i>	<i>4%</i>	<i>16%</i>

Table showing what would encourage people to use their local space more often

	Hampton Vale	Northstowe	T. Meadows
Nice Walks*	49%	68%	49%
Things for the whole family	53%	36%	37%
Cleanliness and maintenance	50%	18%	19%
Nature and Wildlife	41%	65%	47%
Social Opportunities	15%	21%	35%
Better Access	16%	26%	28%

* Clarification of 'nice walks' during focus group discussions identified the following - interesting features (not flat landscape), more trees, more wildlife and nature, information boards about the area, places to sit

Table showing most important features (ranked)

	Hampton Vale	Northstowe	T. Meadows
Accessibility, including good paths and places to sit	2 nd	1 st	2 nd
Maintenance and cleanliness, including adequate bin provision	1 st	4 th	3 rd
Nature and wildlife, including trees	3 rd	3 rd	1 st
Safety and lighting	4 th	5 th	4 th
Range of play spaces, things for all ages	4 th	2 nd	5 th

In addition, other important features included good design to support all ages and a range of interests, biodiversity, and information on the area (wildlife and nature, heritage and history). For Northstowe residents only a designated area for dogs and dog walking was important.

When asked about **other spaces** farther away that people visited the most popular were:

- Ferry Meadows for Hampton Vale residents
- Milton Country Park and Fen Drayton Lakes for Northstowe residents
- Wandlebury and Gog Magog for Trumpington Meadows residents

And when asked why they visited (ranked):

	Hampton Vale	Northstowe	T. Meadows
More for range of ages, better play equipment	1st	1st	2nd
Better area for dogs	-	2nd	-
Change of scenery	2nd	-	1st
More to see and do	3rd	3rd	3rd

Non Use

By far the main reason for people not using a space was that *'there is nothing there for me'*. For Northstowe (59%) and Trumpington Meadows (75%) this was the highest scoring reason but for Hampton Vale it was *'poorly maintained spaces'* (31%) followed by *'nothing there for me'* (28%). During wider discussion across the stakeholder engagement workstream COVID-19 safety was highlighted as one of the main reasons given for people not using their parks and open spaces. However when this question was asked of these communities the response rate was relatively low – Hampton Vale 14%, Northstowe 12%, Trumpington Meadows 4%.

Nature and Wildlife

The importance of nature and wildlife came through strongly in the survey and as part of the wider focus group discussions. This, in part, is likely due to people having more time to engage with their natural surroundings as a result of the pandemic as has been reported elsewhere (RSPB, Wildlife Trusts, Natural Cambridgeshire Survey), plus the national and international raising of awareness on climate change and biodiversity issues.

Table showing type of nature and wildlife that people would like to see more of

	Hampton Vale	Northstowe	T. Meadows
Insect friendly flower meadows	85%	94%	81%
Long grass areas	62%	75%	60%
Otters in rivers	76%	76%	81%
More wild birds	81%	94%	93%
Beehives	64%	60%	70%
Bird boxes	86%	92%	84%
Bat boxes*	12% (80%)	11% (76%)	14% (72%)
Nature trails*	3% (93%)	0% (94%)	2% (93%)

* While those responding 'yes' was quite low across all communities, those who responded, 'not sure' (figure in brackets) was high. Education and communication could help raise the number of positive responses.

In addition, the most popular 'other' ideas for nature and wildlife were:

- Ponds, streams, water features, floating pontoons for nesting birds
- Trees and woodlands, including fruit trees for people and nature
- Habitats for bugs, hedgehogs, snakes, birds (kingfishers, sand martins, red kites), wildlife corridors
- Bird boxes, feeders, hides, cameras on nests
- Protected nature and wildlife areas, including protection for ground nesting birds in season
- Information on the biodiversity of the local area

Volunteering

A relatively low number of respondents stated that they currently volunteer in their local park or green space (HV=11%, N=4%, TM=16%). From the survey and focus group discussions there is interest amongst respondents to be part of a local volunteering group and in smaller numbers to set up a volunteering group.

	Hampton Vale	Northstowe	T. Meadows
Want to join a local park or green space volunteer group	23%	36%	51%
Want to set up a group	12%	22%	16%

