

(1) Welcome

The meeting was opened by Adam Wheeler (AW), Chair of the SCF Management Committee (SCF-MC) who welcomed the attendees, noting a welcome mix of both old and new faces; the current Common Users Survey was connecting with lots of new people. The members of the SCF-MC then introduced themselves.

(2) Introduction

AW ran through the meeting agenda, reminding attendees of the 3 priority areas which previous public meetings had tasked the SCF-MC and Forum to work on, and describing progress to date on these themes

Richer Engagement. This theme had been identified as the initial priority - to get people involved in The Forum and contributing to it. As well as organising the regular public meetings, of which this was one, the SCF-MC had:

- Developed and launched the ongoing 2017 Common Users Survey (results to date would be discussed later in the meeting).

- Held 2 open public workshops on possible futures for The Hawthorns.

- Established a web site, secure email newsletter list (some 500 subscribers) and open facebook page to communicate with members, supporters and the wider public and to allow them to easily contact the Forum.

- Established formal lines of communication with Southampton City Council at both councillor and officer level.

- Established formal lines of communication with the University of Southampton (The Common's biggest neighbour) and Solent University - staff and students of both institutes being significant Common users.

- Held an open consultation on SCC's planning application to widen Lover's walk and reported the results and opinions back to the Planning Department.

Developing a new management plan. Using the lines of communication with Southampton City Council, a series of meetings and email discussions have been held to explore the possible frameworks and mechanisms for developing a new management plan for The Common, which meets the needs of an ever changing and growing City population as well as delivering on statutory obligations relating to ecology etc.. The Management Plan was a primary theme for tonight's meeting.

Operating models for the future management of The Common. This theme would develop in parallel with the management plan - we needed to identify what needed doing before deciding how that would best be managed.

(3) Survey

AW introduced the ongoing 2017 Common Users Survey which had been launched a couple of months ago. The survey was inspired by a 1977 survey conducted by The City of Southampton Society some 40 years ago, which had focussed largely on use patterns. There had been no survey since then and the City had changed enormously over those 4 decades. Detailed and up-to-date information was needed to inform and prioritise the new management plan so that it reflected the needs of the City and its residents. The current survey aims to:

- identify key issues.
- seek opinions on The Common's management and future.
- provide basic information on how the site is currently used.
- raise the profile of the Forum so that it is truly representative of the City and of Common users.

The survey had been launched at the end of May and would run until the end of October. It had attracted about 1,000 responses in its first 4 weeks, with currently some 1,160 received. Publicity and promotion were ongoing and the SCF-MC welcomed offers to help promote it to groups, work colleagues, friends and family.

Some initial results were presented.

To date there has been a strong response from those aged over 30 but very few from the under 21s who are big user group.

Mapping postcodes of responders (where provided in full) shows that responders are from all across the City, not just from areas neighbouring The Common.

Top of the priorities list so far are: play area, toilets, litter, footpaths, lighting, safety, cycle/walker separation; all things relating to hygiene and the basic visitor experience. A clear aspiration is a better user experience for all Common visitors.

Top of the uses list are walking, jogging/running and play. Top of the organised activities are fitness related, funfair and music festivals.

The full presentation is included as Appendix 1 and can be downloaded as a pdf from:

http://www.southamptoncommonforum.org/scfdownloaddocs/publicmeetings/2017_07_04/2017_07_04_Public_Meeting_Presentation.pdf

Priorities for the remainder of the survey period are to fill in obvious and possible gaps in the demographic representation by trying to engage with younger users (who simply may be survey adverse).

Other groups to try to engage include:

- The black and ethnic minority, Polish, Asian and Chinese communities who can often be seen using The Common for group or family gatherings. Unity 101 radio and the Mela festival were suggested as a possible way of introducing the Forum.
- Schools (possibly by using tutor time? or groups on organised visits to the Hawthorns).

- University students (in planning for the start of the new Academic year).
- Disabled groups, especially with respect to access issues which would also benefit all users.
- Sunrise sheltered housing on Burgess Road.

The forum would be grateful to receive suggestions and introductions to these and any other groups.

The forum was intending to approach general users through face-to-face meetings on The Common (proposed for the Summer holiday period) and would be seeking volunteers from the membership to join them for this.

Mitch Sanders (SCC) stressed the value of the survey to Council as it provided objective data with which SCC officers could approach councillors with requests for action and funding to resolve identified and quantified issues.

