

Blythe Hill Fields User Group
July 2006 Consultation Summary

preliminary

prepared by Groundwork South East London



Executive Summary

- 0.1 This report summarises results of a survey of Blythe Hill Fields users and neighbours living in adjacent streets, undertaken in June and July 2006 by Groundwork SE London (GWSEL) and the Blythe Hill Fields User Group (BHFUG). The purpose of the survey was to provide more detail on community opinion regarding what projects might be taken forward in the park.
- 0.2 Over 1,000 questionnaires were hand delivered throughout the area by BHFUG, in conjunction with publicity for their Open Day in the Park on 15th July. Returns, and forms filled out on the day, numbered 157 - less than the 350 returned in 2005, but still a significant number.
- 0.3 The top priorities for investment at BHF noted by respondents are:
1st: lighting
2nd: play facilities
3rd: biodiversity
4th: dog free zones
5th : addressing anti-social behaviour
- This result is consistent with that of the 2005 survey.
- 0.4 Post top lighting of main paths was requested by many respondents. Consideration of lighting will require further discussion with Lewisham Council, and the Met Police.
- 0.5 There is widespread recognition that improved play facilities for under 13's are needed.
- 0.6 Written comments in the questionnaire indicate the current play area is the focus of considerable after hours nuisance behaviour, and there is irritation among residents around use of mini-motorcycles in the park. Both these issues may benefit from improved working with local police, through the Safer Neighbourhoods Unit.
- 0.7 Projects and management practices which increase biodiversity in the park (such as hedgerow and tree planting) are widely supported.
- 0.8 The presence of dog mess in the park remains an emotive issue; dog owners (of which there are many in the park) appear to be under-represented in the surveys. Addressing the dog mess problem usually requires a combination of bin/bag provision, education/outreach, and fouling by-law enforcement.
- 0.9 There is support for the provision of more seating in the park. Interest has also been expressed in interpretive signing. Traditional style furnishings is a clearly stated preference.
- 0.10 The questionnaire process provided the User Group with contact details of several dozen potential volunteers and new members.
- 0.11 The questionnaire and results are included in the Appendix.

Produced by GWSEL
07 October 2006

Introduction / Methodology

1.1 Aim of the Report

This report summarises results of a survey of Blythe Hill Fields users and neighbours living in adjacent streets, undertaken in June and July 2006. Findings of the survey are compared with previous results, and possible actions by BHFUG, Lewisham Council, and GWSEL are suggested.

1.2 Scope of Questionnaire

This questionnaire was developed by Groundwork Southwark (GWSEL) and the Blythe Hill Fields User Group (BHFUG), to

- a) check for consistency with results of the 2005 survey
- b) obtain more detail on issues and possible solutions from the community
- c) allow comment on the outline proposals drawn up by GWSEL in response to the 2005 survey, and
- d) inform further design, investment, and events in the park.

A copy of the questionnaire (and tabulated results) are included as Appendices.

1.3 Collection of Data

Over 1,000 questionnaires were hand delivered throughout the area by BHFUG, in conjunction with publicity for their Open Day in the Park on 15th July. Returns, and forms filled out on the day, numbered 157. This is less than the 350 returned in 2005 but is still a significant number indicating considerable local interest in what happens to the area.

1.4 Additional Outreach

Previous consultation included outreach to local youth centres, schools and other park user groups. Representatives of these organisations were informed of the Open Day by the BHFUG

Questionnaire Results

2. Priorities for Investment

2.1 Top Three items for Investment

After reading a section which summarised results of the 2005 survey, respondents were asked to 'list' their top three priorities for investment in the park. In terms of number of listings, the following

- Lighting 72
- Play facilities 65
- Dog Free Zones 62
- Biodiversity 48
- Tackle Security / anti-social behaviour 17
- No Change 15

2.2 Top Three items, ranked.

If the question could be interpreted as asking respondents to rank results in order of importance, the following tally result is obtained (awarding 3 points for ranking first, 2 points for second, and 1 point for third):

- 1st: lighting (175 points)
- 2nd: play facilities (165)
- 3rd: biodiversity (111)
- 4th: dog free areas: (110)
- 5th: security / anti-social behaviour (55)
- 6th: no change (45 points)