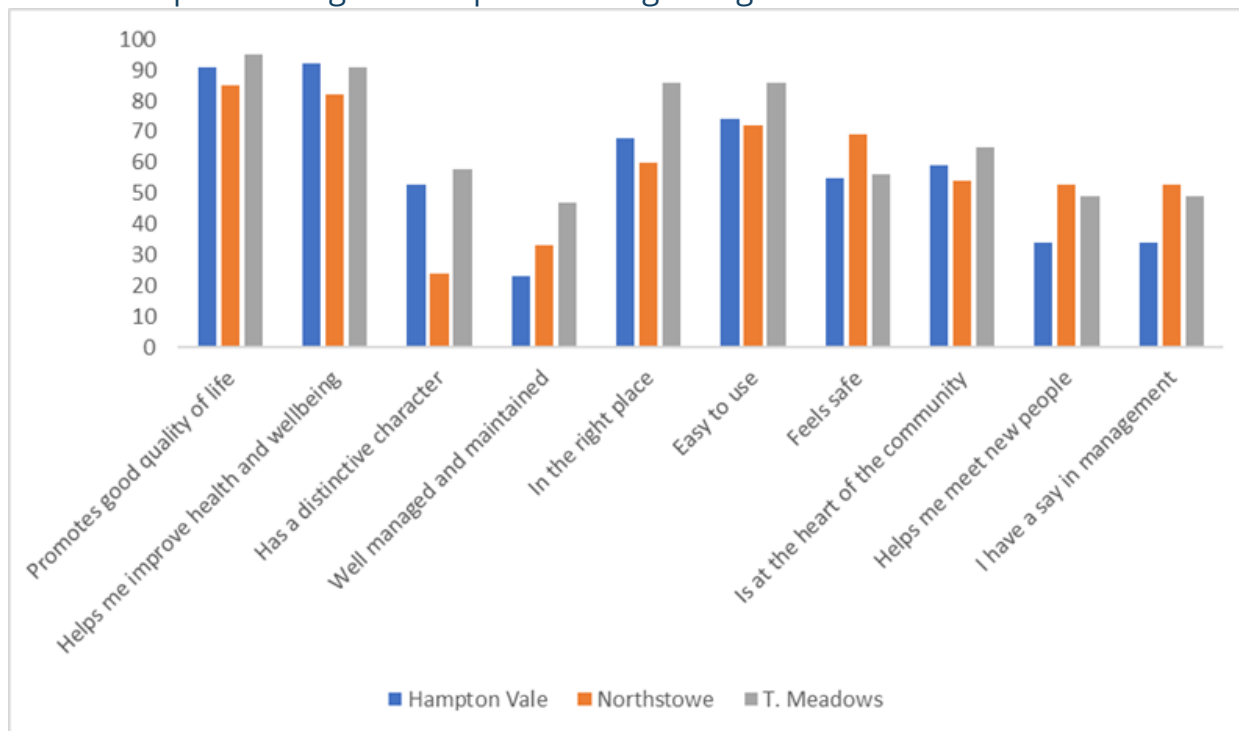
Living In and Valuing Local Spaces

	Hampton Vale	Northstowe	T. Meadows
Importance of parks/green space when buying property (out of 5)	4.3	4.2	4.4
Has your view changed (yes)	30%	32%	23%

Reasons for change of view

Positive	Negative
Value them more as I have a child. Value them more as I have a dog. Working from home – more opportunities to walk and exercise. Pandemic has made access to these spaces more valuable. Realisation from living in the space how good it is for people and nature.	Development is impacting on the current provision, and on nature/wildlife. Lots of litter (Hampton Vale). Antisocial behaviour (T. Meadows). No play equipment for toddlers (Northstowe).

Graph showing % of respondents agreeing with statements on X axis



For **length of time at property** the majority of responses from Northstowe and Trumpington Meadows residents stated they had lived in their properties for ‘1-5 years’; Hampton Vale had a fairly even split across ranges from ‘1 year’ to ‘when they were built’.

Table showing response to question asking whether local spaces were better or worse than the **developers plans**, and had got better or worse over time (*for those who had moved in when the property was built - % shown in header**)

	Hampton Vale 28%*	Northstowe 10%*	T. Meadows 12%*
Better	5%	0%	0%
Worse	19%	43%	0%
As described	43%	43%	60%
Didn't see any plans	24%	0%	0%
Park/green space built later/still being built	10%	14%	40%
Got better over time	34%	40%	53%
Stayed the same over time	41%	39%	30%
Got worse over time	26%	21%	16%

There were very few positive responses on whether the developer **consulted on design** of local spaces – 1% in Hampton, 0% in Northstowe, 2% in T. Meadows

Service Charges

	Hampton Vale	Northstowe	T. Meadows
Those paying service charge	28%	51%	26%
Happy to pay for quality spaces	14%	22%	45%
Told how money is spent on spaces	14%	38%	64%
Able to discuss how money is spent on spaces	5%	14%	9%

Of those who do not pay a service charge, the numbers who said they would or might were:

- Hampton Vale 5% would, 37% might
- Northstowe 14% would, 27% might
- Trumpington Meadows 11% would, 37% might

The proposed acceptable rate to charge for services varied significantly - £100 was the most popular figure, with the range from £5 to £500. Others responded that they felt their council tax should pay for this.

FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

A focus group meeting was held for each of the communities of interest. Participants were identified via the survey, with 66 people registering an initial interest which translated to 18 people taking part. Discussions were very positive, with participants having a great depth of knowledge and insight on a wide range of issues.

