

Contents - Final Report on Battle Pavilion and Cafe consultation

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1 Introduction

1.1 Battle is situated in East Sussex, in the district of Rother, and within the designated High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It is split into four wards with a population (2011 census) of 6,673.

1.2 Battle Recreation Ground (the Rec.) on North Trade Road, is one of the most well used recreation grounds in Battle.

1.3 A public consultation about a new pavilion with cafe, at Battle Recreation Ground. (the Rec.), has taken place. The consultation ran from 22.3.2021-11.4.2021. This is a final report, outlining the findings, to enable Battle Town Council to consider the proposed project. The consultation is also a requirement of many major external funding bodies.

1.4 Battle Town Council has gathered public opinion related to the proposal in the past, during previous consultations. The recently completed Battle Health Pathway & Cycle skills area was consulted on in 2016, and a cafe and toilets were mentioned several times in the comments section. In January 2017 872 students from Claverham Community College, a comprehensive school in the town, responded about their use of the Rec. and facilities they would like to see being developed there. Asked to record one facility they most wanted to be provided, a cafe garnered 263 votes and was the most popular facility. In March 2019, the Council consulted specifically on the pavilion and cafe proposal. (see Annex: F for hyper links to these documents)

2 Context:

2.1 Battle Town Council, in partnership with Battle Local Action Planning Group (BLAPG), Battle Health Pathway subgroup, and Battle Town Football Club, has for two years, been developing plans to enhance the facilities at the Rec. The first phase, which includes the Health Pathway and Cycle Skills Area, including soft planting, has now concluded. The second phase, is the proposed development of a new changing pavilion with cafe and clubroom/meeting room. The current changing pavilion is considered not fit for purpose by the Football Association, and a local architect, and will be demolished as part of the project plan. The Football Association has signed off the proposed design of the Pavilion changing rooms. Currently, the proposed new facility has achieved planning permission and has gone out to tender to determine the potential cost.

2.2 The current pavilion is mainly used by Battle Town Football Club, and other football clubs on an ad-hoc basis, for changing purposes. Battle Town Football Club has been increasingly successful and is hoping to join the National Football League at Step 7 next season. In May 2019, the Football Association undertook a strategic football facility review, looking at every local authority in England. The Rec. was prioritised in that review for a new changing pavilion, and grass pitch improvements on both the full size, and the small-sided pitch. The Football Association noted that Battle Rec. is considered a strategic site for football and community activity, and that the current changing rooms were 'poor quality'. This has resulted in funding already having been given to aid pitch improvements, and also having the option of applying to the Football Foundation for some external funding towards the new pavilion. Other external funding bodies will need to be found to cover the cost of the pavilion, including the cafe, and these have already been identified. Due to the pandemic, many funding bodies have changed their funding strategy to deliver covid-related

funding only, and the project has been delayed for this reason. It is expected that funders will soon resume normal service, and the proposed project can then apply for funds, to complement funding reserved by the Council for this project in 2017/18.

2.3. Battle Town Council, based on feedback by residents, and particularly parents using the facilities with their children, has for some time favoured a cafe/refreshment point, and has kept the idea alive whilst moving on with the pavilion project. The new pathway and cycle skills area at the Rec. has greatly increased the usage of the space by local residents. It is clear from past consultation and ongoing adhoc comments from residents that a cafe on site would provide not only refreshments, but also a valuable focal point for friends and families to meet up to socialise. It would also enable people who may be isolated, or suffering from mental health issues, to make new contacts, and take part in community life.

2.4 There will obviously be some ongoing costs such as electricity, maintenance and repairs, cleaning and staffing. The Council already has budgets for some of these costs, and it is anticipated that the cafe will function as a small business and cover its costs. The Council is looking at options for the cafe such as a franchise, perhaps with an existing local cafe, as well as considering a traditional staffing structure. An overall project and funding timeline was established two years ago, and this continues to be updated. The expected cost of the new facilities was established through a tender process in late 2020, and full planning approval has already been given.