2.3 Other Items receiving a listing

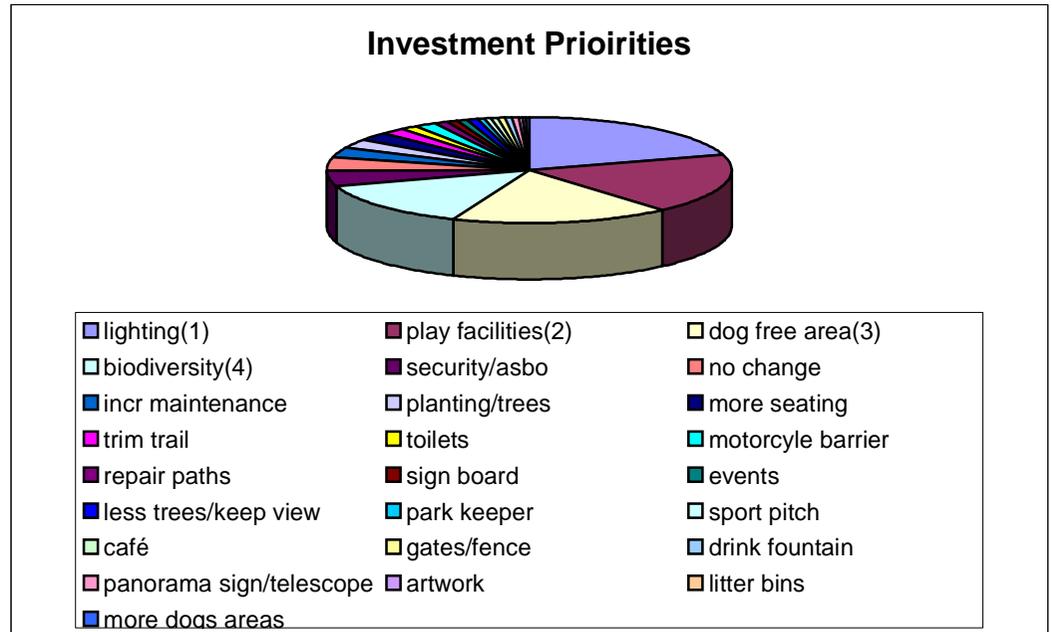
Several other items were mentioned repeatedly:

- planting (10)
- more seating (9)
- fitness trail (7)
- signage (5)
- short grass cut (4)
- more events (4)
- drinking fountain, toilets, and café (2 ea)

2.4 Other Items mentioned in written comments

Three emotive issues often included in the 'comments portion of the questionnaire are:

- a) the presence of dog mess
- b) desire to retain the 'undeveloped' character of the space.
- c) anti-social behaviour at far end of play area late at night.



3. Lighting / Anti Social Behaviour

3.1 Should particular areas in the park be lighted?

Two thirds of respondents answered this question, with 79 saying some paths should be lit, and 21 saying there should be no lights.

3.2 What type of light is preferred?

Columnar lights were preferred to bollards, by margin of 51 to 24 (four having no preference). See section 8.2 for the indication that respondents prefer traditional styled furnishings.

