

Mosswood Playing Fields, Knightsridge



Survey Report



Mosswood Playing Fields – Survey Results

SUMMARY

In June/July 2023, a community consultation was held in order to gain feedback on what the public thought about Mosswood Playing Fields and what suggestions the community had that would enhance the park. The survey was conducted on-line. Information was provided about the park and feedback then sought via a simple questionnaire. Twenty responses were received by the deadline of 23 July 2023.

What people like about the park

The large, open space is appreciated by park users. It is a good place to walk and exercise dogs. It can be easily accessed. You can play football or watch games being played here. It is a safe space away from traffic. The surrounding woods are liked and you can see wildlife in the park.

What people don't like about the park

Respondents commented negatively about the inconsiderate behaviour of dog owners, the amount of dog poo, litter and glass on site. The lack of lighting, seating and play equipment isn't liked. The lack of lines on the football pitch or goals that don't appear to line up are dislikes about the park. People don't like the condition of the trees and woods or the length of time between grass cuts.

Recommendations for action

Using the suggestions from the community feedback, and considering the available budget that could potentially deliver them, it is recommended that a number of proposals are developed:

- New Bitmac path;
- Cut back vegetation;
- New seeded, profiled mounds;
- New park sign;
- New trees (if separate funding can be secured).

Proposals

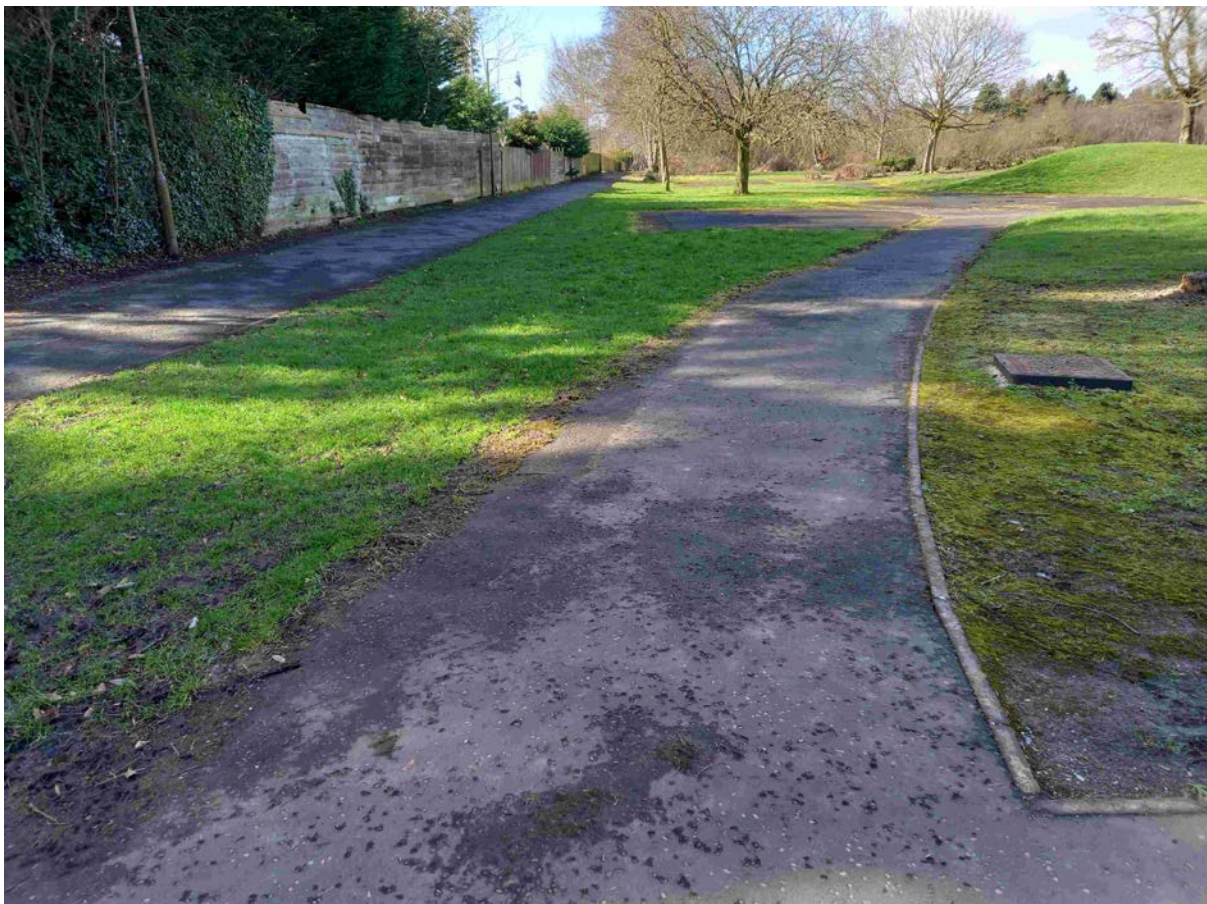
A number of draft proposals are being considered. When finalised, the community will be asked to Agree or Disagree with the proposals. A second consultation is, therefore, planned prior to requesting costings for the implementation of any works.