3 Consultation methodology:

3.1 Purpose of the consultation (**Why**): The Council wanted to find out from the local residents, and users of the ground, if they felt there was a need for such facilities. They also wanted to know how they, or their friends and families, would use them, and if they feel there would be any barriers to accessing the facilities. They also wanted to get views on people's perceptions of the benefits of the facilities in terms of health, wellbeing and community cohesion, and gather any further suggestions to improve on the current ideas. The consultation also enabled the Council to identify potential local outcomes which would link to the local and district councils' own strategic outcomes for the area, and also to the national outcomes of the external funders. In addition, as the proposed Pavilion is expected to be funded on the whole by external organisations, they will require evidence of community consultation and need.

3.2 **Who** was consulted: The Council wanted to specifically consult local residents on the proposals. If there is evidence of need, the Council will further undertake some specific targeted consultation with local sports clubs and organisations to drill down further into their potential use of the clubroom for meetings and training courses/events. In addition, the council may also formally consult local cafe owners on the High Street about the interest in a franchise at the Rec. cafe.

3.2 **How** the Council consulted: A short questionnaire was designed, including demographic information, and posted out to all residents via the annual report in hard copy. Also, an online questionnaire was put up on the Council website for instant submission. During the consultation period, completed paper questionnaires were returned to the Council by posting them through the Council office letterbox, or sending them as a photo or as a scanned attachment by email. In addition the paper copy stated that further copies could be downloaded from the council website. The online questionnaire was simply submitted online after completion.

3.3 An article was produced for the local press about the proposed new facilities to ensure that other local organisations could contribute if they wished. Due to Covid restrictions no consultation workshops or events were planned. Finally, some key partner organisations such as Battle Local Action Planning Group (BLAPG), Battle Town Football Club and Rother District Council's Active & Healthy Communities Specialist forwarded on the link to the consultation on their social media channels.

4 Responses

4.1 The consultation ran from 22.3.2021-11.4.2021, resulting in 158 completed questionnaires, 114 online and 44 paper copies. However, on 15th April, a further 15 paper copies were returned to the Council office. It was decided that, as life is still disrupted at present, and delivery of the questionnaires could easily have been delayed, that the intention to respond was more important, and these were subsequently added to the returns total. In total, therefore, **173 questionnaires** have been returned, of which 114 were online and 59 were paper copies.

4.2 The following gives a brief summary of the demographic data of the people who responded:

Local residents: 161 respondents (95.8%) were local residents. 7 (4.2%) were not local residents, and 5 respondents left blank entries for the "are you a local resident" question.

Age:

U18 – 5 respondents (2.9%)
18 to 24 – 7 respondents (4.1%)
25 to 34 – 18 respondents (10.5%)
35 to 44 – 36 respondents (20.9%)
45 to 54 – 26 respondents (15.1%)
55 to 64 – 30 respondents (17.4%)
65+ – 50 respondents (29.0%)
Blank entry – 1 respondent

Gender:

Female - 107 respondents (63.3%)
Male - 59 respondents (34.9%)
Other - 3 respondents (1.8%)
Blank entry - 4 respondents

Disabled people:

8 respondents (4.6%) declared themselves as disabled. The gender & age breakdown of these respondents are:

- 3 females: 1 aged 55 to 64; 2 aged 65 & over
- 4 males: 1 aged 25 to 34; 1 aged 35 to 44; 2 aged 45 to 54
- 1 other: 1 aged 18 to 24

Ethnicity:

162 respondents are 'White' (97%)

3 respondents are 'Asian or Asian British' (1.8%)

1 respondent is 'Black or Black British' (0.6%)

1 respondent is 'Other ethnicity including Chinese' (0.6%)

6 respondents left 'Ethnicity' blank

Gender by age:

(does not include blank entries for gender or age)

