

Community Engagement Plan

Menheniot Parish - Recreation Field Consultation

Introduction

Menheniot Parish Council recognises that effective community engagement is essential in shaping facilities that genuinely reflect the community's needs, priorities, and aspirations. The consultation for Menheniot Recreation Field aims to authentically understand residents' current usage patterns, explore barriers preventing greater use, and identify amenities that will meaningfully enhance local life, physical health, and mental well-being.

This engagement process will not only collect valuable data but also foster greater community ownership and involvement in future planning, ensuring long-term sustainability and relevance of the Recreation Field facilities.

Objectives of Community Engagement

The consultation is structured around several clear objectives:

- To gain a thorough understanding of current recreational field use by different demographic groups in the community.
- To identify barriers and constraints preventing fuller or more diverse use of existing facilities.
- To uncover unmet recreational and leisure needs, aspirations, and ideas from residents and community groups.
- To identify practical steps for enhancing community involvement, potentially including volunteer management or partnership models.
- To produce clear, actionable recommendations that will guide future improvements and investments.

Community Engagement Approach

Our approach to community engagement for Menheniot Parish Recreation Field will integrate multiple methods, each building sequentially on insights gathered at earlier stages. By progressively refining our understanding through this process, we ensure deeper community participation and more robust outcomes.

Integration and Synergy

- **Sequential Flow:** Each engagement method is carefully timed to build on previous activities, providing continuous refinement of insights and maintaining community momentum and interest.
- **Inclusivity and Diversity:** By employing a mix of online, paper-based, and face-to-face engagement methods, we will engage a broad and representative range of community members, ensuring inclusivity across different demographic groups.
- **Feedback and Adaptation:** Ongoing analysis and interim reporting will allow us to continuously adapt and improve engagement methods in real-time based on community feedback.
- **Saturation Threshold:** We will apply the principle of 'no longer hearing something new' to determine when the engagement has reached a natural conclusion.

Community Communication Channels

Menheniot benefits from strong local communication networks that will be actively used to inform and encourage participation:

- The Menheniot Community Facebook page (with over 1,200 members).
- The local school's community email list to reach parents and families.
- Local newsletters, word of mouth, and posters in community venues.
- Parish Council website and noticeboards.

These channels will be used consistently to inform residents of the purpose and progress of the consultation, creating a shared sense of ownership.

The Five Stages of Community Engagement

Our approach aligns with best practice, using the five progressive levels of engagement:

- **Inform:** Laying the groundwork through clear, consistent communication, explaining the purpose of the engagement and promoting participation through newsletters, social media, and school/community networks.
- **Research:** Framing engagement activities to explore key issues and community values, shaping surveys and discussions to uncover what truly matters to residents.
- **Consult:** Gathering structured feedback through surveys, street canvassing, and a town hall event—understanding the breadth of opinion.
- **Collaborate:** Deeper exploration of emerging themes and possible solutions through focus groups and special interest group sessions.
- **Empower:** Final reporting and communication of findings and recommendations to the Parish Council and the wider community, enabling evidence-informed decision-making and transparency.

Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder Identification and Inclusion

Effective community engagement requires proactively identifying and involving diverse stakeholders:

- **Broad Community Representation:** Ensuring all demographics are heard, particularly older residents, young people, families, and traditionally underrepresented groups.
- **Targeted Groups and Organisations:** Engaging sports clubs, schools, community groups, health providers, and social care networks.
- **Professional and Statutory Stakeholders:** Actively involving Menheniot Parish Council, Cornwall Council representatives, healthcare providers, and relevant recreational bodies.

Key Principles of Community Engagement

Our engagement strategy aligns with best practices in community involvement:

- **Inclusiveness:** Comprehensive outreach strategies to involve all community sectors.
- **Transparency:** Clear and accessible communication of engagement processes and how community contributions will inform decisions.
- **Accessibility:** Methods tailored to ensure participation by individuals with varying access needs.

- **Accountability:** Transparent reporting on how community input has shaped outcomes.
- **Responsiveness:** Adaptive approaches responding swiftly to community feedback.
- **Respect and Openness:** Respectful dialogue and genuine openness to diverse opinions and ideas.
- **Saturation Awareness:** Actively assessing whether we are continuing to learn new insights or if the consultation has reached a natural endpoint.