Introduction

Mosswood Playing Fields is located in the Knightsridge area of Livingston. It is owned and maintained by the Council. It is regarded as a Neighbourhood Park by the Council and designated as Land Safeguarded for Open Space in the adopted West Lothian Local Development Plan 2018.

The site is relatively open and flat except for a small raised area in the south-east which has a number of mature trees and scrub vegetation on it. It is predominantly amenity grassland with two football pitches being the main features on site. High metal fences are found along the northern and eastern edges of the park to stop footballs leaving the playing areas but there are gaps in the northern fence-line where informal access routes have been created as a short cut from a nearby housing area. A Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) sits in the north-eastern corner of the site. There are some surfaced areas in the south-east of the park where an equipped play area once stood. A surfaced path leads off Ferguson Way into the park but terminates in the centre. Pedestrian access is available into the park from all sides although there are no formal entrance routes or entranceways except from the east. An equipped play area sits on the south-western boundary of the park adjacent to The Vennie, which offers kids and young people a programme of activities.

Woodland shelter belts surround the park on its northern, western and south-western edges. A wide surfaced path runs outside of the southern boundary of the park and connects into wider access networks including the park's only surfaced path, from the east.



Information gathering

An on-line survey was used to gather comments and feedback from local stakeholders. This was posted on the Council's website and available for completion between 28 June 2023 and 23 July 2023. Emails were sent to the local ward members, Knightsridge Community Council and a number of Council officers advising of the park survey.

Posters were put up in and around the park publicising the on-line survey and included a QR code connecting you directly to the survey. A copy of the poster was delivered by hand to a number of properties surrounding the park boundary.

There were 20 surveys completed by the closing date.

Feedback

Full responses to the survey are available in Appendix 1. A summary of answers to each question is as follows:

Name of the park

There is no common name given to the park by the local community. Some call it Mosswood Park, Mosswood or Mosswood field. There are variations on Football pitch/Football fields/Field. The Vennie or Knightsridge references are also used.

What people like about the park

The large size and openness of the park is appreciated. It is good for games and playing football or exercising and walking dogs. The fact that it can be accessed easily and its closeness to nearby houses is liked. The ability to play football or still use the park when football is on are positives. The surrounding woodland and trees are enjoyed as well as the wildlife the site attracts/supports. It is safe, clean and well looked after.

What people don't like about the park

The amount of dog poo, litter and broken glass in the park is disliked. The lack of seating and lighting in the park is also not liked. Some said that the woods aren't managed, the bushes need trimming back and the grass is overgrown. There were negative comments about the football pitches: no football lines and the goals don't line up. The area where the old play equipment was previously located seems to be wasted and the fact that there is no play area here is not liked. Vehicles entering the football pitch areas is also a dislike.

Suggestions to enhance the park

A number of suggestions were made to enhance the park or improve the enjoyment of park users. These, and any relevant comments relating to them, are as follows –

A number of suggestions were made which included play/keep fit equipment or sports facilities, either on the former play area space in the south-east of the park or The Vennie Adventure Playground.

Investment in play areas and play equipment is from a separate budget to the park investment budget. The budget that is currently available is for the park's enhancement. No additional or replacement play or sporting equipment would be provided using this budget. The budget that is available would, in any case, not be enough to provide many of the items suggested.

There is, however, play area/equipment investment earmarked for replacing the surface of the Mosswood Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA), located off the southern end of Ferguson Way, in next year's capital programme. Work is expected to start in spring 2024.