(4) Hawthorns workshop

Simon Hill (SH) then presented a summary of the 2 public workshops on the Hawthorns held earlier in the year, which received input from both the general public and SCC / Hawthorns staff.

Key impressions were that:

- the site looked a bit run down.
- the gardens were often and unpredictably closed.
- the education facilities were outdated and under resourced and so usage was declining (school budgets for offsite visits were also under pressure and schools were becoming far more “risk adverse”).
- the Café was a valuable asset.
- interpretation of what visitors can see on The Common needed to be designed for all ages, not just for primary school children.

The workshops identified a series of “issues”, some of which could be addressed by short term, quick, cheap and easy fixes. Others needed to be incorporated into the new management plan as they would require extensive research and resourcing.

Quick fixes included improving the visibility and appeal of the entrance area, providing better facilities for dog owners who couldn’t take dogs into the Centre itself and increasing the sense of “community ownership”. It was hoped that volunteer action could deliver some of these fixes before the new play area opens (scheduled for August bank holiday weekend). Council had promised some of the Common event revenue to the Forum for such projects.

Challenges included how to increase café capacity to meet a clear and growing demand without compromising the education and wildlife resources.

In the longer term, alternative models for funding and running the site would need to be explored to see if they could be viable and beneficial (e.g. a Hawthorns Trust, engaging wildlife interest groups as volunteers etc.. It would be useful to examine how Hillier Arboretum runs its educational offer.

The aspiration was to achieve a fully resourced, enhanced and financially secure centre which provided a strategic focus and resource for The Common.

(5) City Council

Mitch Sanders (SCC) then gave an overview of:

(a) The new play area which will replace the old paddling pool (works currently underway). This will include water play (but not a traditional paddling pool), additional seating and a safe play area. SCC were investing around £500,000 into the scheme which it was hoped would be open for August bank holiday weekend. SCC were currently investigating the possibility of converting the existing kiosk into a disabled access toilet / baby changing facility and of expanding the Hawthorns Café concession to include some offer within the play area. It was noted that access from the east of The Common was poor, the only safe crossings were the subway or the pedestrian crossing south of The Common.

(b) The new strategic plan for The Common. A new management plan was urgently needed to address resourcing issues and changing user needs. Discussions with the SCF-MC were ongoing and currently SCC were proposing to take the lead with SCF support. However, the final balance and mechanism required political input from Council cabinet. A joint SCC - SCF working group would be established with the 2017 survey as a key input. Development of the new plan would involve wide engagement and consultation, review of the current operation model and a phased approach with an initial timeline of July 2018, but this would depend on the framework (to be decided) and allocation of tasks and resources.

See Appendix 1 for presentation slides. The presentation can also be downloaded as a pdf from:

http://www.southamptoncommonforum.org/scfdownloaddocs/publicmeetings/2017_07_04/2017_07_04_Public_Meeting_Presentation.pdf

(6) Attendee workshops.

The majority of the rest of the meeting comprised an attendee workshop. Each table was asked to

- list users and activities, especially the less obvious ones to ensure that as full a list as possible is collated.
- consider available and desired resources for users.
- select one of their identified user groups as a case study to consider in more detail.
- report back their findings to the rest of the meeting

The outputs from the workshop are included as Appendix 2.

(7) Other matters.

Adam Wheeler stressed that in order to operate, the Forum needed funding - for example the room hire for the evening was around £65 (refreshments not included) and this was our 4th public meeting. Web site hosting, printing posters, agendas, etc. all cost money and work parties would require formal insurance. To date, members of the SCF-MC had generously covered all previous expenses from their own pockets, but this was neither sustainable nor fair. In order to not

discourage participation, the SCF-MC had decided not to impose membership fees, but asked attendees to consider donating at least £5 to help the Forum grow its capacity to arrange and deliver improvements to The Common. The SCF's bank account details were provided.

Account: Southampton Common Forum

Sort Code: 60-20-03

Account #:34669574

Cheques can be made out to Southampton Common Forum and sent to SCF, c/o 7, Oakmount Avenue, Southampton, SO17 1DS.

Similarly, the SCF-MC cannot do everything, it urgently needed members to volunteer their time and expertise as projects arise. We were currently seeking volunteers to help with the following:

- Hawthorns entrance tidy up and other practical working parties.
- Strategic Plan research.
- Talking to Common users to encourage survey participation.
- Management Committee roles.
- Proof reading a digitised version of the City of Southampton Society's book on The Common as part of a developing historical archive.
- Historical and archives research.

