Community Consultation Report: Dundry Playground

July 2010
Nancy Jennings and Dundry Playground Group
Photos by Andrew Nixon

Figure 1. Jen Hurford (right), acting secretary of Dundry Playground Group, consulting with members of the community and providing information on Dundry Day. The ‘temporary playground’ is in use in the background.
# Community Consultation Report: Dundry Playground

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Summary

Dundry Parish Plan Group and Dundry Playground Group, in working towards creating a playground in Dundry, have conducted qualitative and quantitative community consultation with many groups and individuals, in many ways, over a period of years. The Parish Plan Questionnaire in 2007 originally provided evidence that a playground is wanted in Dundry. More recently, since applying for funding from Community Spaces in March 2010, Dundry Playground Group has invited ideas and comments from members of the community at special events such as Dundry Day (Figure 1), via Dundry Playground Group’s web page (see www.dundry.org.uk), via posters, notices in the Parish Magazine, at the school’s sports’ day, via formal documents circulated to community groups, and via word of mouth.

Consultation provided answers, as follows, to four questions:

1. Where, exactly, should the playground be?
   ☑ Between the Village Hall and the Sports and Social Club building (location B in Figure 5).
   ☑ Some play items should be around the perimeter of the playing field, to encourage children to leave the main play area and explore the whole field.

2. What features are essential in the playground?
   ☑ Acoustic and/or visual link between main playground and other play items
   ☑ Benches/picnic tables/logs to sit on
   ☑ Climbing frame
   ☑ Features stimulating imaginative/creative and risky play
   ☑ Fence around main playground
   ☑ Innovative, unusual nature/design
   ☑ Relief/mounds/tunnels
   ☑ Shade
   ☑ Slides
   ☑ Suitable for people of all ages, and for unsupervised use by children over 9
   ☑ Swings
   ☑ Wooden, natural appearance with some colour

3. What features are desirable, but not essential?
   ☑ Climbing wall
   ☑ Play house
   ☑ Rocks
   ☑ See-saw
   ☑ Stepping stones
   ☑ Trampoline
   ☑ Zip wire

4. What features are not wanted by members of the community?
   ☑ Level nature
   ☑ Metal construction
   ☑ Theme
   ☑ Urban design

We conclude that Dundry Playground should be innovative and exciting, and made from mostly natural materials (including wood). It should include relief, and therefore be in sharp contrast to the level playing field adjacent to the site. Children will be encouraged to use the playing field by their desire to investigate play items around the perimeter of playing field, including a play sculpture, which they themselves will design and create.

We now plan to use this report to create a brief so that an architect can create a design for Dundry Playground. This will be presented to the community on a consultation day in early September 2010.
Introduction

The need for a playground in Dundry

A playground has been desired by residents of Dundry for many years. Dundry is a small village (ca. 800 inhabitants) on top of a steep hill, five miles outside the city of Bristol. It is relatively isolated, especially for children; in the village there is only the village hall and playing field, a church, a pub and the Royal British Legion. Children, young people, parents, carers, and grandparents would like a community focus, a meeting place where they can play and chat in safety and without leaving their own village. For this reason, the Dundry Parish Plan Questionnaire featured questions for and about the needs of young people, and demonstrated the requirement for a playground. Dundry Parish Plan Group received some funding from the Quartet Community Foundation for a playground. Dundry Playground Group (full name Play Area Implementation Team for Dundry Parish Plan) applied for further funding for a playground from Community Spaces in early 2010. Once Stage 1 of the application for funding from Community Spaces had been approved, it became apparent that more community consultation was needed.

Aims of this report

The aims of this report are to bring together in easily accessible form the methods and results of all community consultation carried out pertaining to Dundry Playground. This report is freely available to members of the public via Dundry Playground Group’s webpage (see www.dundry.org.uk), so that feedback is achieved.

The main questions addressed by the consultation were as follows:
1. Where, exactly, should the playground be?
2. What features are essential in the playground?
3. What features are desirable, but not essential?
4. What features are not wanted by members of the community?
Consultation Methods

Parish Plan Questionnaire

The Parish Plan Questionnaire, incorporating 80 questions covering topics suggested by members of the community on Dundry Day 2007, was circulated to all 317 properties in the parish of Dundry in November 2007. The resulting Parish Plan was published in February 2009. Only the relevant results are summarised here.

Logo competition

Dundry Playground Group ran a competition to design a logo for the playground, and included on the entry form the statement: ‘I want Dundry Playground because…’ to be completed by contestants (Figure 2).

![Logo competition entries](image)

Figure 2. Logo competition entries, including the winning entry by Leah de Boer, displayed on Dundry Day.

