SOLIHULL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL – TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL SURVEY

Ethos Environmental Planning has been commissioned by Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council to undertake an assessment of open space and outdoor recreation provision across the Borough.

This survey will help the Council to understand the current quantity, quality, accessibility and use of open spaces and recreational facilities within Town and Parish areas. It will also assist in identifying local needs, deficiencies and future priorities for provision.

Town and Parish Councils play a key role in the provision, management and understanding of local open spaces. Your responses will therefore provide valuable local insight to inform the assessment and ensure that future planning policies and decisions are based on robust, up-to-date evidence.

The information gathered will be used to:

- Assess existing open space provision across the Borough;
- Identify areas of deficiency or need;
- Inform standards for future provision;
- Support the delivery of appropriate open space through new development.

All responses will be considered as part of the wider evidence base and will help shape the Council's approach to open space planning**.**

Q1. Name of Town/Parish:

Berkswell Parish Council

Q2. Name, position, and telephone no. of the person answering this survey

Charlotte Shadbolt, Chair of Berkswell Parish Council, tel: 07772 007374

PART A – OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION FACILITIES

YOUR OWN OPEN SPACES AND RECREATION FACILITIES

Q3. Is the Town/Parish Council responsible for the management and/or maintenance of any open space, play or outdoor recreational facilities in its area?

☒ **Yes** ☐ **No**

If yes, please provide a brief list of the facilities/open space areas involved and whether you manage and/or maintain them. If possible, could you please provide a postcode/address for these facilities/open spaces.

Berkswell Parish Council is responsible for the maintenance of the village green in Berkswell village (CV7 7BJ) and the area around Berkswell well, also classed as a village green (CV7 7BJ).

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION FACILITIES MANAGED BY OTHERS

Q4. What other open spaces and outdoor recreation facilities (managed by others) are you aware of in the town/parish? Please provide brief details (including who manages them, location and contact details, if known).

Lavender Hall Park, managed by SMBC off Lavender Hall Lane, Balsall Common CV7 7BN.

The Triangle, playing fields off Lavender Hall Lane leased from SMBC by the Hornets Football Club.

Berkswell and Balsall Common Sports and Community Association runs The Lant on behalf of its associated clubs – tennis, cricket, hockey, running and offshore cruising. The facilities are fully utilised and more pitches and courts are required. The club is half in Berkswell Parish and half in Balsall Parish.

Q5. Do you think there is any scope for recreational community use of any school facilities (outdoor) in your Town/Parish or for further developing community use at schools that already provide some?

☒ **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐ **Don't know**

If yes, please provide further details.

The only school within Berkswell Parish is Berkswell Primary School which has some outside facilities but they are not currently used by the community outside of school hours.

Q6. Generally, within your town/parish, do you consider your open spaces to be:

☐ **Underused** ☐ **Adequately used** ☒ **Overused**

Please provide further details.

Lavender Hall Park is the recreational facility not just within Berkswell Parish but for Balsall Common and it is heavily utilised by residents for the playground facilities, open space for walking and the football pitches for use by the local football club.

Berkswell and Balsall Parishes are due to grow significantly within the next 15 years. The existing open space is heavily utilised and more will be needed with the additional houses due to be built.

The Parish Councils are working together with Solihull MBC to ensure the sport provision in particular is suitable to meet the needs of the future settlement of Balsall Common and Berkswell. This is being co-ordinated by Cllr Peter Wreford of Balsall Parish Council who is working with the local sports clubs and associations and representatives from Berkswell Parish Council to make this happen. Detailed information of the local need has been provided to the Solihull Local Plan team and in relation to sports provision consultations.

PART B – LOCAL NEEDS AND ASPIRATIONS

Q7. Are you aware of any particular groups or general sectors within your community whose needs for open space and recreational facilities are not currently met? This could include specific groups and/or more general sectors.

☒ **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐ **Don't know**

If yes, please provide a brief list of the groups or general sectors involved and any comments on their need for open space. If possible, please provide a postcode/address for any existing facilities/open spaces they may use.

See previous answer.

Q8. Do you think there is a need for additional or improved open space and outdoor recreation facilities within your Town/Parish?