Attendees were asked to register their interest in any of these tasks.

(8) Questions from the floor

It was noted that The Avenue was a major issue for Common users, in terms of safety, crossing, traffic speed etc.. Any strategic plan needed to consider The Avenue and how it might be made safer.

Litter issues were an emerging theme from the survey. The meeting asked Council to consider installing additional litter bins across the site.

Appendix 1 - Initial Survey Results

(Note, these represent an initial collation of the first 6 weeks of a 5 month long initiative.)

Download original presentation from SCF www site as pdf file:

http://www.southamptoncommonforum.org/scfdownloaddocs/publicmeetings/2017_07_04/2017_07_04_Public_Meeting_Presentation.pdf

PTO



OPEN MEETING

4th July 2017

Richard Taunton College

southamptoncommonforum.org

facebook.com/SouthamptonCommonForum

@SotonCommonF #southamptoncommonforum



1. Welcome & Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Update on survey (Adam)
3. Update on Hawthorns consultation (Simon & Roger)
4. Update on new play area (Mitch)
5. Developing the Common Strategic Plan (Mitch & Adam)
6. Activities & Resources (Adam)



SCF Priorities & Activities

	Richer Engagement	Common Plan	Operating Model
Common Survey	X	X	X
Hawthorns Consultation	X	X	
SCC	X	X	X
Universities	X		
Lovers Walk	X		
Website/Facebook/ Twitter/email	X		



2. Update Common Survey 2017

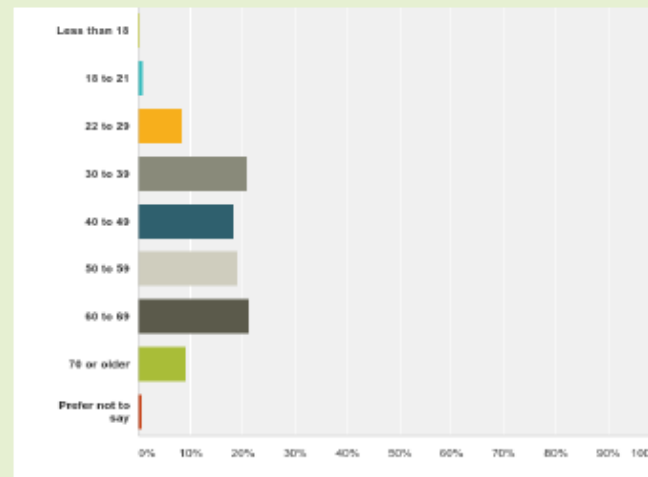
- Previous survey in 1977 by The City of Southampton Society - 503 respondents.

- Purposes of the SCF Survey 2017:
 1. Identify public's key issues to inform plan and operating model in partnership with SCC.
 - Opinions about the management and the future of The Common.
 - Basic information about how The Common is currently used.
 2. Raise the profile and engagement of the public with Southampton Common Forum.