3.3 When should lights be shut off?

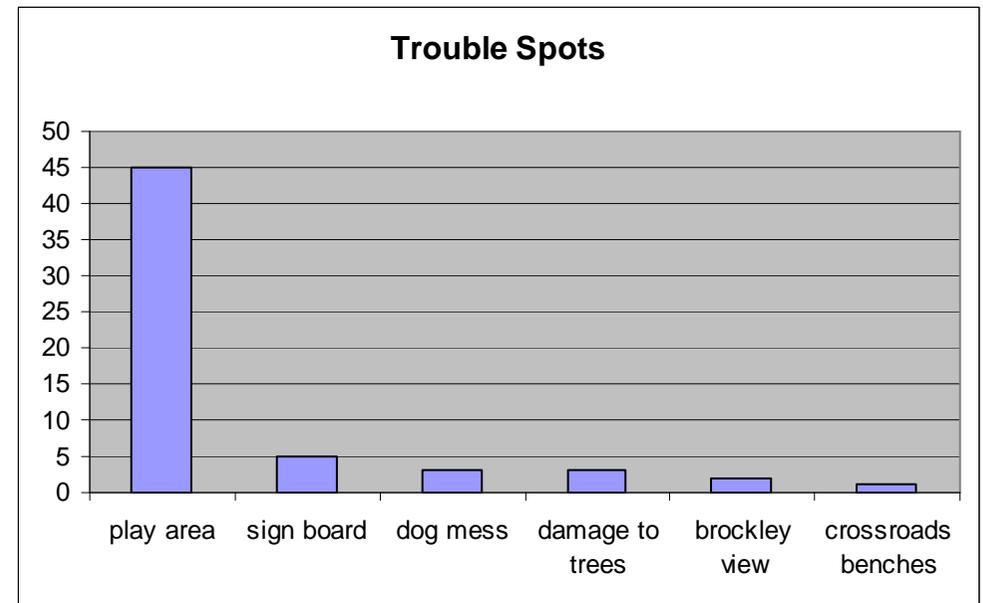
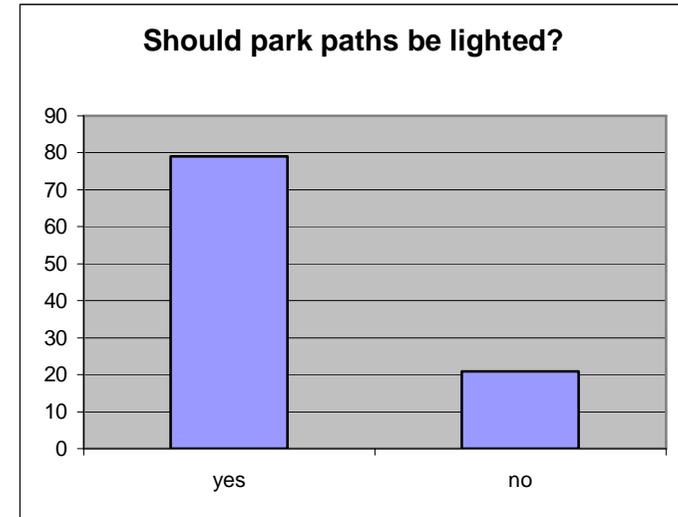
Responses showed a preference for late night operation –typically until midnight.

3.4 Should anti-motorcycle barriers be installed at park entrances?

Most respondents answered this question. A clear majority of responses (118) were 'yes', with only 18 'no'.

3.5 Are there 'trouble spots' in the park?

Thirty seven of the sixty seven people responding to this question noted the play area was a trouble area.



4. Play Areas

4.1 Response Rate

A third of respondents answered questions regarding provision of play; this roughly mirrors the number indicating there are children in the household (53).

