

MILLFIELDS PARK 2nd CONSULTATION FAQ

1. Trim Trail Exercise Equipment

Q: Rather than 3 clusters of exercise equipment have you considered other options for the trim trail set-up such as single items spread around the path or in one cluster?

A: We asked for views on these three options in the 2018 public survey and the clusters option was clearly the most popular.

Q: Will the exercise equipment be suitable for the disabled?

A: Yes. There will be equipment designed for the disabled and accessible from the walking/jogging path. There is a real shortage of disabled exercise equipment in Easingwold.

Q: What will the exercise equipment be constructed of?

A: We will choose equipment constructed as far as possible of materials that fit well with the rural park location and constructed from robust long-lasting materials finished in a colour scheme to blend well in the park scene (e.g. a muted green). Some example illustrations are provided in the supporting information.

Q: Will the exercising equipment be illuminated?

A: Under Option A (Bollard lighting) this will not be possible but would be possible under Option B (Column lighting).

2. Bike Jump and Skills Track

Q: What ages are the bike tracks suitable for?

A: The aim is to make the tracks suitable for as wide a range of people as possible with a challenging pump track for experienced/advanced riders and a simpler track for beginners and younger riders.

Q: What will it look like?

A: A professional design would be commissioned supported by appropriate planting that will soften its impact into the landscape.

Q: Why have you chosen this location for the bike track?

A: This location was chosen based on feedback from the first consultation with views expressed that with a location near the skate park, children and youngsters are in an open and visible area with good access.

Q: Who will be controlling/enforcing the access to the bike area?

A: As with all other areas in Millfields Park it is freely open to the public, so trying to apply controls or enforcement activity would be both impractical and

inappropriate as well as unnecessary. Anti-social behaviour would be a matter for the police.

Q: The proposal document suggests that the police would have to ensure anti-social behavior is dealt with. That may well be the case, but given the police already have overstretched resources, have they been asked their views?

A: They have been made aware of the proposals and will have an input to the consultation.

Q: Will the bike tracks be illuminated?

A: No.

Q: How much would it cost?

A: We have been quoted £90,000 for a professionally designed and constructed track – this would need to be funded through grants rather than Council funds.

3. Lighting of the Jogging/Walking Path and Skatepark

Q: Why does the existing walking/jogging path need to have lights?

A: The path needs lights to fully allow safe use in the hours of darkness particularly in the winter months when access to other walking/jogging trails is limited. Jogging and walking in the dark and on roads is a barrier to a lot of people, in particular younger and older people in the winter months. It may also benefit people who wish to walk dogs in the dark mornings and evenings.

Q: Have other options for lighting the path been carefully considered? e.g. runway style lighting or a glow in the dark track?

A: Yes – but such options are designed to be seen from above and are not suitable to ensure a safe and secure lighting level for joggers/walkers to see other users and avoid collision. A specialist lighting company, using industry-recognised software and concepts and following professional guidance notes for the reduction of obtrusive light, produced the designs.

Q: How tall will the lights around the path be? At what distance will they be spaced?

A: Under option A there would be 43 x 1m high bollard lights spaced around the path (approx. 7m spacing) plus 2 x 4m columns with directional floodlights (to light both the skatepark and path). Under Option B there would be 10 x 4m high column directional floodlights (including lighting of the skatepark) spaced around the path (approx. 46m spacing). Under both options directional floodlights would be fitted to 3 of the existing street lights on the main cycle/foot path (see the maps and illustrations provided).

Q: Why are so many bollard lights needed?

A: The number of bollards is determined by the spread of light from the lower height needed to achieve a consistent safe level of light around the path.

Q: Will there be light spillage away from the path with the column lighting?

A: This will be very minimal as the design uses directional floodlights to provide a safe level of lighting only on the path itself.

Q: Will the lights affect the Skatepark?