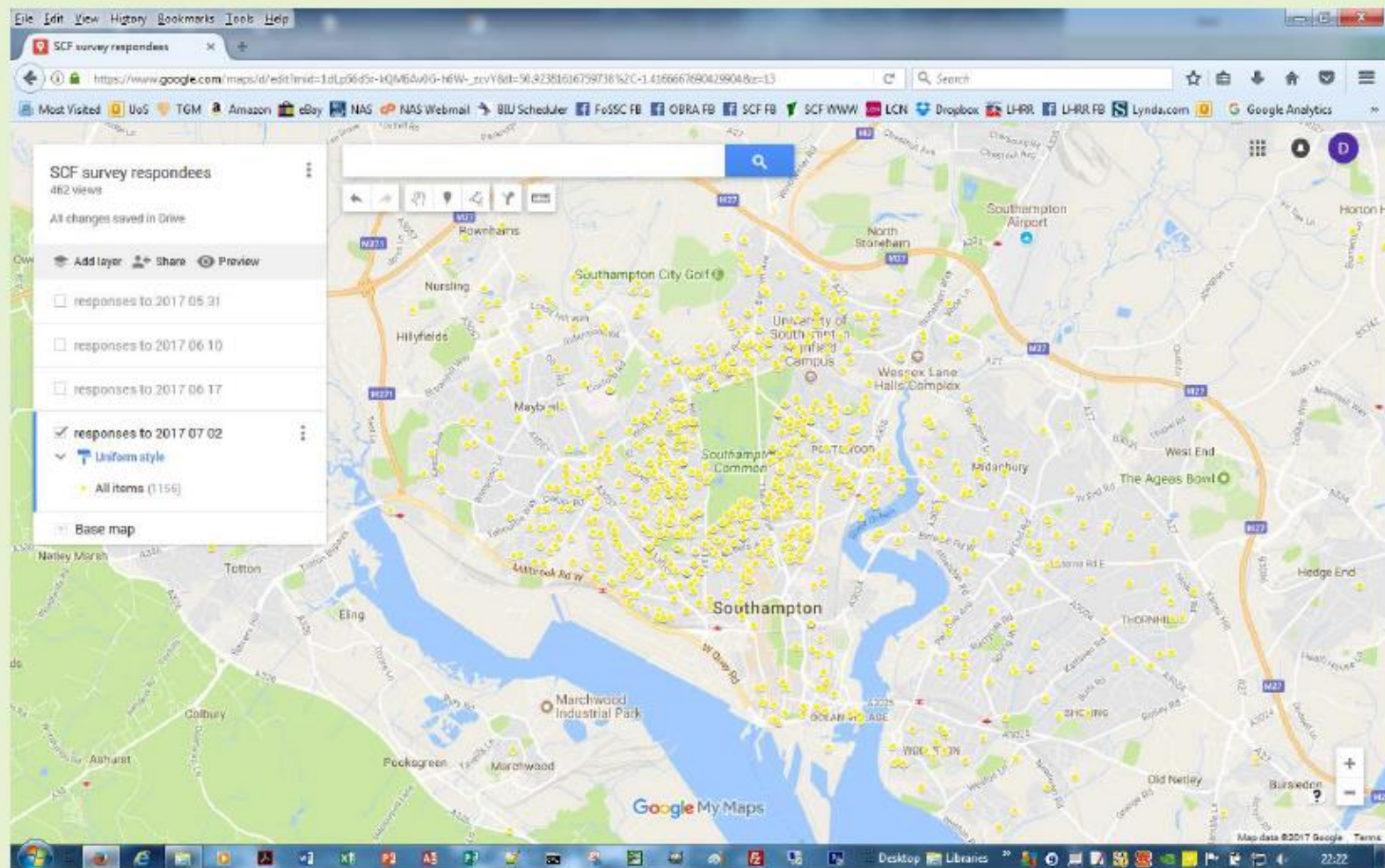


Emerging Results

- Launched May 2017; Over 1,000 respondents in first four weeks (Currently 1150 & rising)
- SCF subscribers have increased to c. 500
- Age distribution:

