



*Blythe Hill Fields User Group (BHFUG) exists to represent everyone living around or using Blythe Hill Fields. Our purpose is to achieve sustainable improvements and facilities in this vital resource for the benefit of the whole community. We aim to promote the increased use and enjoyment of this essential open space.*

*We are a voluntary community group established in October 2003. Our mission is to promote the increased use, access to and enjoyment of Blythe Hill Fields for local residents and other users of this essential open space. The User Group liases with partners, such as Lewisham Council, in order to maintain existing facilities as well as develop and install new ones.*

To,

Chris Bull,  
CCCP,  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Laurence House,  
1 Catford Road,  
SE6 4RU

Dear Chris,

I attach our submission of interest in developing the Play Ground in Blythe Hill Fields under the Playbuilder Programme.

As well as supplying answers to the questions posed in the brief, I attach

1. copies of pages 9 and 10 of our August 2005 Feasibility Report which illustrate the high level of importance attached to the need to improve play facilities by those surveyed.
2. copies of pages 4 and 6 of our July 2006 Consultation which show both a continuation of that high level of priority regarding the play area and detailed responses to the more targeted "play" questions in this consultation.

Full copies of both these documents can be downloaded from our website ([www.blythehillfields.org.uk](http://www.blythehillfields.org.uk)) but I thought it best not to inundate you with paper.

I also attach a summary of the responses we received from Children in response to our questionnaire over the last couple of weeks.

Improving the play area has been in our top 2 priorities since we began work. It would be great to have the chance to develop the play area so that our local Children have more opportunity to develop themselves and their relationship with Blythe Hill Fields.

Yours sincerely,

Alan Bailey  
Chair, Blythe Hill Fields User Group

## Playbuilder Programme

### **Name and address of proposed site**

Children's Play Area, Blythe Hill Fields, SE6.

### **Details of Consultation**

In **April 2005**, on the recommendation of Lewisham Council, Blythe Hill Fields User Group approached Groundwork South East London to produce a feasibility study on the potential improvements to Blythe Hill Fields. Groundwork's objective was to engage local residents and community groups to determine the key issues in the park and identify possible solutions to these. One sketch design, together with costings was produced to guide community members in their choice of improvements. **When asking respondents "how important" suggested developments were, 3 of the 13 options given were play related as we knew that this was a prime use of the Fields.**

352 completed questionnaires were returned and evaluated.

In an effort to engage the older children in the consultation, a visit was made to The Rise Youth Centre to speak with both children between the ages of ten and sixteen and young adults between the ages of seventeen and twenty-one. The consultation event (16<sup>th</sup> July) provided a further opportunity to consult with teenagers and young adult users of the park.

A Community consultation event was held on 16th July 2005 on the Fields. Over fifty users of the park attended the event, providing valuable feedback for the project.

In **June and July 2006** a further survey was carried out to provide more detail on community opinion regarding what projects might be taken forward in the park. **This survey had a distinct section seeking opinions on the Play Area.** We received 157 completed questionnaires.

**Since news of the Playbuilder Programme was released** we have sought further opinions from **children specifically**. We have used a quick questionnaire to establish what they like best, what might make the playground more exciting and where their favourite playground is and why it is their favourite.

We completed these 1-2-1 in the playground, by email and response to our members and their children and through the Acorn After School Club and the Ackroyd Children and Families Nursery. We have received 33 replies.

### **Who will lead on this?**

Alan Bailey, Chair, Blythe Hill Fields User Group.

## **The Beneficiaries.**

- Local Children who already use the playground will have more fun.
- Local Children who don't use the playground now will have their curiosity stirred.
- All Children who visit will have more Children to play with and learn from.
- Children's groups will visit more and enjoy the other benefits of the Fields too.
- Families will visit more and build better relationships between themselves and with others.

## **What will make this area exciting to children and young people?**

**In 2006**, answers on "Young Children's play" indicated that "**traditional items remain popular**" – **climbing nets/frames, under 5's equipment, roundabouts, bigger slide** – see graph on page 6 of the July 2006 Consultation Summary.

For "Older Children's play", there was a distinct nod to the "**out of datedness**" of the equipment and a clear skew towards **sports games and exercise/adventure**. We hope in the future to develop a "Trim Trail" in the Fields and this may meet some of these needs. As to sports and games, there is not consensus about this within the User Group many of whom do not want the grass areas re-modeled.

**In 2008**, the Children were asked "what would make the playground more exciting?" They seem to have said 3 things. (See summary attached.)

1. "We want things to climb on. Ropes, Ladders, Bars, Walls, Aerial Walkways." To us Adults, it looks like they want to extend and stretch themselves physically. To do things that look a bit challenging and even a bit dangerous.
2. "We want to extend ourselves on traditional playground equipment like Slides, Swings and Roundabouts. But we want them to be bigger and we want there to be more of them."
3. "We want places where we can be creative. Places to play "houses" or play at being Train Drivers. To be excited by bright colours and to have a safe and comfortable surface/place to just use our imagination".

## **Access to Children of all abilities.**

We are fortunate to start from a position where the playground area is accessible to all as the Fields do not close, the playground is already fenced off and the pathways are level even if they do slope a bit.

We approached the parent of a multiple disabled child who grew up by the Fields and specialist staff at the Ackroyd Children and Families Nursery where they have places allocated for Children with special needs. We asked for some insight.

The Parent (P) suggested specially adapted swings and roundabouts that can take wheel chairs. P wanted to see a lot of rubberised matting to cushion against falls. She also suggested Trampolines, textured walls (perhaps made by children) embedded with shells. (She suggested a visit to one of the Boroughs Primary