A: Under Option A in addition to the bollard lights two 4m columns with directional floodlights will be installed to illuminate both the skatepark and the jogging/walking path. Under option B two of the 10 Columns would have directional floodlights illuminating both the skatepark and the jogging/walking path. The operation of these lights would be synchronised with the existing floodlight on the main path that currently partly illuminates the Skatepark (i.e. dusk until 9pm).

Q: Why does the Skatepark need additional lighting?

A: The skatepark has been a phenomenal success. Very limited lighting is in place now and it is felt to improve this would enable the skatepark to be used more safely after dusk until 9pm. The installation of lighting to the path gives this opportunity.

Q: Will the provision of enhanced lighting to the skatepark increase anti-social behaviour?

A: Quite the contrary as enhanced lighting and a resulting increase in use by skaters would be a disincentive to anti-social behaviour.

Q: Originally it was agreed by NYCC/HDC that the recreational area was elevated and so they would only allow low-level lighting along only the tarmacked path. Doesn't the impact of 10 x 4m lights go against this reasoning?

A: The path lights will be a lot more focused with less light spillage and lower output than the lights on the path (approx. 50% less bright). NYCC/HDC will have an input to the consultation.

Q: How bright will these new lights be?

A: The lights are professionally designed to provide an even distribution of light along the length of the walking/jogging path for safety reasons. They are on average broadly 50% less bright than the existing street lights on the main walking/cycling path in Millfields Park which have bright and dark patches along their length. The light will also be warmer than the harsh white from the existing street lights.

Q: Will the lights affect bats?

A: We have not carried out any bat surveys but there are already lights on the tarmacked cycleway/footpath that are approx. 50% brighter and are on longer than those proposed for the jogging path. The new lights would also be warmer and less harsh than the existing lights.

Q: Will the new lights be on all night?

A: No - they will be on from 7am to dawn and dusk to 9pm to allow safe morning and evening exercise during the winter months. They will not be on before 7am or after 9pm.

Q: How much will the lighting cost to run?

A: Under the Column option the total lighting load will be 1001w and will cost 14p per hour to run in total. Under the Bollard option the total lighting load will be 1421w and will cost 20p per hour to run in total.

Q: Who's going to maintain the jogging path and lights?

A: The Council will assume responsibility for the maintenance of all the community facilities at Millfields Park.

Q: What role will Easingwold Running Club (ERC) have?

A: ERC will be a key partner with the Council and take the lead in securing grants and technical specifications for the lights etc. The path is very much a community facility and available for all members of the community to use. However, the lights will allow ERC to offer training, coaching and development to runners of all abilities and ages as well as existing members in a safe environment in the dark winter mornings and evenings.

Q: Why does a lit path have to be at Millfields Park?

A: Millfields Park is the only suitable community owned public recreational space in the town and allows free access to all members of the community in a great location close to the town.

Q: Will this affect parkrun?

A: No, although the path does use part of the parkrun course it does not change it. Lighting the path may encourage people to train and practice for parkrun in the winter months when daylight is restricted. It will also allow the safe running of "Couch to 5k" groups outside of normal work hours when members of the community have their free time.

Q: Has the Covid pandemic affected the proposals?

A: The pandemic has introduced delay; however it has also exposed a previously latent demand for health and fitness activities. More people have taken up walking, jogging and other outdoor activities and the proposals are a timely effort to retain this momentum toward better health outcomes.

Q: Have alternative sites for a lit path been seriously considered? The Secondary school or the football ground on Stillington Road?

A: This is the only suitable public open space in Easingwold. The football club own their ground and do not consider a lit jogging path compatible with their facilities or purpose and the school grounds are not open to the public.

Q: Has the Town Council consulted with the Hesley Group about any sensory impact on their residents, specifically the lighting for the jogging path? Given that they have invested anything up to a couple of million on the site and obviously chose a calm quiet location it might be of interest to them to know what is proposed for Millfields Park.

A: They will have an opportunity to input into this public consultation. The Vision for Millfields Park was published on the Council Website and put on Social media well before Hesley Group purchased the site.