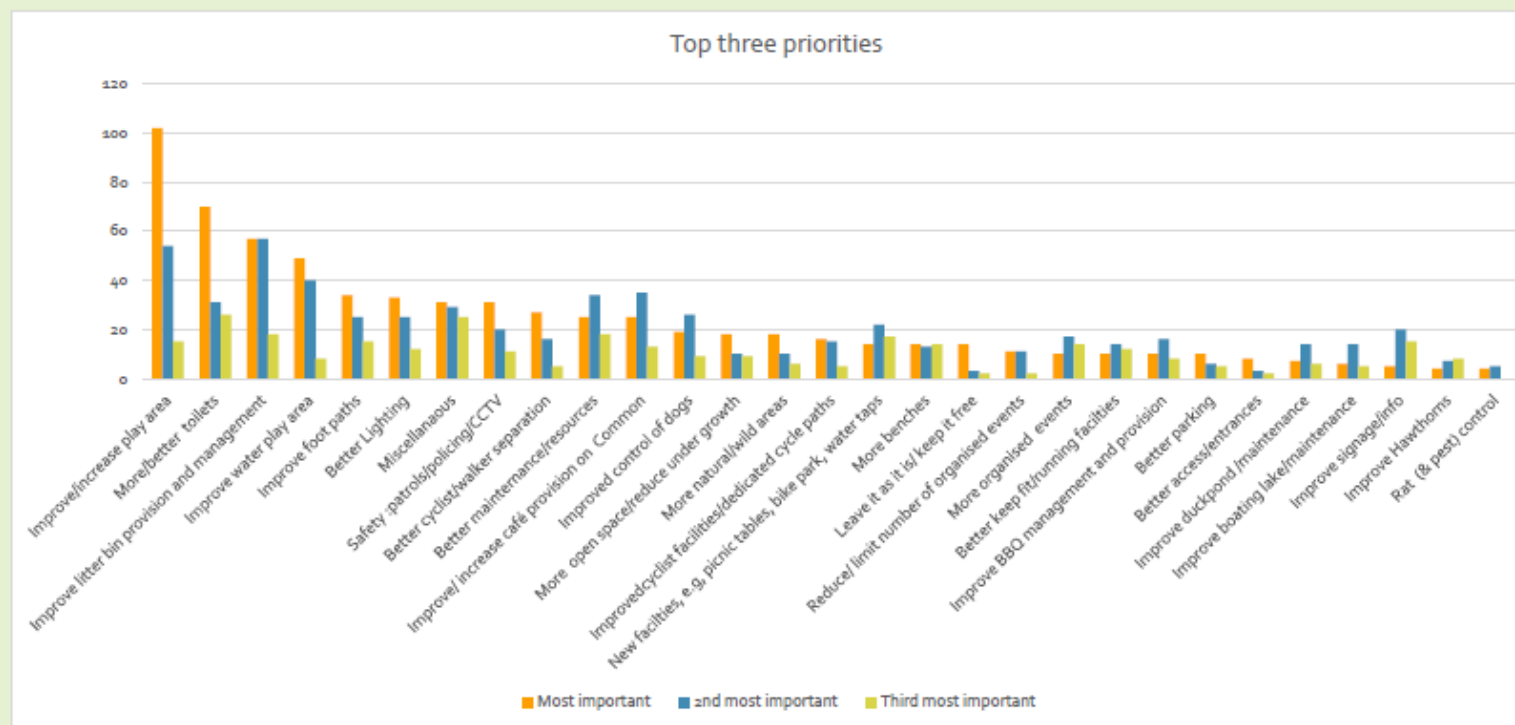








Top Priorities:



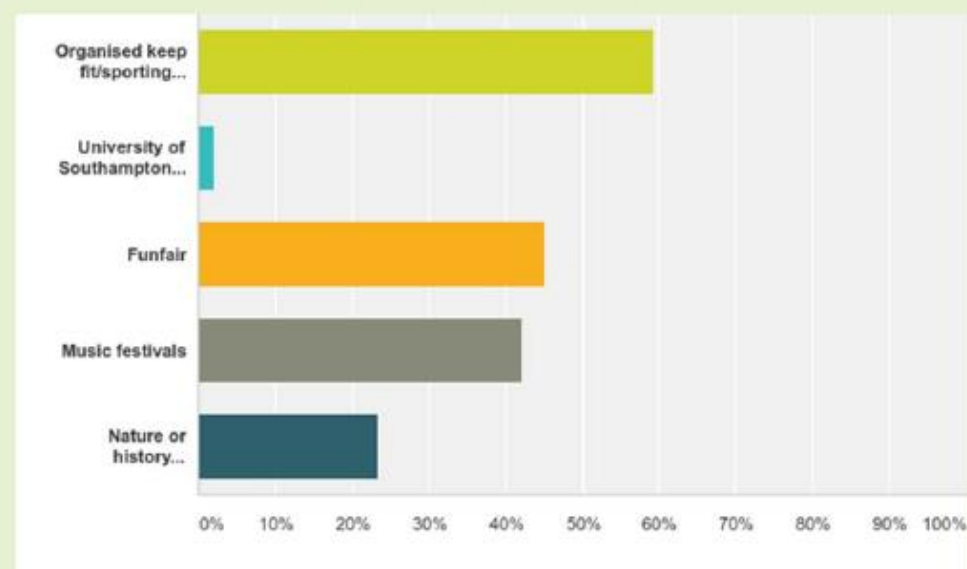
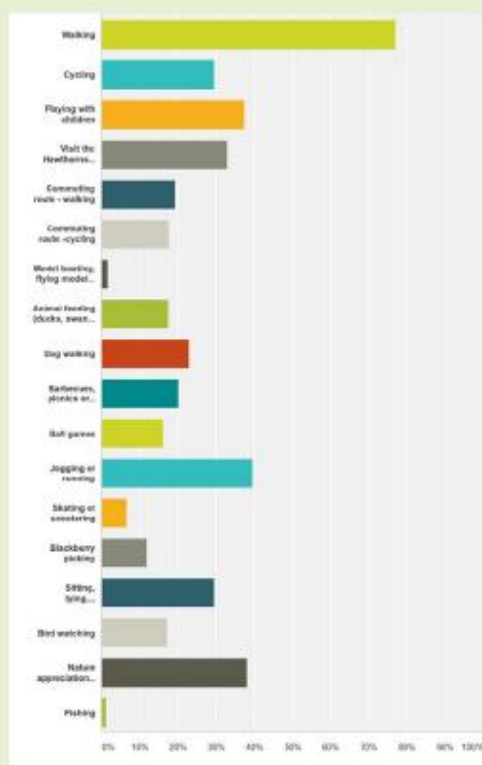


Survey Issues:

- Focus on:
 - Under 21's
 - BME communities
- How can we reach these groups more effectively?