All participants were residents, with a range of backgrounds:

- Representatives of residents associations (RA)
- Physics teacher
- New resident
- Town/urban planner
- Scientist
- Member of the British Antarctic Survey
- Volunteer in the community
- Property manager
- Ward Councillor
- Youth volunteer
- Making Space for Girls sessional worker
- Member of local sustainability group
- Working age
- Retired
- Families with children
- Living alone

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Summary of Focus Group Discussions

Hampton Vale

Initial thoughts	Lots of good quality green spaces, broadly managed well, including for biodiversity, lovely walks. Good quality space attracts visitors who are non-residents; the space should only be for residents as there is no infrastructure to support external visitors and no parking. Litter and dog mess are big issues. From discussions it appears that the various ‘villages’ in Hampton are not connected up and function as separate entities.
Managing Agents/ Developers	Managed by O&H, participants felt they are reasonably accessible at front line level but not engaged at a higher management level. Long term management is overlooked in planning. Not able to discuss how service charge is spent, even when asked participants stated that the response is opaque and only annual financial reports are shared. Also that there is a lack of transparency and accountability due to the complex governance as O&H are the umbrella organisation with a number of developers sitting under them, plus the local authority. Very difficult to know who is responsible for what.
Communication	Lots of social media creates ‘noise’ and is difficult to navigate and to find any information about what’s on for new residents, O&H website is not that informative and needs updating. Resident Association member suggested their Facebook page as a go to site along with Parish Council website. There are also hard copy magazines (Hampton and PE7) but comms is not harmonised. Need a list for new residents to signpost them to what’s on, and also who to contact at O&H and local authority to report issues. Could also use the community centre which is the central hub as a focus for promotion and communication. Residents association and schools arrange activities and events. O&H have everyone’s email so could send information that way.

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Accessibility	Pathways are not very accessible, uneven ground, not wheelchair accessible.
Wildlife and Nature	For wildlife and nature issues, RSPB and Wildlife Trust have been brought in on occasions to support protection of rare species where managing agent has not been proactive. Would be useful to have information in the area to tell people about the nature and wildlife, have maps of the area, put leaflets through doors to raise awareness. Trees still have plastic tubes on their trunks, and where these have fallen off they are left on the ground and not recycled.
COVID-19	Participants were not keen on publicising their spaces as a resource and response to COVID-19 as there is no infrastructure to support increased visits from non-residents.
Resident Involvement	Residents are willing to take ownership and do tasks (including litter picking and other community activities) to make their places safe and accessible. Example, residents wanted to spread salt during winter as roads were icy but could not get a positive discussion or decision as governance is complex and were told they could not do this.
Ideas to take forward	Would like to see more and better engagement with managing agent and local authority to support local planning and development. Suggested at a minimum to set up litter groups in each 'village'. Representatives of each group could meet a few times a year which would join up each of the areas and could start to establish a grass roots network. These could then become a critical mass to engage with local authority and managing agents. There are also other groups of interest including neighbourhood watch.



Northstowe

Initial thoughts	Northstowe is younger than the other communities of interest and phase 1 has just finished being built with phase 2 about to start. Participants felt that this might impact on the responses they gave.
Managing Agents/ Developers	<p>Infrastructure is still being built but this causes problems for residents who have already moved in as the cycle path to the school which was built several years ago is not going to be finished until 2026 even though active travel is encouraged by L&Q. Participant thought that the reason for this was that the developer has to hand the paths over to the local authority for adoption in good condition and the only way to do that is to build them at the end of the development. Concern that people will get used to using cars instead of bikes if paths are not in place and this behaviour will be hard to change back. Similar issues for paths that connect the area to the park and ride, last 10 metres not built – residents had to campaign to get this completed.</p> <p>Developers should think about residents that move in at the start of the development, not just when the site is completed in 10 or 15 years’ time. Also, target in plans for solar panels is 20% which might have been ambitious in 2013 but needs to be revised and increased for phase 2 to reflect current climate change and sustainability issues. Houses should have nest boxes but these are also missing and have to be retrofitted. Important for developers to learn lessons from phase 1 to take into phase 2. Plans were developed a long time ago, there needs to be a review to check what has worked and where the challenges are, including on biodiversity, and use learn lessons and feedback from existing residents. To also consider residents who move in at the start of the development when building infrastructure which is needed now, not at the end of a decadal long development site.</p>

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Communication	No information on when things will come online, for example the lake – it is not clear who to contact about things like this. There is a forum, residents can submit a question to and it is answered but this is a vague process and often questions are bundled together so the response is not detailed. The forum is a long meeting which can put people off attending to discuss an issue. Communication and sharing of information through newsletter, Facebook groups and WhatsApp.
Accessibility	See managing agents/developed section re. unbuilt paths.
Wildlife and Nature	A number of examples given of poor habitat management – wildflower areas cut in July instead of at the start and end of the flowering season; trees being cut down on one side of the lake to conform to plans and then new ones planted on the opposite side of the lake which is a less favourable location; ponds being cleared to create aquatic habitats even though they had already developed into good quality aquatic habitats supporting a range of species including dragonflies. Phase 2 site is an accidental nature reserve due to the length of time it has been left untouched. Lots of insects and nesting birds – plovers, avocets. Ecological impact assessment (if one exists) will be old as it was done at the start of the planning process. Ecological assessments should be included in contract monitoring – the ecological ‘experts’ are not aware of what is already there – 21 species have been counted recently. Need to develop a good management plan to look after habitats.
COVID-19	No great impact experienced by participants.
Resident Involvement	Residents are very keen to have a say on how things are developed and managed with a focus on balance for people and nature. Create a collaboration of town council, Anglian Water and community to offer stewardship. There are a number of green and environmental groups – sustainability, swifts, trees, litter pickers, wildlife watch, Northstowe pioneers, but no central link or coordination. All of these groups are keen to get out and do things for the community. Residents have significant nature and