There were a few suggestions for a dog exercise area. The Council has previously considered such facilities elsewhere and will not support their set-up within public parks. As the area would

need to be fenced off this would mean the loss of public open space and, as such, would not be something that the Council will develop further. In addition, the budget that is available is limited and will, therefore, be focussed on human park users rather than dogs.

There was a comment about the lack of markings on the football pitches. Any requests from community football teams for pitch lining will be considered by the Council's Grounds Maintenance section. Lines can be marked at the beginning of the season and are thereafter maintained by the football club.

The grass cutting of a pitch is again undertaken by Grounds Maintenance following its standard number of cuts per year.

Lighting within the park – Lighting is generally not provided within the Council's parks. Some parks do have lighting where there is an adopted path running through it, such as between the eastern playing field and the MUGA. Additional lighting within the park will not be considered for Mosswood Playing Fields.

New paths in the park – The existing surfaced path from the eastern boundary terminates in the centre leaving users with the option of doubling back or going over the grass which is not ideal in wet weather or for those with wheelchairs or prams. By continuing the existing path and connecting it into the one on the southern edge of the park would create a circular route around part of the park. A new looped section of path with a Bitmac (sealed) surface could potentially attract more users into the park and make it more welcoming to existing users. A number of factors would, however, need to be considered prior to the development of a new path:

Is there room to accommodate a new path and maintain pitch width and required run-off?

Can the path be routed between mature trees without affecting their root zone?

Can encroaching vegetation from neighbouring land be cut back along the proposed path route?

The removal/reduction in vegetation along the potential new path line would make this link more attractive and give an improved sense of safety to users. Even if the path was not extended here the cutting back of vegetation along this line would improve sight lines for park users and so improve perceived well-being and security. There would still be sufficient vegetation left for birds and animals to shelter and forage and management works are likely to improve growth in the long-run.

The suggestion of a path around the football pitch or extending a path to the west of the park is unlikely to be feasible within the available budget and so will not be considered further.

New seating – Seating was suggested which could provide resting points for park users. The location of any additional seating needs to be considered to limit the chance of anti-social behaviour within the park and disturbance to nearby residential properties.

A covered area was also suggested. There is already a covered shelter on the western side of the park, near the adventure play-ground. A second shelter would not be considered in the park. In addition, the budget that is available for the park's enhancement is unlikely to cover the cost of this facility.

BBQ provision – The Council does not generally provide BBQ facilities in its parks for health and safety reasons. Unfortunately, not all users would clean food grills which is not pleasant for people using them next and would attract vermin and insects. In addition, there is the potential for nearby vegetation catching fire from stray sparks. (Some of the Country Parks have BBQ stations but there are Rangers in these spaces to manage their use). A BBQ facility will not, therefore, be considered further at Mosswood Playing Fields.

New trees/shrub/flowers - Under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act (2004), all public bodies in Scotland are required to further the conservation of biodiversity when carrying out their responsibilities. One way of doing this is to provide plants that offer shelter, fruit, nuts, pollen or nectar for animals and insects.

The maintenance of any additional features in parks needs to be considered to ensure there would be resources available to look after them. The Council no longer plants flowering annuals or perennials as we do not have the resources to weed, feed, water and maintain them. New trees, if carefully selected, do not need the same amount of resources to maintain. Trees provide many beneficial eco-system services: they provide shade and reduce temperatures, reduce soil erosion and flooding as well as absorb pollution. They shelter many different animals, insects and birds and provide food sources too.

The provision of additional trees on site would not only provide enhanced biodiversity and climate change mitigation but would add visual interest throughout the seasons. Native trees or those that bear berries and nuts could be considered for Mosswood Playing Fields.

Park proposals

Based on the community's suggestions that could be implemented within the park (and likely to be within budget) a number of enhancements will be considered for possible implementation:

New path – A new Bitmac (sealed surface) section between the existing surfaced path in the park and the existing path on the park's southern boundary edge. This would extend the "path to nowhere" and create a small circular route. The sealed surface would improve accessibility for those with mobility issues, wheelchairs and prams or just be considered more pleasant than walking on the grass particularly when wet or muddy.