	Under 18	18 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55 to 64	65 & over	TOTAL
Female	1 (0.9%)	2 (1.9%)	7 (6.5%)	24 (22.4%)	22 (20.6%)	22 (20.6%)	29 (27.1%)	107
Male	4 (6.8%)	4 (6.8%)	11 (18.6%)	10 (16.9%)	4 (6.8%)	8 (13.6%)	18 (30.5%)	59
Other	0	1 (33.3%)	0	2 (66.7%)	0	0	0	3
TOTAL	5 (3%)	7 (4.1%)	18 (10.7%)	36 (21.3%)	26 (15.3%)	30 (17.8%)	47 (27.8%)	169

5 Results:

5.1 Headline Results:

* **95.9%** of respondents were in favour of developing a new pavilion;

* **91.3%** of respondents were in favour of developing a new cafe;

* **93.5%** of respondents were in favour of developing a new clubroom, which could be used for meetings, training and activities.

* **84.6%** of respondents felt that the new facilities would increase their usage and contribute to their improved physical and mental wellbeing and skills, and promote better community cohesion. These results also reflected the views of 100% of disabled respondents.

5.2 Secondary results

* **The new facilities as a whole** - The comments demonstrated a positive view and clear interest in the facilities as a whole: 'A place to bring people together', 'A new destination post lock down can only be a good thing', 'Great for all those areas. I think the Rec. would become a much more inviting place to spend more time..... and for it not just be a place for the kids to play, but for everyone to socialise more'. One resident highlighted the state of nearby roads and extra construction related damage'. 'Such a shame the current building is so empty. Many teenagers hang

around the Rec. Maybe a youth club may be a good idea one night a weekend' and 'Important to make the park inclusive for all, from toilets, ramps, low swings, visuals and the sensory garden/ planting is splendid!'

- * **Pavilion** - The comments included using it for children's birthday hire, senior citizens' meeting place, and one person described it as a 'vital' space to allow children and adults to have to have access to better facilities. Respondents were also concerned that the pavilion was managed effectively with so many potentially different uses, saying there needed to be a 'clear focus on what the space was used for'. Hire prices and refreshment prices 'needed to be affordable'. 'I would like to use the facilities to change pre and post workout as well as meet friends and then enjoy food and drinks after to cool down'. There were several comments on the need for a robust cleaning regime, maybe even a full time cleaner, mixing Football and other clubs using changing provision and also having a cafe on site.
- * **Cafe** - Comments included 'I would possibly use the Rec. more if there was a cafe available (with toilets)'. 'Somewhere to meet friends, stroll, have a coffee, sit and chat. The cafe is an important feature'. 'My whole family will use the cafe as long as it is fully disabled friendly'. 'I think people will be more likely to use the facilities. That's already the case after the bike track and walking path. having a cafe will make it a good place to meet for a longer period of time'. One responder suggested a vision for the cafe - 'Prioritise packaging-free and ecological business models to avoid old-school crisps, cans, and chocolate ending up littering the Rec., plus avoiding disposable and single use cups, cutlery etc.'. There was debate about whether the cafe is needed with the High Street being nearby and already having cafe provision. An idea to offer a franchise to an existing cafe suggested a way forward which would not impact the High Street specifically. Also 'A different destination which is not the High Street, is going to encourage me to use it'. Finally, 'There is a need for hot drinks at the Rec. as so many people bring take-away drinks from a national chain of coffee shops'. 'Clear financial plan essential'.
- * **Clubroom/Meeting room** - Comments included: 'I would look to hire the hall for my exercise class for older adults'. 'Use the guide hall more'. 'Meetings for clubs'. 'Social meetings'. 'Hire for parties, use for clubs!'. 'Attend an event run by an organisation and meet after for coffee'. Respondents felt that the meeting room would compete with the Memorial Hall and the Guide hall.
- * **Benefits to Health and better community cohesion** - There were many comments on benefits of the new facilities including: 'would encourage me to come out of my house more and engage with friends in a great setting that is good for me and my kids'; 'increased socialising and exercise'; 'meet other mums'; 'it would be a nice place to meet friends and neighbours'; 'Allows me to meet people in a nice area, to sit or walk around with a drink'; 'every time I walk the pathway, my soul feels uplifted and inspired to look forward to brighter new days for us all in Battle'.
- * **Related issues raised** - A number of relevant issues have been raised during the consultation and are listed below. These should be reviewed by the steering group to ensure residents' concerns are addressed.