Dundry Day

Dundry Day is an annual village fête organised by the Parish Council, the Women’s Institute and other members of the community. In 2010, the Parish Council decided to use Dundry Day (5 June) as a fund-raising event for the playground. Dundry Playground Group used Dundry Day for community consultation and to provide information about the group’s activities, in several ways. We also invited members of the community to join Dundry Playground Group.
Dundry Day questionnaire
A brief questionnaire was given out to children and adults. Three multiple-choice questions were asked, to discover:

😊 what people wanted to do in the playground (answers were: chatting, climbing, exploring nature, imaginative play, jumping, running, sitting quietly, swinging, and team play)

😊 what play equipment should be there (answers included: benches, climbing frame, grass mounds, roundabout, shade, slides, stepping stones, trees, tunnels, zip wire)

😊 what the playground should look like (answers included: bright and colourful, innovative, contoured, level, natural, themed, wooden).

Space was provided for comments, and parents of young children were asked to complete the questionnaire for themselves as well as on behalf of their children.

‘Draw what you would like to see in Dundry Playground’
We asked children and adults to draw what they wanted to see in Dundry Playground, without considering what would be feasible, to comment on their drawing, and to place themselves in an age category (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Children drawing what they want to see in Dundry Playground, on Dundry Day, with the playing field in the background.

‘Give us your ideas for Dundry Playground’
We provided a board where people could leave suggestions, comments and ideas about the playground. A similar board was offered at Dundry Primary School’s Sports’ Day (2 July 2010).

Observations of children playing
To ensure that people had a clear idea of what Dundry Playground could eventually look like, we marked out the approximate boundary of our proposed fenced area, and filled the resulting ‘temporary playground’ (Figure 4) with toys borrowed from Dundry Pre-school and Dundry Baby and Toddler Group, and with items such as recycled packaging, pieces of rubber, cloth, netting, tubes, cardboard boxes, etc. for imaginative play (from Bristol Children’s Scrapstore). The toys included a small climbing frame, a slide, trikes, scooters, other ride-on toys, ‘stepping stones’, a see-saw and fabric tunnels. Every 15 minutes we observed how children were playing, by making a tally of children engaged in play categories including: bouncing, chatting, climbing, imaginative play, jumping, and rocking.
Other information
We gained many ideas through informal conversations with people attending Dundry Day.

Consultation with North Somerset Council’s Play Rangers

In order to co-ordinate our activities with our local council’s Play Strategy, as suggested by Community Spaces, we met and consulted with North Somerset Council’s play rangers and other professionals with responsibility for play at the site of the proposed playground.

Consultation about the exact location of the playground

A consultation document, including an aerial photograph marked with two alternative locations for the playground (Figure 5) for comment, and also asking for comment on our proposal to place play items around the perimeter of the playing field, was circulated to the following nine community groups on 1 July 2010: Dundry Baby and Toddler Group (Emily McKeown), Dundry Parish Council (Holger Laux), Dundry Parish Plan Group (Dave Nevitt), Dundry Playground Group (Nancy Jennings), Dundry Pre-school (Annie Noble), Dundry Primary School (Rhiannon Price), Dundry Sports and Social Club (Anthony Mattock), Village Hall (Dave Nevitt), Women’s Institute (Lesley Hurford). The consultation document was also posted on our web page so that anyone could download it and return a response.

Ongoing informal consultation

We have made people aware of our plans, and asked for feedback, via our web page (see www.dundry.org.uk), flyers, posters, an advert in the Parish News magazine (distributed to all households in Dundry), and mentions in Parish Council Minutes which are widely published. In most cases, a phone number and email address is provided, and comments are invited from the community.
Figure 5. The aerial photograph used in the location consultation (created by Andy Nixon). The Village Hall is the large building at the top with the red roof. The playing field is to the south of it. The two alternative locations for the playground are shown as A and B.

Consultation once a design has been created

Using this report to create a brief, we aim to instruct an architect to create a design for Dundry Playground. This will be presented to the community on a consultation day in early September 2010.
Consultation Results

Parish Plan Questionnaire

The Parish Plan Questionnaire was returned by 242 respondents, representing 76% of households and 70% of the population. Of these, 58% supported the provision of a children’s playground in the village. Relevant comments included:
‘There somehow needs to be more community. (…) Due to lack of play areas (communal areas) we know no local children. We met only one family with children of a similar age.’
‘A village playground - swings and slide - is needed.’
When asked to name the three most important things to be addressed by the Parish Plan, 25 respondents listed ‘a playground/facilities for children/facilities for 10-16 year olds’.