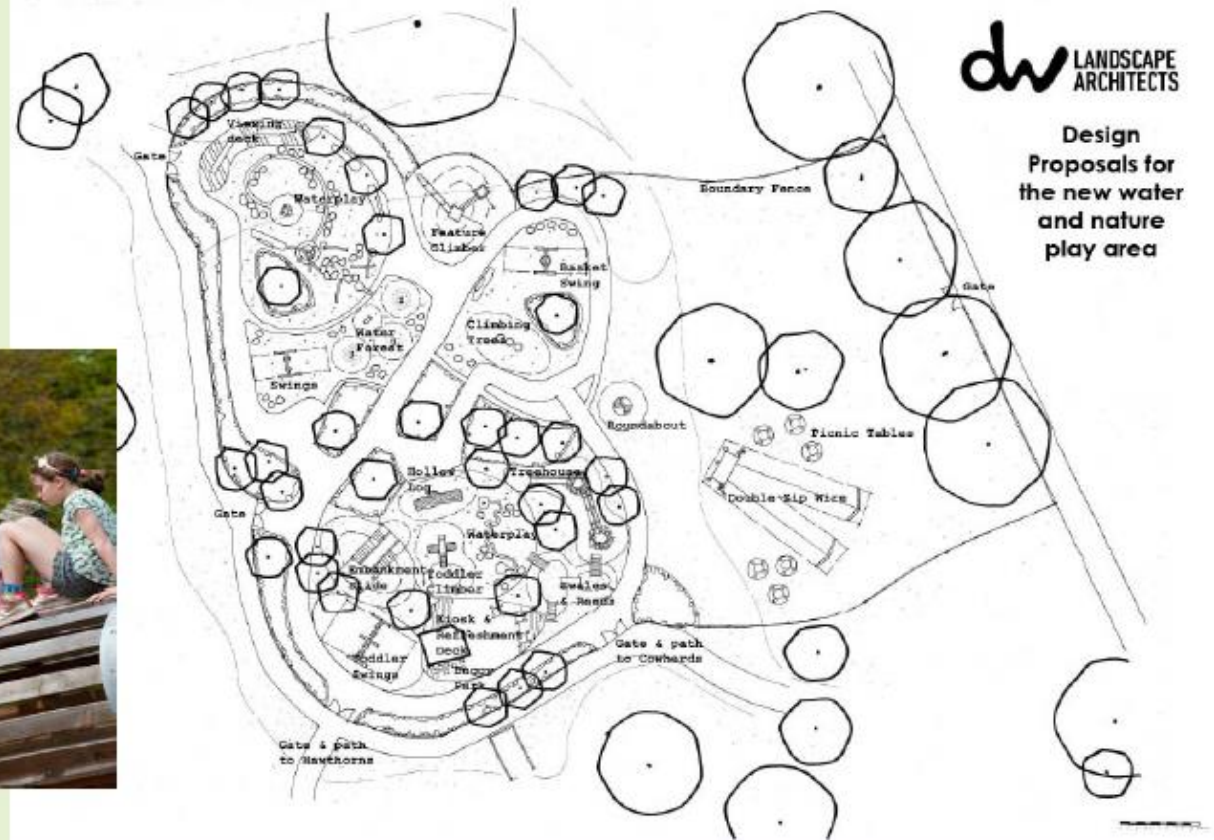
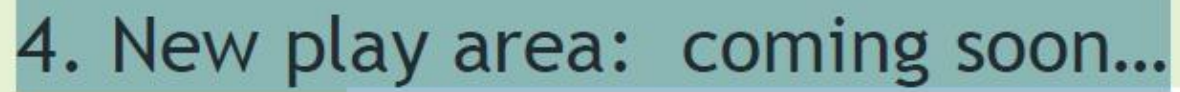
Activities:





3. Hawthorns Consultation

- Simon Hill & Roger Brown





5. A Strategic Plan for The Common

- A New Plan to be developed;
- Southampton City Council to lead with SCF support;
- Joint Council/SCF Working Group (2017 Survey will be a key input);
- Wide Engagement and Consultation;
- Operating Model to be reviewed;
- Phased approach to be completed by July 2018.