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	wildlife expertise and are keen to do ecological walkabouts with South Cambs local authority, planners and developers, and ecologist to review sites and develop a long term management plan. This could save money as some of the work in the plans to develop for nature and wildlife is not needed as the nature and wildlife is already there. Regular habitat monitoring needs to be introduced.
Ideas to take forward	Suggestion for local authority and developers to work with school geography department who could do a longitudinal study of the site. Children learn about every aspect of building, development and nature and wildlife. Annual planning meetings with community would be helpful, put plans up and encourage community to get involved in developing actions and priorities for the following year and what the service charge will be spent on. Event could also have nature and wildlife information and walks.



Trumpington Meadows

Initial thoughts	No features, really flat and no mature plants, can see for miles, no undulation, lack of geographical features makes the space less interesting, and not compensated for by wildlife and nature features.
Managing Agents/ Developers	<p>What was promised and what was delivered are very different – overpromise and underdeliver. Some areas have been adopted by the council – was an assessment done on condition before this? Lots of dead trees. Council should be stricter in what they take over in terms of quality. Residents felt that service charge pays for public art glass instead of paying for things like gardening support. Some feel that service charge and council tax should pay for gardening, litter picking and weeding. Council tax is higher than Kensington and Chelsea (London). Makes it a challenge to get people involved as they think their charges should cover everything.</p> <p>Issues around original developers selling off blocks of the site to other developers so there is a fractured site, and division of accountability so it is difficult to hold anyone to account. At the point where the development has already been shaped, planned, and build is completed everyone has move on. Things start to get adopted and handed over and its quite difficult to convince anyone that anything should have been done differently, short of demolishing it there isn't much that can be done. Difficult to get accurate information from salespeople when buying properties, they will say anything for a sale and it feels like the sales team of the developer is very divorced from the development itself.</p>
Communication	The Resident Association (RA) has a newsletter, model is a paid membership (£5 a year, needs assessed) – charity and limited company, also run the pavilion. Local magazine is sent around called the Trumpet (from the local church), but it does not have a religious focus. Social media – there is too much – Facebook page and WhatsApp, gets silly with people's issues and complaints. RA has developed a

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	Facebook page (300 followers) now posting factual positive information. Various community forums with local councillors and council officers and other community groups. Clay Farm has WhatsApp groups, organised around interests e.g. food, dog walking but there is no one stop shop at the moment for communications.
Accessibility	Gravel paths are not accessible. Hobsons Park paths flooded badly – geology not taken into consideration as conduit has been built over it. Trumpington Meadows has lots of points of access but they are not designed for anyone less able; there are areas that are relatively smooth but other areas are pitted and potholed. Hobsons Park is quite restrictive for general access. Perches should be introduced as well as benches as sitting down can be difficult for some, good for older/less able people. Also think about how to get to the space – bench or perch at spots along the way could encourage people to travel to the spaces.
Play Areas	Children’s green space is divorced from adults green space, there is a pen at end each block for kids; separating out is not good planning. Glebe Farm has 3 or 4 tiers of play space, one area has disabled access, but the other tiers are less accessible and not in one place – you have to walk along to each area.
Wildlife and Nature	According to participants, developers have not done their research and do not understand the local climate –lots of the planting is not appropriate for the climate or the environment; fenland means bog, totally saturated, planning is inappropriate and so plants haven’t survived, felt that this is down to lack of research in terms of natural environment. For trees it would be better to plant larger trees and less of them. None of the trees put in across the southern fringe have been looked after and are dying, group of residents remove tree guards themselves as they have not been removed and are killing the trees.
COVID-19	Already using spaces a lot before COVID-19; one participant stated how valuable the local green spaces had been during lockdown as she had just had a child and without them would have felt very isolated.