Methodology and Engagement Activities

To ensure our consultation is robust, inclusive, and capable of capturing the broadest range of community perspectives, Menheniot Parish Council will adopt a multi-method approach rooted in best practice community engagement frameworks. Our methods are aligned with the IAP2 spectrum of public participation (Inform, Research, Consult, Collaborate, Empower), and reflect national guidance on inclusivity, diversity of methods, and meaningful participation.

Each activity is designed not only to gather responses but to encourage conversation, understanding, and co-production of solutions that reflect the character and aspirations of Menheniot's residents.

1. Online and Paper Surveys

Purpose:

To consult the widest possible cross section of the community and gather individual views on current and future use of the Recreation Field. The survey is structured to provide both quantitative and qualitative data, with thematic depth and contextual sensitivity.

Rationale:

Surveys remain one of the most effective tools for capturing structured data from a broad population. They allow people to respond in their own time and at their own pace, which is especially important for those with caregiving responsibilities, limited mobility, or discomfort in public forums. By offering both digital (SurveyMonkey) and physical formats (paper copies available at community venues), we ensure digital exclusion does not limit participation.

Promotion:

Surveys will be widely promoted through the Parish Council newsletter, Menheniot's community Facebook group (1,200 members), the local school's community email list, and posters in high-traffic areas (Post Office, village hall, pub, playground). This aligns with best practice guidance on using established communication networks to maximise reach.

Expected Outcomes:

- Establish baseline data on recreation field usage, perceived barriers, and future aspirations.
- Identify segment-specific trends by analysing responses by postcode, age group, and use-type.
- Surface early ideas for further exploration in focus groups and town hall sessions.

2. Street Canvassing

Purpose:

To reach residents who may not respond to surveys or attend formal events, and to gain immediate, conversational insights into their views. Canvassing will be conducted twice to raise awareness and gather responses, and again near the end to validate emerging themes.

Rationale:

As shown in national practice, street engagement in everyday spaces (e.g. playground, outside shops or pubs) helps reach “accidental participants”, those who wouldn’t typically engage in this type of activity. These interactions can be brief but meaningful, especially for those who feel formal consultations do not represent them.

Approach:

- Canvassers will gather verbal responses and record short quotes or quick polls (e.g. “What’s the one thing you’d change about the field?”).
- Participants will be offered a flyer about the full consultation and encouraged to complete the full survey.

Expected Outcomes:

- Increase visibility and trust in the consultation process.
- Capture perspectives from those underrepresented in written surveys, including older adults, informal users, and commuters.
- Identify emotional responses to the space, often better captured in informal dialogue.

3. Town Hall Community Event

Purpose:

To provide an open, inclusive space for residents to reflect on interim findings from the survey and street canvassing, discuss key themes, and begin shaping shared priorities for the Recreation Field’s future.

Rationale:

Town hall events allow for deeper deliberation, spontaneous conversation, and real-time engagement with others’ views. Best practice shows that when structured properly, with facilitation and feedback loops, town halls can generate rich, community driven direction.

Structure:

- Presentation of interim findings from survey and canvassing.
- Opinion walls for participants to anonymously place thoughts under thematic headings (e.g. “What we love,” “What we’d like to change,” “Big ideas,” “Worries or concerns”).
- Voting and ranking exercises using stickers or cards to prioritise proposals.
- Themed breakout discussions at tables, each with a facilitator guiding active solution oriented dialogue (e.g. “Designing for all ages,” “Balancing nature and recreation,” “Business and enterprise use of the field”).

Accessibility:

- Drop in format (stay 20 minutes or the full 2 hours).
- Feedback captured through post it notes, conversations, and written forms.

Expected Outcomes:

- Clarify consensus and divergence on key issues.
- Identify areas of tension (e.g. preservation vs. development).
- Gather grounded, community-generated priorities to refine in focus groups.

4. Focus Groups**Purpose:**

To explore key themes in greater depth with selected cross-sections of the community (e.g. older adults, young parents, teenagers, sports users), allowing for contextual insight, value trade-offs, and forward planning.