The ‘Youth’ section of the questionnaire, aimed at young people aged 6-18 years, was completed by 51 people (representing two thirds of young people in the village). 55% of respondents rated a playground very high or high priority, and when asked what they wanted in the village, young people desired provision for play, as follows:
‘place to socialise/meet other children (2)’
‘play area/park/natural play area (5)
’skate park’
‘trampoline’.

The Parish Plan Questionnaire demonstrated that the majority of the residents of Dundry want a playground.

Logo competition

There were 40 entries, from adults and children, for the logo competition. A team of seven judges, including two children, spent several hours choosing the winning design. After much deliberation, the winning logo was chosen: Leah de Boer’s image of smiling people holding hands under a cheerful yellow sun (Figure 2). Leah is 13 years old.

The sentence ‘I want Dundry Playground because…’ was completed as follows by contestants:
‘…so we don’t have to drive to get to a climbing frame.’
‘…so we don’t have to drive miles and miles.’
‘…I’d love to be able to take my children somewhere on foot.’
‘…all there is at the Village Hall are two football fields. It would be better if there was one football field and a big playground.’
‘…it’s local to where we live and would be a great place to meet up with my friends and have lots of fun.’
‘…I like playgrounds.’
‘…I want one of those things that goes swingy, round and round and up and down! You sit on it.’
‘…all the kids in Dundry can play on it and their cousins as well.’
‘…I would love some swings and a slide so me and my friends can play together close to home.’
‘…it would be good fun!’

The logo competition was successful in providing a clear, recognisable ‘identity’ for the playground, and in raising awareness of the playground funding application among local people.
**Dundry Day**

Dundry Day was successful as a fund-raising event (£280 was raised for the playground), as a community consultation day, and as a way to raise awareness of the playground (Figure 6).

![Dundry Day Information Board](image)

**Figure 6.** Information board provided on Dundry Day.

**Dundry Day questionnaire**

67 completed questionnaires were returned (Figure 7). Results (Figure 8) showed that members of the community want the playground to allow climbing, swinging, jumping and imaginative play, via the provision of one or more swings, climbing frames, slides, tunnels, see-saws, zip-wires, logs and grass mounds. Benches and shade, to allow chatting in comfort, are also desired.

In terms of the style of the playground, respondents showed a clear preference for wooden, natural structures, with some bright colour, and there was support for an innovative, unusual, contoured or landscaped playground. The least favoured options were level, urban and metal.
Comments provided by questionnaire respondents included suggestions to include:

- Climbing frame shaped like train, car, plane etc.
- Climbing frame with slides
- Counting/letters
- Cycle/skate board ramps
- Enclosed area to keep younger children safe (2 respondents)
- Involvement from local children (community art project)
- Items for hiding in
- Items for older children
- Logs as benches
- Natural obstacles
- Picnic tables
- Plastic items
- Sand pit
- Small growing area/garden
- Soft surface
- Trampoline for bouncing
- Water fountain

Of the 67 respondents, 59 indicated their age. Of these, 42 (71%) were aged 21+ years; 1 (2%) was 16-20; 4 (7%) were 11-16; 7 (12%) were 6-10, and 5 (8%) were 0-5 years old. Questionnaires were a successful way to find out the view of adults in particular.

Figure 7. One of the questionnaires completed on Dundry Day.
**Figure 8.** Answers, pooled and expressed as percentages of the 67 questionnaire respondents, to the questions: a) what do you want to do in Dundry Playground? b) what should be included? and c) what should the playground look like?
‘Draw what you would like to see in Dundry Playground’
We received 51 drawings (Figure 9) of ‘what you would like to see in the playground’, from adults and children, including items which could be organised into five overlapping categories, corresponding to five purposes (Figure 10). The 51 drawings included 86 recognisable or named items in total. The most popular ‘purpose’ category was ‘climbing, sliding and risky play’, followed by ‘imaginative play’. The most popular items were slides, swings (Figure 9), ladders, climbing frames, stepping stones or logs, balls and houses.

On 75% of drawings the age of the artist was indicated. Of these known-age drawings, 19 (50%) were by participants classed as 0-5 years old; 11 (29%) as 6-10; 4 (11%) as 11-15; none as 16-20, and 4 (11%) as 21+. This method of consultation clearly mostly represents the views of young children.