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<p>Resident Involvement</p>	<p>Local RA are heavily involved in planning and local infrastructure discussions, less so involved in pre-built planning. Challenging the developers is hard work and they have to nag. Some evidence of participants being able to engage with developers, dependent on ability, and background knowledge and expertise. Residents are doing weeding in the street, would like to be able to borrow equipment, basic materials and tools to do their bit. Would like volunteering offer available at different times so that people can volunteer when they want to – opportunities for informal volunteering. Some people might want to volunteer in the evening to do some weeding or gardening, others might want to do something early in the morning. Core hours 9-5 are not necessarily inclusive. Ad hoc opportunities would be good. Make bags and tools available to volunteer outside hours, e.g. litter picking can be done independently and then notify someone where the bags are.</p>
<p>Ideas to take forward</p>	<p>Keen to work more closely with managing agents and local authority, and RA have plans to start delivering activities but need support. Norwegian model was suggested – 2 days a year community clean up, notification months in advance lets people get involved, everyone cooks, builds community, within the day flexibility can be built in. Comms needs to be planned well; short notice is not helpful to get people involved. This can support management planning and discussions on priorities for service charge spend. Community planning to understand what the priorities are and where the volunteer effort is needed so that people can get on with it. Get the planners, developers, managing agents, local authority to put a small amount of funding to create a community day for this. Countryside (developers) have a community fund. Link to family fun run in Hobsons Park. RA are trying to bring all of this together, planning a Christmas event to bring communities together, but getting people involved is the biggest challenge.</p>

OBSERVATIONS

Sites are at different stages of development and each focus group discussion varied in direction, though with some common themes. All discussions were very positive. Residents provide a valuable asset with a range of knowledge and expertise. Conversations covered the following themes.

Managing Agents and Developers

- Engagement with managing agents, planners and developers is difficult and should be more transparent and accessible. Changes in ownership through development and beyond creates more complexity that residents find difficult to navigate.
- Mixed feelings about service charging but participants felt that they should be able to discuss with managing agents what the annual priorities are for service charge spend.
- Where sites are developed over long periods of time and in phases, review points should be introduced to look at existing plans, consult with existing residents, and ensure plans for the next phase are still fit for purpose. To also assess whether environmental (and other) targets are still challenging enough, and to update ecological impact statements and habitat reviews.
- Long term sustainable and viable management plans should be a requirement of the planning process.

Communication

- Communication is varied with some appreciating social media and others stating that it creates too much 'noise' with no clear space to find out what's happening. Important to have up to date information about what's on in the area, who the key contacts are, and about the local nature and wildlife habitats and how to look after it.
- Raising awareness of what is on offer locally, and adapting messages to suit target audiences, would highlight the variety of spaces available locally, can bring communities together, and could also address the feedback from non-users that '*there is nothing there for me*'.
- New residents should be provided with a resource guide that informs them of local activities, spaces, groups, and key contacts. This could be a link to a page on the managing agent's website and hard copy booklet for those who are not digitally engaged.

Accessibility

- Accessibility is an issue at all sites and should be reviewed as a priority by local authorities, managing agents and developers, irrespective of Future Parks work. Access issues came through strongly in the survey and focus

group discussions. Local disability and access groups, as well as residents in the new communities could assist with this work.

Provision

- Play Park provision was a key theme that was not delivered particularly well, felt like an afterthought rather than given proper thought. A range of play opportunities should be available that are future proofed for children moving through ages. One of the main reasons in the survey for people using spaces farther away was that they had better and a wider range of play offer, as well as variety for all ages. Toddlers in particular are not well catered for.

Nature and Wildlife

- Nature and wildlife is high on everyone's agenda. Residents are keen to see more nature and wildlife and appear to have a good appreciation of the requirements that are needed to introduce diverse habitats.
- Habitat assessments and regular monitoring is critical to protect what's already on site. Site visits and walkabouts should be introduced as a matter of urgency, especially at Northstowe.

COVID-19

- Use of parks and open spaces during pandemic does not appear to have impacted significantly on residents who attended focus groups.
- Some observed increase in dogs, dogs mess and litter.
- One group were not keen on promoting their spaces to a wider audience (non-residents) in terms of COVID-19 response and recovery, as there is no infrastructure to support additional visitors 'from outside'.

Resident Involvement

- Residents are a valuable resource of expertise and willingness. Some volunteering takes place and people are keen to get involved and do more. A number of respondents in each community identified that they would like to join parks and green spaces volunteer groups, and some wanting to set groups up.

Ideas to take forward

- Community days and annual events are opportunities for services, developers and managing agents to engage with residents in a fun way, to develop plans together, and prioritise service charge spend.
- Supporting volunteers to develop into groups would create a more joined up community voice that can have better engagement with managing agents/developer/local authority. Using this learning, and mapping the