Rationale:

Focus groups are ideal for discussing trade-offs and testing complex ideas in a supportive, informal setting. For example, participants may be asked whether they would support removing existing equipment in favour of new facilities, or whether they would pay to participate in activities that create revenue for the site.

Format:

- Small-group sessions (6–10 participants), each lasting 60–90 minutes.
- Use of facilitated scenarios, visual prompts (site maps, drawings), and guided ranking tasks (e.g. “Top 3 features to invest in,” “Which facility would you give up, to gain something new?”).
- Exploration of themes surfaced from the survey: design, parking concerns, storage for community groups, structured vs. informal use.

Expected Outcomes:

- Understand willingness to pay/give time for specific improvements.
- Generate testable hypotheses for design priorities (e.g. walking track vs. nature preservation).
- Collect narratives and values behind statistical trends identified in the survey.

5. Special Interest Groups**Purpose:**

To collaborate with groups that have a vested interest in the Recreation Field, such as the Cricket Club, Tennis Club, school groups, and potential new users (e.g. outdoor yoga providers) in shaping detailed design and usage concepts.

Rationale:

These sessions represent the “collaborate” phase of engagement, moving from gathering ideas to testing and refining shared solutions. Partnering with existing clubs and local entrepreneurs builds local ownership and ensures that new facilities are viable and community-aligned.

Approach:

- Targeted invitation to clubs and user groups.
- Topics may include booking systems, shared storage units, or how to avoid conflict over use.

Expected Outcomes:

- Identification of operating models for activities (e.g. shared booking calendar, pricing, terms of use).
- Early stage interest from community members in co-delivering solutions (e.g. as activity providers or event hosts).

Summary

Each engagement activity is selected not only for data collection, but for relationship building, trust, and transparency. Our approach ensures that Menheniot's consultation moves beyond surface preferences into values, priorities, and readiness for change. By combining surveys, in person dialogue, informal canvassing, and co design, we help build a holistic understanding of what really matters and how you get there together.

Evaluation Framework

To assess the effectiveness of the engagement, we will systematically evaluate:

- **Purposes:** Clarity of engagement objectives and achievement.
- **Methods:** Effectiveness of engagement methods and tools.
- **Participation:** Levels of involvement and representation across community demographics.
- **Results:** Quality, clarity, and usefulness of insights gathered.
- **Outcomes:** Practical and actionable outcomes derived from the consultation.
- **Participant Feedback:** Community perceptions and feedback on the engagement process.
- **Cost-Effectiveness:** Efficiency and justification of engagement expenditure relative to outcomes achieved.

Revised Timeline and Delivery Plan

Activity	Start Date	End Date	Responsible Party
Council Approval & Invoice Paid	-	4 July 2025	Parish Council
Community Engagement Strategy Drafting	7 July 2025	14 July 2025	Jackie & Chris
Survey Design & Set-up	17 July 2025	18 July 2025	Chris
Survey Live Period	28 July 2025	7 September 2025	Jackie & Chris
Initial Street Canvassing	15 August 2025	16 August 2025	Jackie & Chris
Interim Analysis & Reporting	17 August 2025	18 August 2025	Chris
Town Hall Event	19 August 2025	19 August 2025	Jackie & Chris
Follow-up Street Canvassing	2 September 2025	4 September 2025	Jackie & Chris
Focus Groups (2 sessions)	9 September 2025	9 September 2025	Jackie & Chris
Special Interest Groups (2 sessions)	16 September 2025	16 September 2025	Jackie & Chris
Final Analysis & Report Drafting	6 October 2025	17 October 2025	Chris
Final Report Publishing & Submission	20 October 2025	31 October 2025	Jackie & Chris

Communication & Final Reporting

Our final report will clearly and transparently summarise community feedback, illustrate how input informed decision-making, and provide actionable recommendations. The report will be broadly disseminated through all available community channels, including social media, newsletters, and public venues, to reinforce trust and accountability.

Risk Management

A thorough risk management approach will ensure safety, data security, and positive community interactions, addressing health and safety, public interaction risks, and data privacy comprehensively.

Contacts

- Jackie George – jackie@jackiegeorge.co.uk
- Chris Cotter – chris.cotter@jolaassociates.com

Jackie George Limited & Chris Cotter (Jola Associates)

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