Q: How much will the lights cost?

A: Both options would cost approximately £30,000 but may vary depending on the involvement of volunteers to help with the installation. This would largely be funded through grants.

4. Dog Exercise Area

Q: Will the area be enclosed?

A: Yes it will be fenced off with a self-closing gate.

Q: Will there be any equipment?

A: Yes – some easy jumps plus some seating for dog owners.

Q: How big will the area be?

A: Approximately 18m x 40m

Q: Where will it be located?

A: It is proposed to locate it on the current low-lying area further down from the garden area and adjacent to the main footpath, wetland fence and Jacko's Way – but the level of the land will need to be raised first (see the indicative map provided).

Q: Why this location?

A: This was in response to feedback from the previous consultation and will provide easy access for the elderly and those with mobility issues as well as a good distance from the friendship garden.

Q: Who would use this facility when the whole park is open to dogs?

A: The area would be useful for those who would like/need to let their dogs off the lead for play, exercise and/or training in an enclosed area, particularly if they do not respond well to recall. It would also benefit the elderly and those with mobility issues as it provides a space for them to sit whilst the dogs are able to exercise/play off the lead without fear of them running off in the wider open spaces.

Q: Will this be the only area that dogs are allowed of their lead?

A: No – dogs will continue to be allowed off their lead in other areas of the park

this is just an additional facility for dogs and their owners.

5. Deciding and Paying

Q: Who/How will this all be paid for?

A: Mostly through grants and some Council funds.

Q: Who/How will decisions be made about the proposals?

A: The Council will make the decisions about the way forward taking into consideration the responses to the consultation exercise.

Q: When will the decisions be made?

A: As quickly as possible after the consultation period closes and an analysis of the responses has been completed.

Q: How will you fund the maintenance of the various proposals?

A: Through a combination of grants and Council budget.

6. General Issues

Q: How will the proposals benefit the disabled?

A: Some of the exercise equipment on the trim trail would be disabled-friendly as would one of the bike tracks. The wheel-chair friendly walking/jogging path would be available in the dark mornings and evenings. The dog area will enable those with mobility issues to sit/rest whilst their dogs are allowed off the lead in an enclosed area.

Q: Will these proposals make Millfields look cluttered?

A: Millfields Park is the only existing large public open space in Easingwold and therefore presents an opportunity to make it an attractive, useful and useable facility that will benefit all members of our diverse community. Something for everybody to enjoy and use. Furthermore, we will also seek to design each of these facilities to be screened and/or blend in as much as possible with the existing park scene by the use of suitable colours (e.g. lighting columns and exercise equipment) as well as judicious planting (e.g. the bike tracks).

Q: Will the proposals have a detrimental impact on Wildlife?

A: Whilst Millfields Park is not a nature reserve we believe it is important to balance the needs of people with the needs of wildlife and we believe these proposals strike a very reasonable balance. The whole of the wetland area has been fenced off from dogs and access for people is restricted only to the pond dipping platform. The whole of the North Meadow and the woodland area is unaffected by these proposals, whilst the lights and fitness equipment proposals only affect the existing recreational area.

Q: In 1999 the residents of Easingwold were asked to participate in a consultation. The outcome of that was to keep the Millfields area as natural as possible. Why is this decision now being disregarded?

A: That was over 20 years ago, Easingwold has grown since and the Council believe the time is right to ask the public again if they wish to evolve the use of this site for broader community use whilst maintaining and enhancing many natural features.

Q: Does Hambleton DC agree with all the proposals?

A: We held meetings with HDC's Head of Leisure Services and Communities prior to publishing the Millfields Vision and again prior to publishing the previous consultation and they were fully supportive. They will have an opportunity to input in detail to the public consultation.

Q: Have the blue lights (police/fire/ambulance) had any input on these proposals? Or the local group associations e.g. disability groups who enjoy the area?

A: They will have an opportunity to input to the public consultation.