'journey' could support Future Parks with understanding what the 'package of support' for volunteer groups looks like.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Annual or six monthly community fun day event(s) which support future planning and budgeting with decision makers, include a community clean-up, shout out for volunteers, and offer nature walks and awareness sessions. Can also bring in other services that want to work with communities. Seed funded by managing agents (community events are relatively low cost in relation to the return from engagement and opportunities to consult) and other local funding pots (e.g. ward councillor budgets). Work with the Residents Association and Think Communities community connectors to develop and deliver. These could also be used to decide on priorities for service charge spend by having topics proposed by the community that people could vote on during the day.
2. Habitat and Biodiversity monitoring – using site walkabouts to produce a baseline with managing agents, developers, local authority, ecologist and interested residents (there are a number who want to do this). Regular monitoring following the baseline survey by residents who could be trained in wildlife surveying and monitoring. This should be done as a matter of urgency (especially in Northstowe where a number of issues have been identified).
3. Support from Future Parks (and wider) to help people connect to volunteering groups (for those who said they wanted to volunteer) and support individuals who want to set up volunteering groups – testing the pathway and core requirements to set up and build capacity within a group (this feeds into the volunteering recommendation around developing a package of support).
4. Work with local partnerships, ward councillors, Think Communities community connectors to bring all of the green/environmental volunteer groups together as a network and 'one voice' (Green Team/Parks Action Group?) with access to decision makers/budget holders to talk about management plans and stewardship.
5. Discuss with managing agents (working with residents associations) the opportunities to map all of the communication and information channels and networks so that a resource guide can be shared with residents – digitally and hard copy – so that they can be signposted to activities and

events, opportunities to get involved and volunteer, and key contacts to raise issues.

6. Accessibility review should be undertaken (working with disability/access groups) to ensure all sites are fully accessible for all. In the future, accessibility should form part of the planning and development process and be included in contract monitoring.
7. For planners and developers, where sites are long term builds over a number of phases and/or years, introduce annual or phase end reviews by planners/developers to understand whether plans are still fit for purpose. This should include consulting with existing residents to capture lessons learned so that the same issues are not experienced by future residents and the same mistakes are not repeated. This should be discussed at the C&P Housing Board and Developing with Nature Forum.

IN SUMMARY

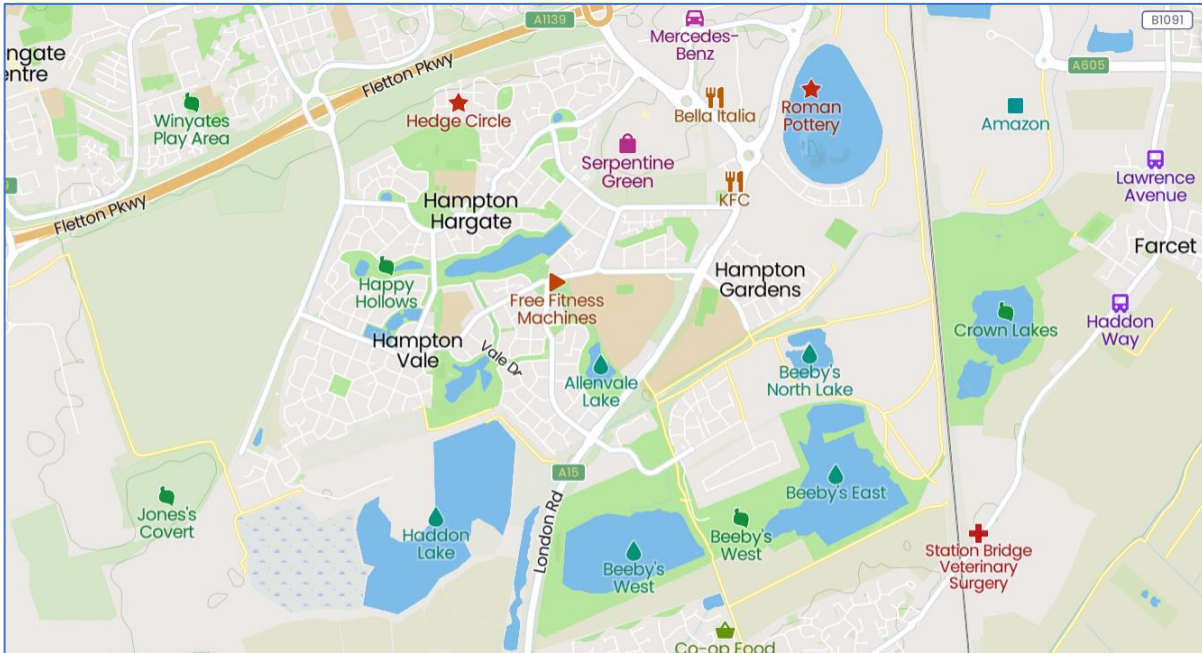
Working with communities to create spaces, and develop maintenance and management solutions can create effective partnership collaborations that are both cost effective and inclusive. Bringing communities together can help to build community cohesion and contribute to improved health and wellbeing outcomes as people feel empowered, are more engaged, less isolated and more active in their green spaces.

For planners and developers, creating parks and open spaces within new communities is not something new, but work they have done many times before. However, often the same issues arise and are repeated at each new project or phase of work. More should be done to review and learn from previous work, and to engage with communities throughout the process. They provide a valuable resource to support developing creative solutions and could provide a stewardship role that supports effective and sustainable long term management plans.