‘Give us your ideas for Dundry Playground’
The comments left on the board by eight people can be summarised as follows:
Requests for play equipment:
😊 central climbing frame with slides off it
😊 climbing wall
😊 equipment for balancing
😊 round sloped spinny thing (an angled roundabout)
😊 see-saw
😊 swings
😊 wooden ‘assault course’ type of play area
General requests/suggestions:
😊 for all ages (2 comments)
😊 people should be able to flow from one section to another
😊 reliable
😊 sturdy

Figure 9. A drawing of what one child, aged 6-10, would like to see in Dundry Playground. The writing says ‘My drawing shows that I want a swings.’
**For climbing, sliding, and risky play (37)**
- climbing frame (4)
- climbing net/frame like a spider’s web (2)
- ladder/climbing steps (7)
- logs to climb on (2)
- mound with spiral slide/helter skelter (2)
- slide/big slide/sack slide (11)
- stepping stones/stepping logs (4)
- tower with a view
- tractor tyres
- zip-wire

**For chatting and socialising; general (7)**
- area for small and big children
- benches/logs to sit on (2)
- lolly
- mummy
- shade
- tubes to talk into and make noise
- rocks (2)

**For imaginative play (23)**
- animals/jelly fish/sea serpent/butterflies (4)
- ball pool/ball/bouncy ball that never stops/balloon (4)
- dressing up/theatre (2)
- giant pillow
- little house/house/turret play house on two levels/spooky house (4)
- lots of colours
- mound
- plane/rocket (3)
- sand pit
- telescopes
- tunnel through mound

**For rocking, swinging, and bouncing (14)**
- roundabout
- see-saw
- springy monster for 5 children to sit on
- swing/big swing/basket swing/rope swing (11)

**For sports (5)**
- show-jumping arena for humans
- skate/bike park/bike (2)
- small football pitches
- table tennis table

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**Figure 10.** Results from ‘Draw what you would like to see at Dundry Playground’. Items have been placed in five overlapping categories, corresponding to purpose. We received 51 drawings, of 86 recognisable or named items in total. Numbers in parentheses are the numbers of drawings of each category or item.
Observations of children playing

At least 70 individual children and many adults played on the 'temporary playground' we marked out. Our spot observations of the children playing provided 109 data points from 13 scored moments over a period of three hours (so that there were, on average, 8 children playing at each scored moment). The spread of children between the categories was even over time, and in total 45 (41%) observations were of children engaged in imaginative play, and 26 (24%) of children climbing. These were the two most observed categories (Figures 11 and 12). Imaginative play involved climbing in boxes, blowing in plastic tubes, hiding under a net, fighting with foam strips, building with foam blocks, using a cardboard tube as a telescope, talking through pipes, chasing and catching with nets, pretending a box was a boat, using the climbing frame as a den, and putting small items through a tube. Children were also repeatedly observed running away from the busy playground onto the open playing field, then returning to the playground (Figure 13).

Small numbers of observations were of children bouncing (11%), chatting (3%), running (9%), rocking (5%), playing football (1%), using the tunnels (3%) and sliding (2%).

This observational consultation showed that most children prefer to be offered open-ended play items which they can use for imaginative, creative play, and also enjoy climbing.

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**Figure 11.** The spread of pooled observations, over three hours, of children playing on the 'temporary playground' on Dundry Day showed that imaginative play and climbing were the most interesting activities for children.
Figure 12. Imaginative play, in this case using recycled packaging and other objects, was the most common behaviour among children and adults on the ‘temporary playground’ on Dundry Day.

Other information
Through conversations with people attending Dundry Day, including members of the Village Hall Committee, we learned that our proposed location was not universally considered the best place for the playground. This led to consultation about the exact location of the playground (see below).

Through conversations with members of the community, which took place mainly on Dundry Day, we learned of some common questions or concerns people have about the playground. We have summarised the main questions, and our responses, in Table 1.

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<tr>
<th>Questions from the community</th>
<th>Responses from Dundry Playground Group</th>
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<tr>
<td>How will people access the playground when the front gates of the Village Hall are shut?</td>
<td>The current kissing gate to the north west of the Village Hall will be replaced with a wheelchair- and buggy-friendly gate. Many people will walk to the playground and access it on foot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where will people using the playground park?</td>
<td>Those driving will park in nearby Crabtree Lane and Crabtree Close. If parking becomes a problem, the Parish Council will consider opening the gates each day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How will vandalism be prevented?</td>
<td>We will choose equipment designed for public areas. We will involve the community through consultation, so that a feeling of ‘ownership’ of the playground exists. The playground will be clearly visible from the lane, and we will consider installing lighting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will teenagers use the playground and cause trouble?</td>
<td>We hope that teenagers will use the playground without causing trouble. This consultation has shown that most people want a playground suitable for people of all ages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will the items around the perimeter of the playing field be safe?</td>
<td>These items are intended to invite children to explore, and do not need to be unsafe. We are considering stepping stones and logs to walk and balance on.</td>
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Table 1. Common questions or concerns raised by members of the community, and answers from Dundry Playground Group.
We learned that many children over about 9 years old currently use the playing field without supervision. Parents feel it is essential that the playground and all associated play equipment is suitable for unsupervised play by children aged 9 and over.