Outline idea of a Strategic Plan

- **Management**
 - Overall aims, objectives and guiding principles;
- **Recreation**
 - Activities, Dog/Walking, Cycling, Sports, Play;
- **Events**
 - Major Festivals, 10k/Charity runs, Parkrun, Military Fitness, Fayres, Fun Fayres;
- **Wildlife**
 - SSSI, Protected species, Flora & Fauna, Habitats Management, Higher level stewardship, Conservation areas;
- **Health and Well Being**
 - Quiet contemplation, Secluded areas, Cycle/Running tracks - distance markers.



Identifying Key Priorities in Phase I

		Resources						
User	Activity	Open spaces	Play equipment	Toilet provision	Hawthorns	Tarmac paths	New facilities	...
Families with children	Play	Quality/maintenance/dog poo/safety	Range/quality/maintenance					
	Education				Facilities/accessibility	Nature trails	Nature trails	
	Eating & drinking				Opening times/food offer		Additional outlets	
	Loo breaks ...			Accessibility/cleanliness/baby changing				
Parkrun participants	Running					Quality and maintenance of paths		
	Eating drinking				Capacity/food offer		Drinking fountains	
Dog walkers								
Cyclists								
...								
...								



Group Exercise

At your tables:

Identify:

- Users and their activities
- Resources on the Common
- Case study:
 - Focus on one activity and consider the resources it requires and the associated issues.



6. Activities & Resources

- Survey & plan are our top priorities.
- We have a range of ideas for other things, e.g.
 - Photo competition
 - Treasure hunt
 - Map/app for The Common
 - Film of The Common
 - Historical archive of The Common
- We need resources to maintain and build our activities.
- Without them we will fail!



How can you help?

- Please consider donating at least £5 to SCF - details available from Shirley Pinn.
- Please donate your time, energy and expertise if you can:
 - Hawthorns facelift working party
 - Working parties on Common/Plan work
 - New initiatives
 - Management Committee
- Register your interest on the sign up sheet and also to talk to Committee members.



Making a donation

Donations to SCF may be made by online banking to:

Southampton Common Forum

Sort Code: 60-20-03

Account number 34669574

Cheques should be made out to Southampton Common Forum and sent to:

SCF, c/o 7 Oakmount Avenue, Southampton, SO17 1DS

Or can be handed to any SCF committee member.

Appendix 2 - Workshop Output Results

Users & Activities

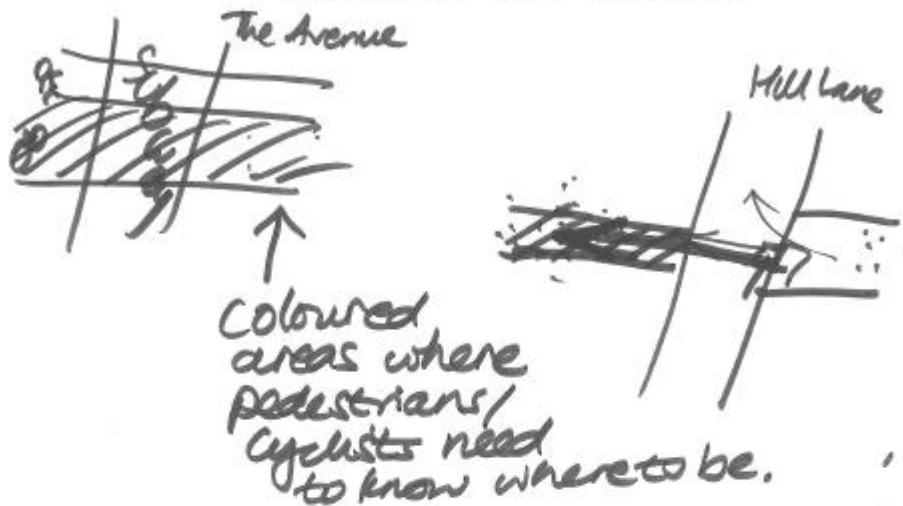
- People coming from west (Blenheim Ave / Oakmount Ave) need to CROSS SAFELY lots of bollards north of Cowherds to slow traffic cross safely. Cycle/shared use pavements smooth?

- festivals-management. Grass recovering? Litter IS left every time. Bigger bins out on busy weekends. Community policing on busy weekends.