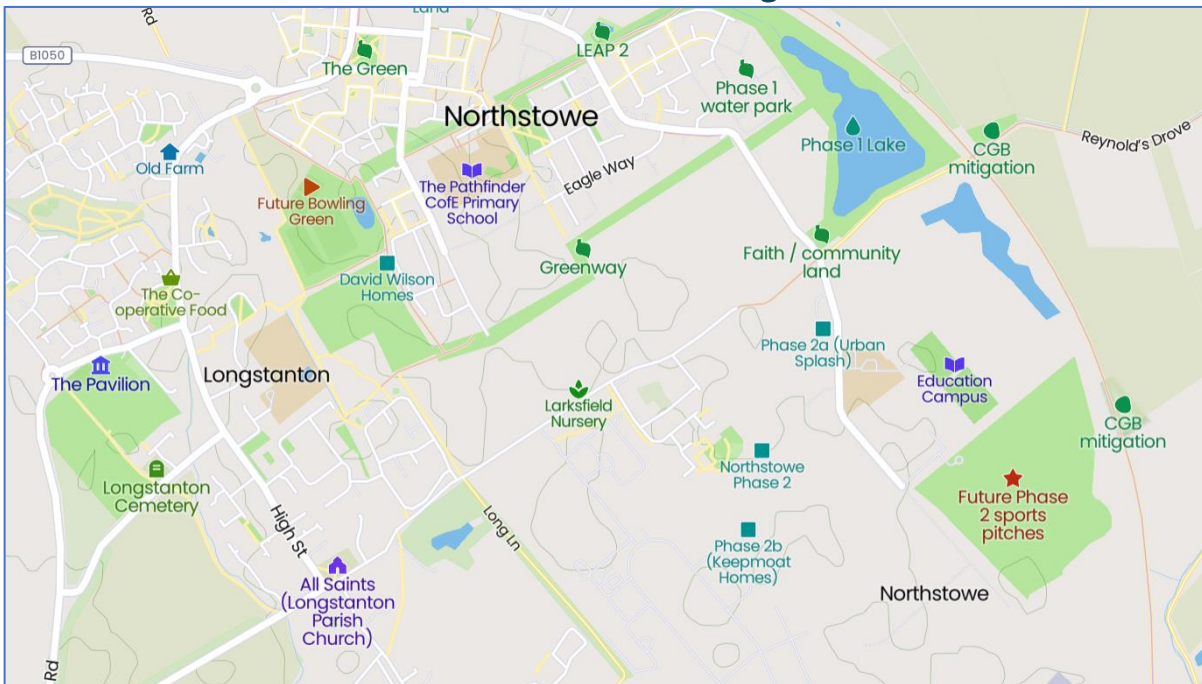
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Appendix 1: Maps of Communities of Interest