Key issues raised in the consultation included:

A perceived need locally, for the Pavilion, cafe and meeting room

Cleaning
 Costs to local residents (hire charges, cafe prices)
 Car Parking issues will increase
 Management of the cafe/ competing with the High Street (franchise?)
 Lack of detail on the funding for the pavilion for local residents
 Continuing development of the Rec. facilities and impacts of this.

5.3 Questionnaires:

1. Question 1 (yes/no):_ Are you in favour of the proposed pavilion for use by local sports clubs for changing facilities?

Yes

164 respondents (95.9%). Breakdown by gender:

- 105 Female representing 98.1% of all of the 107 Female respondents to this question
- 54 Male representing 94.7% of all of the to 57 male respondents to this question
- 1 Other
- 4 Blank entries for gender

No

7 respondents (4.1%). Breakdown by gender:

- 2 Female : 1 aged 35 to 44; 1 aged 65 & over
- 3 Male: 1 aged 18 to 24; 2 aged 65 & over
- 2 Other: 2 aged 35 to 44

(Note that there were 2 respondents to this question who added comments but did not say yes or no to the specific question. They are counted in terms of responding to the questionnaire, and their comments are included in the appendices, but they are not counted on this individual question).

Breakdown of “Yes” by age & gender: (does not include blank entries for gender or age)

	Under 18	18 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55 to 64	65 & over	TOTAL
Female	1 (1%)	2 (1.9%)	7 (6.7%)	23 (21.9%)	22 (21%)	22 (21%)	28 (26.7%)	105
Male	4 (7.4%)	3 (5.6%)	11 (20.4%)	10 (18.5%)	3 (5.6%)	8 (14.8%)	15 (27.8%)	54
Other	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1
TOTAL	5 (3.1%)	6 (3.8%)	18 (11.2%)	33 (20.6%)	25 (15.6%)	30 (18.8%)	43 (26.9%)	160

Yes from Disabled People: 7 of 8 disabled respondents are in favour of the pavilion, with the other disabled person leaving ‘yes/no’ blank for this question. (100%)

Yes from local residents: 153 local residents are in favour of the pavilion, (96.2% of 159 local residents who responded)

2. Question 2 (yes/no): Are you in favour of the proposed pavilion café for refreshments & for meeting up with friends/socialising to make new friends?

Yes

157 respondents (91.3%). Breakdown by gender:

- 100 Female representing 95.2% of all of the 105 Female respondents
- 50 Male representing 89.3% of all of the 56 Male respondents
- 3 Other
- 4 Blank entries for gender: 3 aged 65 & over; 1 blank age entry

No

15 respondents (8.7%). Breakdown by gender:

- 5 Female : 1 aged 25 to 34; 1 aged 45 to 54; 1 aged 55 to 64; 2 aged 65 & over
- 6 Male: 1 aged 18 to 24; 5 aged 65 & over

(Note that there was one respondent to this question who added comments but did not say yes or no to the specific question. They are counted in terms of responding to the questionnaire, and their comments are included in the appendices, but they are not counted on this individual question).

**Breakdown of “Yes” by age & gender:
(does not include blank entries for gender or age)**

	Under 18	18 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55 to 64	65 & over	TOTAL
Female	1 (1%)	2 (2%)	5 (5%)	22 (22%)	22 (22%)	21 (21%)	27 (27%)	100
Male	4 (8%)	3 (6%)	10 (20%)	10 (20%)	3 (6%)	7 (14%)	13 (26%)	50
Other	0 (%)	1 (33.3%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (66.6%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3
TOTAL	5 (3.3%)	6 (3.9%)	15 (9.8%)	34 (22.2%)	25 (16.3%)	28 (18.3%)	40 (26.1%)	153