4.2 Under 13's Equipment Preference?

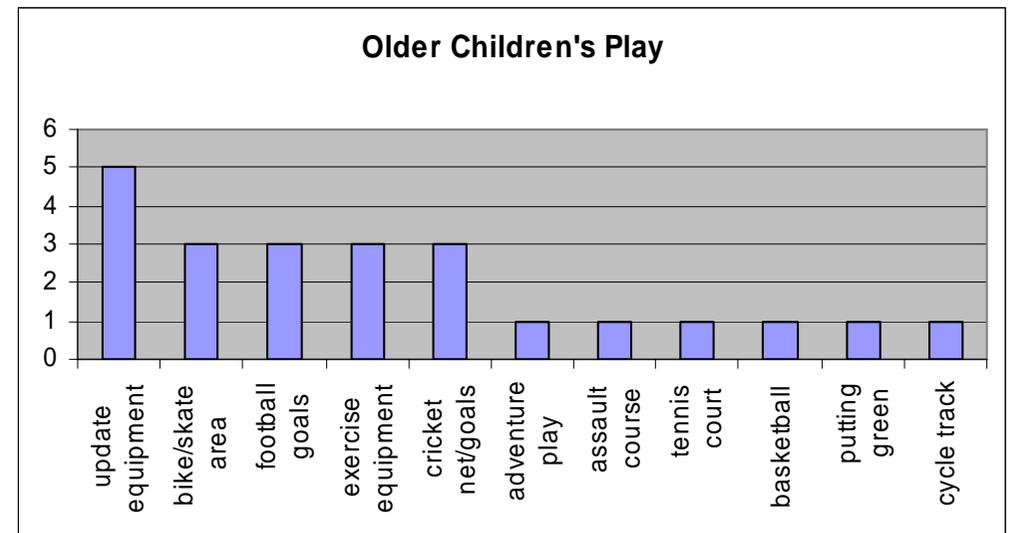
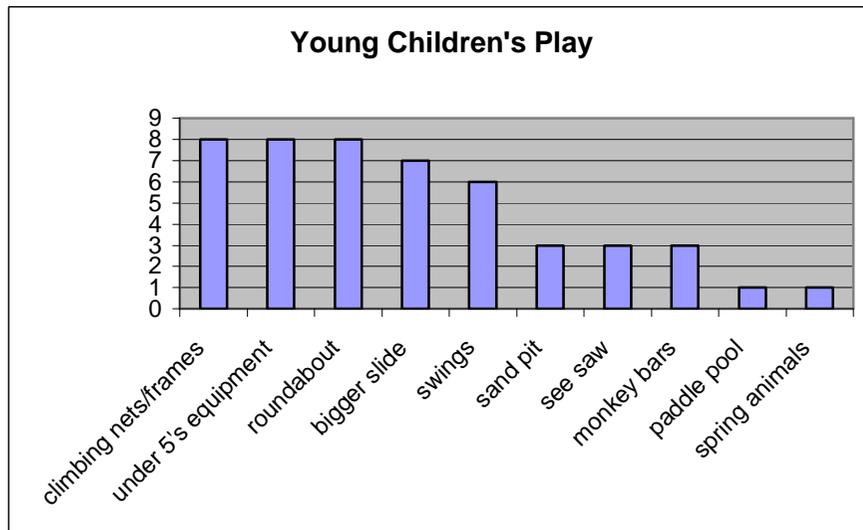
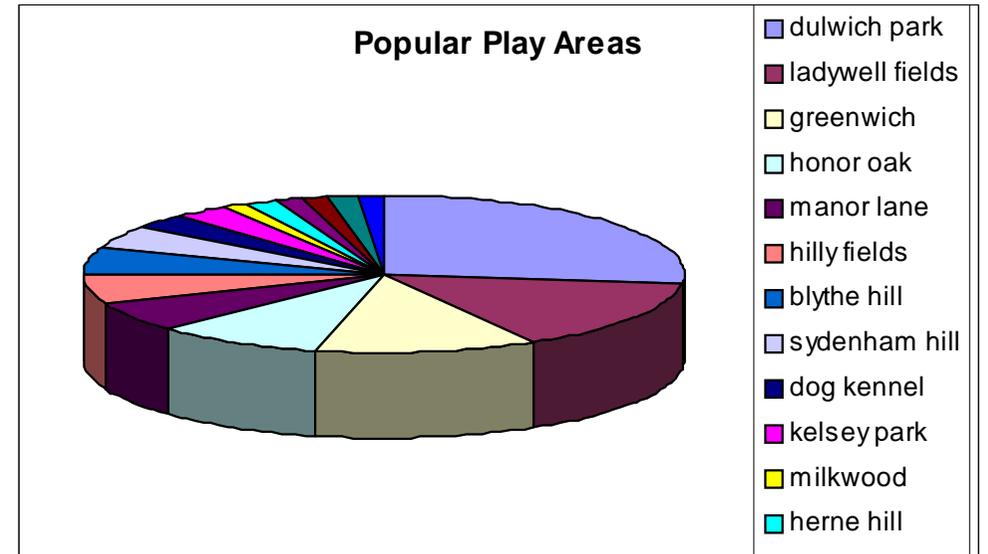
Preferences for play equipment are noted below, showing traditional items remain popular.

4.3 Over 13's Preferences?

Provision for sports and larger scale play items was requested.

4.4 Would you be interested in a Trim Trail?

Many people (83) indicated they would be interested in this.



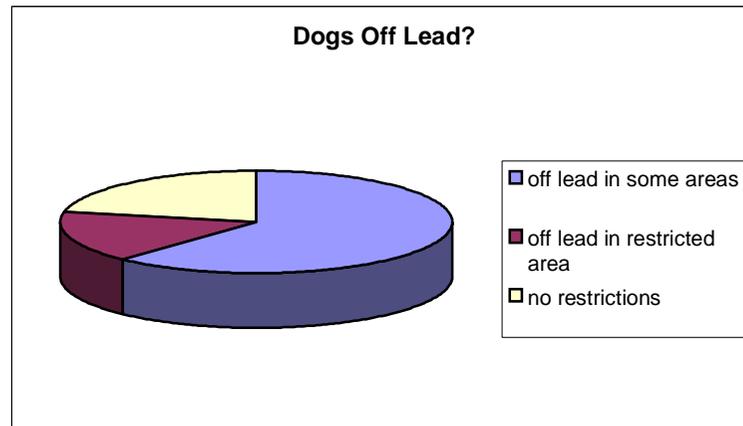
5. Dog Walking

5.1 Response Rate

Dog owners / walkers were under-represented in the survey, with only ten of the 159 respondents being owners. Additional consultation with dog owners is therefore recommended prior to instituting any changes in dog running / dog fouling management.

