

At the Town Council’s Planning, Contracts and Works meeting on 14th August, members received the recent Play Area inspections. In view of a number of costly repairs identified at Orchard Hill, it was agreed to seeks views on this particular play area.

Householders in the following streets were delivered a letter and short survey and invited to share their thoughts, the figures in brackets denote the replies received, please note that Cockshott Dean is the nearest street to the play area.

Cockshott Dean (7)
Orchards Hill (1)
Ducketts Dean (1)
Appletree Drive (4)

Well Dean (2)
The Ford (1)
The Waggonway (1)

Have you or any member of your household used the play area?

YES 53%

NO 47%

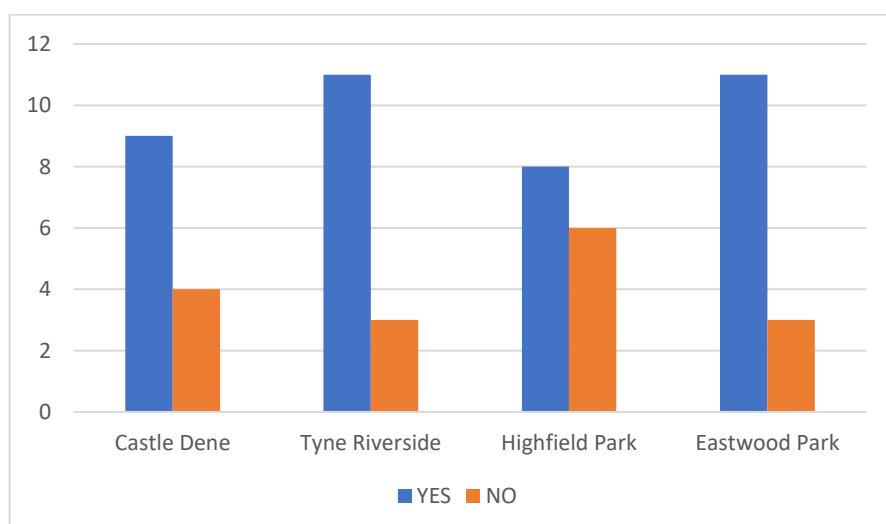
How valuable to the immediate local area would you rate the current play equipment?
(1 being least valuable and 5 being most valuable)



If the play space was removed, to what extent do you think young people in the immediate, local area would be disappointed?
(1 being not disappointed and 5 being very disappointed)



Would you consider any of the following play areas as suitable alternatives:



Do you think this area needs some type of children's play equipment?

YES 50%

NO 50%

Would you prefer that this area was maintained as an open space only, i.e. no equipment, fencing only grassed?

YES 53%

NO 47%

Outline of additional comments received:

- Neighbourhood play areas should be installed for very young children only, as they visit on foot or with pushchair.
- If better equipment was installed and the area was maintained, it would be used.
- The play area at Orchard Hill only attracts teenagers, resulting in anti-social behaviour and litter, this is not appreciated by those living in close proximity.
- Near-by residents enjoy the open space, as does the wildlife.
- As an open space, it is used as a meeting place for dog walkers and young people kicking a football or on bikes.
- Dog walkers may appreciate a space that dogs could be let off-lead.
- The area is poorly maintained with a frequently overflowing litter/dog bin.
- A sensory garden with seating area could be enjoyed.
- A large estate like Castlefields should have a play area, like other estates in Prudhoe.

Summary

It is clear from the survey responses that there are a number of near-by residents who are vehemently against the play area and have called the police on a number of occasions, recently and in the past. The Neighbourhood Police Team has responded to calls of anti-social behaviour but do not have any statistics they can share with us as when they respond it is young people congregating, which in itself is not unlawful.

Of those who would appreciate a play area in this location, the only type of play equipment that would be welcomed is that for very young children, although one respondent did mention goal posts or a basketball net for older children.

Respondents are equally split on whether the area should have some play equipment or simply be a managed open-space. There is, however, a clear indication that the current equipment/space is neither used nor valued and therefore **the Town Council should agree to remove what is there as a priority and commission groundwork to restore the grassⁱ**. This would not preclude the Town Council from agreeing to install a Play Area in the future, should it find that this was supported in greater numbers.

ⁱ The fencing could be removed and retained for use in the future as it is the same as all other play areas.