More bin collections needed at key times - bank holidays / summer and after key events e.g. furfur.
When big events NOT over access to Hawthorns play area etc. Litter picked before mowing - pieces of rubbish.

What is the council currently going to do about the erosion of the grass due to the festivals? It had not yet recovered from last year!
Recovery time? No. of festivals?

Resources



Most users are respectful/courteous, but a small % of are not - can't judge on those few dog walkers/drivers/cyclists/etc etc.

eg. If all those cycling went in a car - congestion/pollution etc would be so much worse around the common.
cycling/walking is the solution to pollution.
Electric cars don't help congestion, still pollution off tyres, electricity means still comes on grid so also wasted getting to charging points.

Users & Activities

photography	⊗ Keep fit.
fishing	painting groups
bird watching	guided walks
quiditch	toddler groups
nature lovers	bat watchers
battle re-enactors	orienteering
walk thro'	mountain biking
commuters	skateboarders
dog walkers ⊗	blades/etc.
leisure walkers cyclists	⊗ families for playing
model planes/kites/boats	
ball games	
picnic	
wild areas seekers	

Resources

have

- play area
- Hawthorns
- ecological areas
 - like rare orchid
- bird life
- lighting
- lakes
 - boat / fishing / duck

wanted

- better toilets
- adequate bins that close.
- better nature info / accurate (sponsored?)
- lighting - (N→S)
- sympathetic to wild life.
- better pest control - ie rats
- secure points to leave ~~garbage~~ cycles.
- drinking water ^{across}
- better 'policing' + imposition of fines for litter / dog fouling

Users & Activities

FAMILIES

DOG WALKERS

WALKERS (all abilities)

JOGGERS

CYCLISTS

SKATERS

BIRD WATCHERS

FISHING

PHOTOGRAPHY

FOOTBALL AND
OTHER SPORTS

CRICKET, GOLF
FRISBEE

KITE FLYING

DRONE FLYING

PIC-NIC'S

BAR B Q

CAMPING

BLACKBERRYING

HOLLY PICKING

Resources

BAR BQ SITE

SIGNAGE about SHARED USE

BIGGER BINS (OR EMPTY MORE
FREQUENTLY)

MORE FORMAL Area to sit &
CONTEMPLATE

A VOLUNTEER WARDEN

DAS

Users & Activities

FAMILIES WITH NO AMMENITY SPACE.

DISABLED USERS

COMMUTING + THROUGH ROUTES VS
ON COMMON ACTIVITIES.

~~Information on the
history
of the
area~~

DD3

Resources

NOT A HOMOGENEOUS SPACE -
INTENSITY OF USE + SPACE
- TIME / WEATHER / SEASONALITY.

PARTICULAR AREAS - GRAVITATE
TO SPECIFIC AREAS FOR SPECIFIC
ACTIVITIES

INTERPRETATION - NATURE
- HISTORY
- SIGNAGE
- APPS, HAWTHORN S
ETC.

DAS

Case Study

DISABLED USE + NEED

DITCHES ON FLATS - NO BRIDGES

PATH QUALITY BENEFITS ALL WHEELCHAIR
V.I.
BUGGY
PRAM.

MORE SEATS FOR PHYSICALLY INFIRM.

MANUAL WHEELCHAIR - SMOOTH TARMAC

PATH - KISSING GATE @ CEMETERY LAKE.

HEIGHT OF FENCE @ CEMETERY LAKE.
BOULDER FORCE OFF PATH.

"SPEED BUMPS + WHEELCHAIR GAPS.

1/2 WITH RESTING SPACES.

- LINE OF SIGHT FROM WHEELCHAIR.

TRIP HAZARDS (GO F CHILDREN)

MUD - INCONSISTENT PATHS -

GRAVEL → MUD (DRAINAGE)

DECENT PATHS → OFF ROAD WALKING
+ DAMAGE TO WILDLIFE.

Users & Activities

Drug Users

Events - too many!! → Consider alternative sites
→ Noise
→ Vibration

Fishermen.

Children cycling to school, & Adult cyclists

Dogs + their owners → dogs using the fishing lake?
→ what's allowed.

People keeping fit → walking
→ running etc
barbecues.

Families & play ✓

Resources

Capacity for additional litter/rubbish

Fishing platforms

Bins

Information boards with SCC Emergency Contact Numbers, -24 hrs.

Fitness equipment

Existing seating

Existing path lighting - needs improving

Wildlife interpretation boards - improve