5.2 Is there an area where dogs off lead should be restricted to?

Overall response rate to this question was low. Thirty nine respondents were in favour of encouraging owners to let dogs off lead only in a particular area; eight of these wanted this restricted to an area that was fenced off. Eleven respondents favoured no restrictions.



5.3 Is there an area that should be dog free?

Of fifty nine total responses, forty two noted it was the play area that should be dog free. Only seven people felt most of the park should be dog free; thirteen suggested that dogs should be permitted everywhere.

5.4 Would more dog bins be useful?

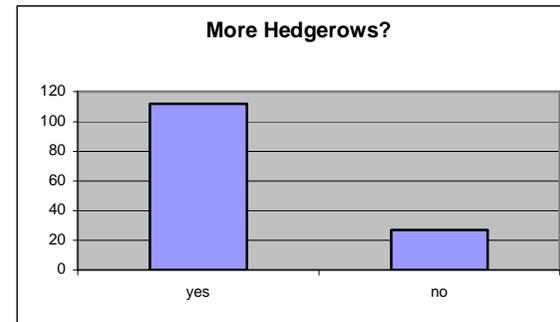
Fourteen said yes, six no.

6. Biodiversity

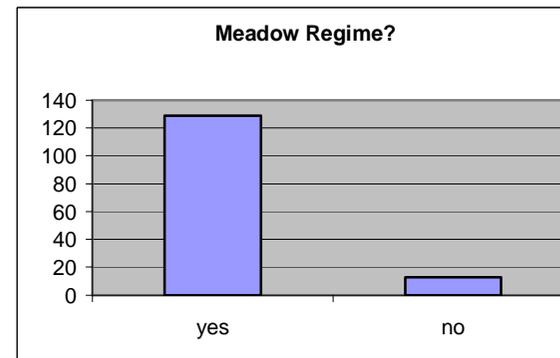
6.1 Should trees be planted on lower slopes?



6.2 Should there be more hedgerow planting?



6.3 Do you favour mowing regime that allows for meadow?

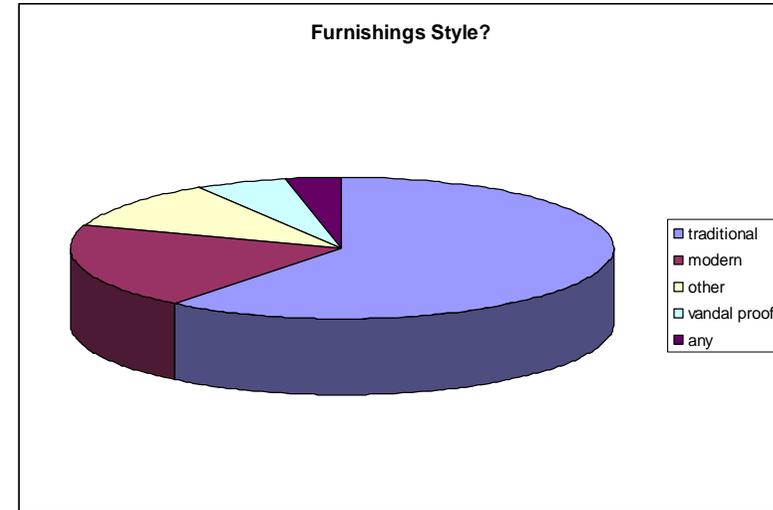


6.4 Suggestions for a more 'eco-friendly' park?

planting, incl. fruits	16
bins, incl. recycling	7
pond	6
bird/bat boxes	5
hedgerows	4
logs/rocks	3
solar lighting	3
composting	3
leave natural	2
school/kids projects	2
info board	2
botany or butterfly garden	2
weed picking	1
less hard play surface	1