The combination of the temporary playground and the adjacent playing field clearly invited children to explore outside the fenced area. Informal consultation revealed to us how important the open, flat grass of the playing field was for playing, and discussions with children and adults suggested to us the idea of having one item of play equipment, preferably one that would look attractive and inviting from a distance, at the far end of the playing field. This would act as a beacon, inviting older children to explore the whole field, while the fenced area would provide safety for the very young.

![Image of children playing]

**Figure 13.** Children enjoyed repeatedly running from the busy temporary playground onto the open, empty playing field and back again; they viewed it as an adventure and then a return to safety.

**Consultation with North Somerset Council’s Play Rangers**

North Somerset Council’s play rangers offered us a play sculpture, which will be designed and built by members of the community with Touchwood Enterprises ([http://www.touchwoodenterprises.co.uk/](http://www.touchwoodenterprises.co.uk/)), and is separately funded by North Somerset Council under the Find Your Talent scheme ([http://www.findyourtalent.org/](http://www.findyourtalent.org/)). The design day took place at the school on 22 July, and the build will take place in September. In response to our consultation on Dundry Day, this play sculpture will be placed at the far end of the field. The play rangers also suggested to us the following:

- ☺ We should have a few play items around the perimeter of the playing field, to invite older children and adults to explore use the whole area. A ‘circuit’ would be ideal.
- ☺ The fenced area should be as big as possible, to allow the later addition of items provided by further funding or by members of the community, such as logs, tractor tyres, rocks, and to allow children to play on grass as well as on play equipment.
- ☺ All equipment should, as far as possible, be suitable for people of all ages.
Consultation about the exact location of the playground

Among the 20 members of Dundry Playground Group and the eight other community groups consulted, there was overwhelming support for location B (Figure 5). Only one member of Dundry Playground Group, and one group, preferred location A, and they did not feel strongly.

There was overall support for the play sculpture and for the play items around the perimeter of the playing field.

Conclusions

Community consultation showed that many people in Dundry want to have a say in the design and execution of the playground. Once the Parish Plan Questionnaire results had established the need for a playground, further consultation information came mainly from the following six lines of evidence, abbreviated as shown in parentheses:

1. Dundry Day Questionnaire (Q)
2. Dundry Day drawings (D)
3. Informal consultation and ideas boards (I)
4. Observations of children playing on our ‘temporary playground’ (O)
5. Consultation with North Somerset Play Rangers (P)
6. Location consultation (L)

Consultation was successful and provided answers to our questions as follows, from the lines of evidence indicated by the abbreviations:

1. Where, exactly, should the playground be?
   - Between the Village Hall and the Sports and Social Club building (location B in Figure 5; I, P, L).
   - Some play items should be around the perimeter of the playing field, to encourage children to leave the main play area and explore the whole field (I, P, L).

2. What features are essential in the playground?
   - Acoustic and/or visual link between main playground and other items in the playing field (D, P)
   - Benches/picnic tables/logs to sit on (Q, I)
   - Climbing frame (Q, D, I, O)
   - Features stimulating imaginative/creative and risky play (Q, D, I, O)
   - Fence around main playground (Q)
   - Innovative, unusual nature (Q)
   - Relief/mounds/tunnels (D, Q)
   - Shade (Q, D)
   - Slide (Q, D, I)
   - Suitable for people of all ages, and for unsupervised use by children aged 9 years and over (Q, I, P)
   - Swing (Q, D, I)
   - Wooden, natural appearance with some colour (Q)
3. What features are desirable, but not essential?
   - Climbing wall (Q)
   - Play house (Q, D)
   - Rocks (Q)
   - See-saw (Q, O)
   - Stepping stones (Q, O)
   - Trampoline (Q, O)
   - Zip wire (Q)

4. What features are not wanted by members of the community?
   - Level nature of site (Q)
   - Metal construction (Q)
   - Theme (Q)
   - Urban design (Q)

We conclude that Dundry Playground should be innovative and exciting to play on, and made from mostly natural materials (including wood). It should definitely include some relief, and therefore be in sharp contrast to the level playing field adjacent to the site. Children will be encouraged to run and play on the playing field by their desire to investigate play items around the perimeter of the playing field, which will include a play sculpture which they themselves will design and create.