☒ **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐ **Don't know**

If yes, please indicate against the type of facility that requires improvement:

Types of open space and recreational facility	Need for more facilities	Improved quality	Improved access
Local recreation grounds and parks	x		
Children's play areas	x		
Facilities for teenagers (e.g., skate parks, shelters)	x		
Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs) – hard surfaced	x		

Types of open space and recreational facility	Need for more facilities	Improved quality	Improved access
Footpaths, bridleways, cycle paths, disused railways etc.	x		x
Water recreation facilities (e.g., rivers, canals, lakes, ponds)			
Woodlands, wildlife areas and nature reserves	x		
Allotments	x		
Informal Open Spaces for ball games, picnics, dog walking etc.	x		
Churchyards and cemeteries			

Q9. Please provide additional detail below about specific Town/Parish Council priorities/plans/aspirations regarding open space provision.

As previously mentioned, Berkswell and Balsall Parishes are due to substantially expand over the next 15 years. Sports provision is already insufficient for the existing residents and therefore is a requirement to cope with the expansion. This is one of the priorities moving forwards ensuring the provision is sufficient for the communities' needs. A group has been established by Cllr Peter Wreford of Balsall Parish Council to co-ordinate this across the 2 parishes along with the local sports associations and Berkswell Parish Council. The requirement moving forwards has been established and they are working with SMBC and the local parish councils to locate suitable land for a new sports hub/provision to be located.

Suitable and timely infrastructure for Berkswell and Balsall Parishes is one of the key priorities. This includes open spaces, recreational space, sports facilities, ensuring connectivity of wildlife corridors and ponds within new developments etc. These issues are closely evaluated within housing planning applications and commented on appropriately.

Berkswell Parish has less open space on average than the rest of the borough and we would like to see this imbalance addressed when new housing developments come our way.

Q10. Other plans and aspirations: please let us know if you are aware of any other specific projects, plans, and aspirations for improving open space and community recreational facilities in the Town/Parish (e.g. by local community organisations/clubs).

See above.

Q11. Do you consider there to be any barriers to accessing open space in your Town/Parish?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know

If yes, please indicate against the type of barrier to access in the table below:

Barriers to accessing open space	Not an issue	Barrier to some residents	Barrier to the majority of residents
Distance		x	
Lack of footpaths/cycle links/etc.			x
Poor public transport			x
Safety concerns		x	
Physical barriers (e.g. roads, railways)		x	
Other			

If yes, please identify open spaces where these barriers may present an issue. If possible, please provide a postcode/address for these facilities/open spaces.

Berkswell village has open space on the village green and is in a rural setting but if residents wish to access playground facilities, there is no footpath or cycleway linking Berkswell to Balsall Common. The public transport is limited and the road between Berkswell and Balsall Common not safe to walk along.

Berkswell Parish Council are lobbying for a safe walking and cycling route to be established from Berkswell village to Balsall Common Hall Meadow Road to address this issue.

PART C – GENERAL ISSUES RELATING TO OPEN SPACE

Q12. How important are the following factors in relation to the quality of open spaces? Please provide a rating for all where you have an opinion (HIGH, MEDIUM or LOW importance). Please do not rate more than 5 aspects as HIGH importance.

	HIGH	MED	LOW
They should be easy to get to for all members of the community	x		
They should be easy to get around by all members of the community		x	
There should be good footpath and cycleway links to and between them	x		
They should have good car parking facilities		x	
They should be multi-functional providing for all sectors of the community		x	
They should be clean and free from litter and graffiti		x	
They should be safe and secure for those using them	x		
They should provide a contribution to biodiversity and wildlife	x		
There should be adequate opportunities for dog walking and freedom from dog fouling		x	
They should have good signposting and information about what's available		x	
There should be control of noise and anti-social behaviour	x		

Equipment and grounds should be of high quality and well maintained		x	
There should be places to shelter/sit in poor weather		x	

Q13. Are there any other aspects about open space that you think are important that are missing from the above list? Please give details.

If you have any further comments about the provision and standard of open space and recreation facilities in the Town/Parish or in Solihull in general, please give details below.

We need more open space. Local residents have to travel elsewhere for activities such as park runs as the local park is not sufficient to run a local event, there is no all-weather pitch / floodlit pitch so residents have to go outside the village for these facilities.

Thank you for completing this survey.

Please return by Friday 11th September by email to Martha.PickardStrange@ethosep.co.uk or by post to:

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