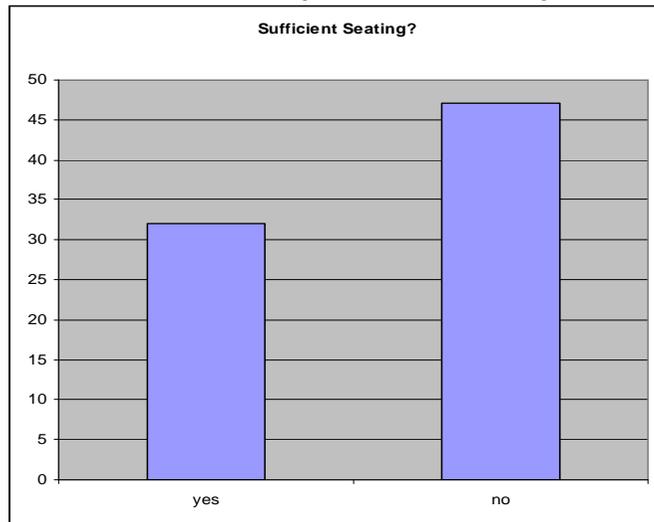
A preference for more seating overlooking the view was expressed by 41 people.

7.2 What style furnishings would you prefer?

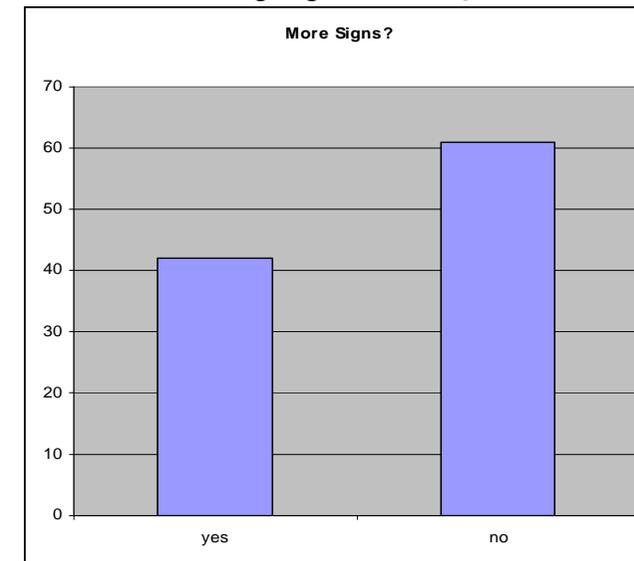


7. Furnishings/ Signage/ Art

7.1 Are there sufficient places to sit in the park?



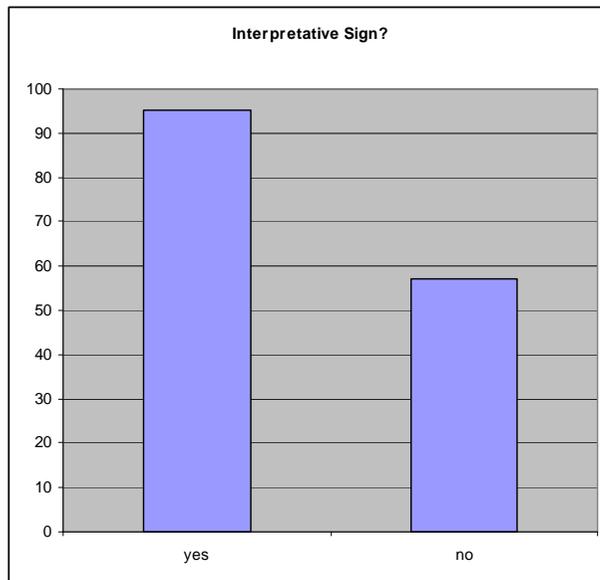
7.3 Is additional signage necessary?



Some of the ideas expressed for signs were:

destinations	15
view	4
dog mess	4
ecology	3
transport	
links	3

7.4 Would you welcome interpretative signs (e.g. a panoramic map)?



7.5 Can you suggest an idea for artwork?

There were thirty nine responses. The two most frequent suggestions were 'wooden sculpture' (14) and 'something done by kids/schools' (6). There were 18 requests that no art be installed, or that it would be 'a graffiti magnet'.

8. Participation

8.1 Volunteers

Fifty two people expressed interest in participating in BHFUG volunteer 'planting days' in the park.

8.2 New Members

Forty one potential new members to the BHFUG were identified through the questionnaire process.

END OF QUESTIONNAIRE DATA

Final section on Personal Data to follow, upon receipt of comments on above from BHFUG.