Cut back vegetation - Reduce the vegetation along the proposed path route. Removing or reducing the height and trimming the sides of the existing scrub would improve your view in this area and increase the gap between the path and vegetation which would increase the sense of personal security. It may look drastic to begin with but the remaining trees and shrubs would benefit from the additional space and light made available.

Seeded mounds – New mounds on the existing redundant/broken surfaced areas in the south-east. Creating the proposed new path section involves digging out the path line and removing the grass/earth/spoil. In most cases this needs to be sent to landfill, which can be a waste of resources and also increases project costs, unless it can be relocated on site. The area where the old play area used to be, in the south-east corner, has broken surfacing which would be better removed to reduce potential tripping hazards (there is not enough park budget to repair it). One way of dealing with this would be to break-up the surfacing and form low mounds which could then be covered with the earth from the dug-out path line and seed it with a grassland/meadow flower mix. This would reduce potential landfill and create new habitat.

New park sign – a new park sign would let people know that they are entering a managed space and provide contact details for reporting any issues to the Council.

New trees (if separate funding allows) – The existing trees on site provide shelter from the wind and shade from the sun. They provide habitat for birds, insects and mammals to source food and seek shelter. Trees also mitigate flooding and reduce soil erosion. All of these benefits, to wildlife and humans (known as ecosystem services), multiply with each tree planted whether grown as a single specimen or woodland group. If funding was secured for

tree planting then the grass area near the southern boundary could be planted with native species.

The implementation of any of the above proposals depends on their costs being within budget. (The potential tree planting would be possible only if additional funding, separate to the park budget, was secured).

A draft layout plan showing the potential proposals outlined above is shown in Appendix 2.

Next Steps

This report will be made available on the Council's webpage at <https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/parkinfo> under Reports.

The viability of implementing all proposals without them negatively affecting existing park features/activities will now be considered further. A final proposals plan will then be developed and the community asked to Agree or Disagree with the park proposals by voting on each suggestion (except for the park sign which will be installed to assist with reporting park issues). This second consultation would be made available on the Council's website and accessed via the same link as above.

The 15 respondents who requested to join the park email list will be kept updated about the park improvements. Anyone else who would like to join the list can request to do so by emailing Carol.Campbell@westlothian.gov.uk

Appendix 1 - All survey results

1. 1. What do you call the park?

Number of participants: 19

- Mosswood Park
 - Mosswood
 - Mosseood
 - The green
 - Football pitch
 - The Football fields
 - Playing Fields
 - The pitches
 - Mosswood field
 - The big field
 - Field
 - Vennie
 - The football pitch at vennie
 - I enjoy walking the dogs around the park and love the trees and seeing wildlife, have seen a deer just at the wooded area
 - the field
 - The vennie
 - The field
 - The Park or The Park by the Vennie
 - Knightsridge football fields
-

2. 2. What do you like best about this park?

Number of participants: 19

- Open space, plenty of room for games
- Good access
- Good access as I stay right next door to park I like to watch football being played
- It is an oasis , full of wildlife including deer.
- How big it is and that you can play football on it
- It's clean, well looked after.
- The woods to side and surrounded by footpaths that have bins which is handy for the dog
- The space and that there are 2 pitches to play on if one is getting used.
- I use it when taking the dog out sometimes depends on the weather
- Large open space
- Dog walking
- The activity and club
- Large open space but not used much by local kids used for football matches and for dogs
- When the clover grows in the grass its alive with bees so beautiful and not having traffic so you get a nice safe walk which is relaxing with all the lovely trees at the edge.
- green space
- It's close to my house for dog walks. As there isn't a thing else suitable for them
- Big open space, dogs enjoy it, the entrance/exit on the east end is convenient
- The open area to let my dog chase a ball.
- Nice open space used alot by dog walkers and kids playing football