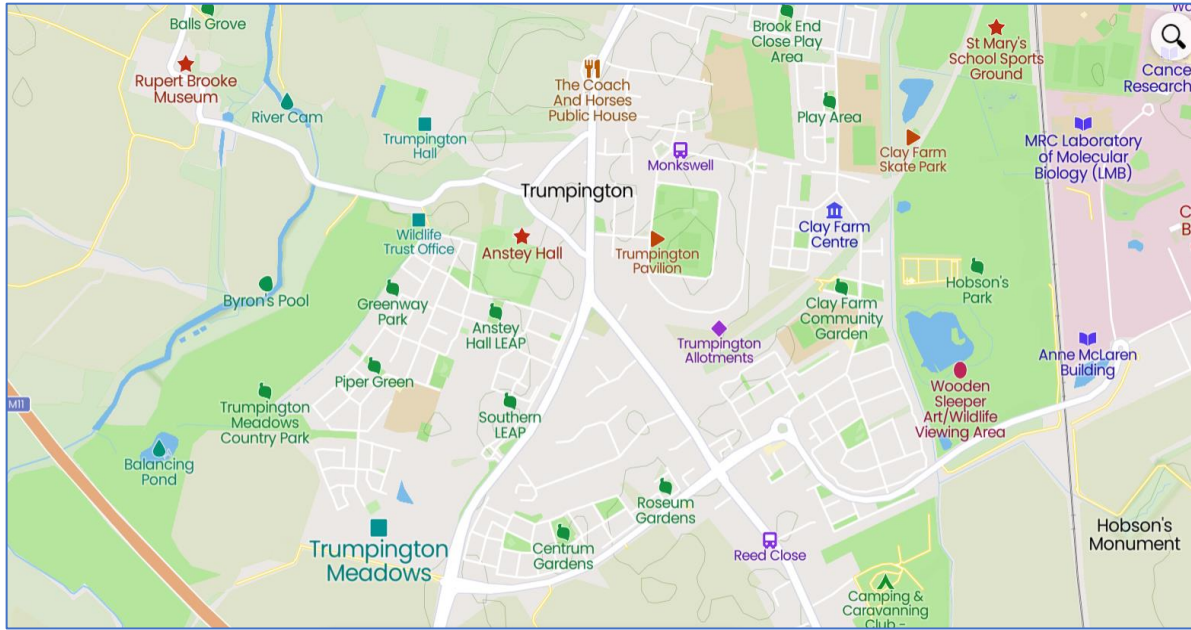
Hampton, Peterborough



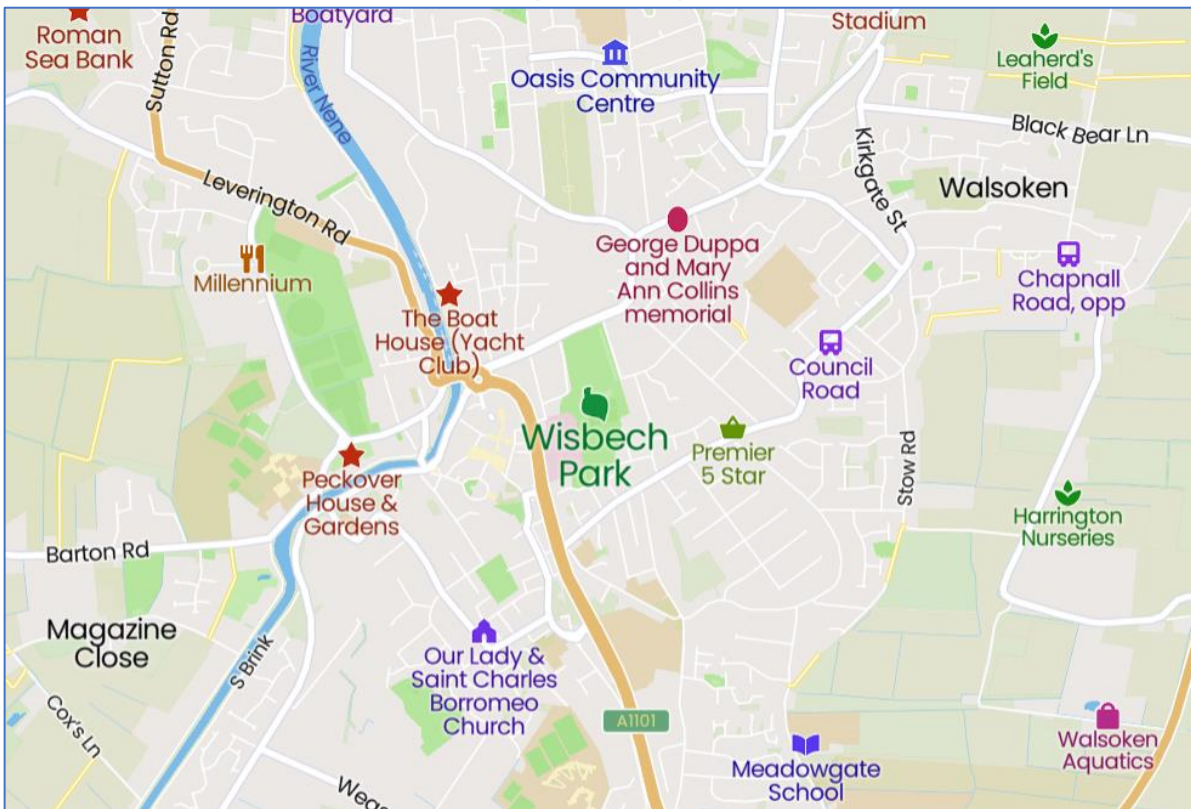
Northstowe, South Cambridgeshire



Trumpington Meadows, Cambridge



Waterlees, Wisbech, Fenland



Appendix 2: Waterlees Community of Interest

Waterlees has been chosen as a community of interest as there are already a number of Future Parks connections with this area that can support engaging with this community. The Volunteering element of the Future Parks work is working with the I Love Wisbech Partnership whose partners include Clarion Housing (Waterlees Housing Provider) and the Oasis Centre (Waterless community and health and wellbeing hub).

A number of social housing providers attending the C&P Housing Board meeting were keen to investigate the relationship between lower socio economic groups and their use of green spaces, and the Think Communities Inequalities lead is keen to discuss this further.

The transition phase should be used to fully understand this community of interest and identify opportunities to increase parks and open space use and involvement. The following engagement has taken place so far to support this learning and development:

- Clarion has considerable knowledge of this community and have also held a number of consultations with residents as part of wider engagement.
- Blackfield Creatives spoke to 100 people (local people, volunteers, tourists) over three days in July 2021 as they developed the Vertical Garden at Wisbech Park.
- Liminal Labs conducted an extensive consultation with residents about access to green spaces in February 2021.
- A focus group took place during the co-design phase with the Youth Advisory Board (Fenland and East Cambs).

Next Steps

- Collate all existing data available relating to this community of interest and green spaces, including Liminal Labs work – Futurebright.
- Meet with Blackfield Creatives to discuss their findings from the three day consultation.
- Meet with Blackfield Creatives, Oasis Centre, Think Communities, Clarion Housing and Housing Board social housing providers to discuss the potential for a research project.
- Identify opportunities for on sight engagement with residents through I Love Wisbech Partnership and Oasis Centre (*note: there is an event at Wisbech Park on 8th August that Future Parks could attend with Blackfield Creatives*).



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