3. **3. Is there anything you don't like?**

Number of participants: 19

- It could do with a spruce up.
- Grass overgrown for too long before cuts
- Never any markings on it to outline football pitch
- Ncondiderste dog owners
- The woods are Not looked after well enough
- Yes the veni
- The set of goals next to the Vennie don't line up, so they can't be used for games
- No seating, would be nice to sit on a steel bench and rest while the dog runs about
- Lack of seating.
- People not picking up there rubbish or dogs poo
- Broken glass lying about too
- Not very used by local kids
- I particularly don't like when the football season is on and competative games are played by I assume local teams and the participants leave behind all of their rubbish mainly bottles leaving the area in a mess
- It's not on everyday during the summer and there is set gender clubs
- Dog dirt left lying knowing kids play there
- Sometimes there is litter or broken glass
- the huge amount of dog poo in the field
- the motorbikes that use it hence ruining the grass
- the lack of lighting
- no seating area
- no play park!.
- The unsafe manor of all exits and the ability for vehicles to access the grass
- Rubbish, dog fouling, out of control dogs off lead, difficult to exit
- The area over the hump seems wasted where there looks like there has been a play area in the past but it hasn't been there for at least 10 years that I have been walking the dog in the area.
- Some trees need thinned and trimmed back

4. **4. Please suggest things that could enhance the park or improve your enjoyment of it.**

Number of participants: 20

- perhaps a separate play area for younger children
- Formal ball court needs a lot or attention - the filter drains that should collect water from the slope are blocked and broken, the paving outside the ball court is broken up as well. The area of former playground looks like a mess and the purpose & look of that area should be reconsidered. There will already be sub bases under the old surfacing so it lends itself to being redone in hardstanding with some feature seating etc
- 3G (although probably outwith budget)
- More maintenance through out the year to make it playable
- Lights to make it more usable in darker evenings
- Better woodland paths underfoot.
- Make a proper football pitch with fake grass and make good proper football goals and make a proper football pitch like Livingston have or make like good Wall around the football pitch and make it that everyone can go in with out trying to damage the wall or a actual football pitch that is like celtic or Livingston football club

-Dual purpose goal posts for both football and rugby.

The money would be better used for the five a side pitch as the floor surface is very worn

-Benches, tree planting. Replacing the play equipment which hasn't been there for years

-Football goal posts renewed and one set renewed to be combi posts so that it promotes other sports such as rugby, hurling, gaelic football etc. Which influences uptake of participation in community.

-I would like to see benches or metal ones somewhere you can sit down and relax and a nice bbq area

-Putting green

Golf net

Rugby goals

Football pitch markings

Upgraded football goals

Trim track

Bicycle track

-Better clearing of Rubbish

-Extend it add more Epiqt meant

-The area close to foil is way that used to be a kids play area could be utilised for enclosed dog socialising area with jumps tunnels etc for them to play and include dog poop bucket and water tap. A place dog owners can safely let their dogs off to play without interrupting players on field and reducing the amount of dog dirt on pitches. Area could be colourful with seats for the owners to socialise too. These areas are used greatly in other countries and I think would be a useful use of the dormant space. At this time when so many attacks are being made on people it contains the dogs in a secure space too

-I would enjoy more trees with bird boxes some shrubs and flowers around the area or some planters would be good. Maybe some seats like benches but would need to be sturdy to stop the vandals. Create a little dog park off the main park with Dog loops for them to walk through fun for all neighbours and their pets. Organise a planting day and introduce trees to get all locals involved in the improvements and improve the childrens area where they play maybe a small covered area where they can do art and posters

-extend the "play park" that is here.. if you notice there isn't much for the kids to do around knightsridge hence why the teenagers hang around it at the weekends!. make the skatepark bigger, and make a decent play park, have better lighting around the field/park, it's covered with trees!which is great but it can be quite a scary place in the dark. have a few benches dotted around(it used to be the pitches but It never gets played on anymore! make it a community space where people can meet up with friends and kids and sit in the summer.

there is a litter bin but dog owners never pick up poo can we have more signage around it? for dog owners to be aware that this is a poo free area??.

I'd love to see something for all ages!! and an area for all the family!(even the furry ones).

I am very excited to see what happens to this area!! Knighstridge is in need of some up lifting and I know the community will love this!!

-A dedicated dog area, possibly enclosed

-Enforcing litter, dog fouling, and dog lead rules. An easier exit on the west side would be helpful

-a series of benches on the hump of grass by one of the football pitches and the path for those older who don't really have anything in the park for them.

A space for playing boules or pétanque could be put in this wasted area where the kid play equipment is gone. The area that doesn't really serve a purpose just now.

Picnic tables perhaps.

-Maybe a gravel path around the large football pitch (already has tarmaced path at one side). This could then used for walking, jogging and running, maybe for spectators watching the football games too.

Appendix 2 – Park proposals

