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MENHENIOT PARISH COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT

Recreation Field and Green Spaces
Visioning Process



Funded by
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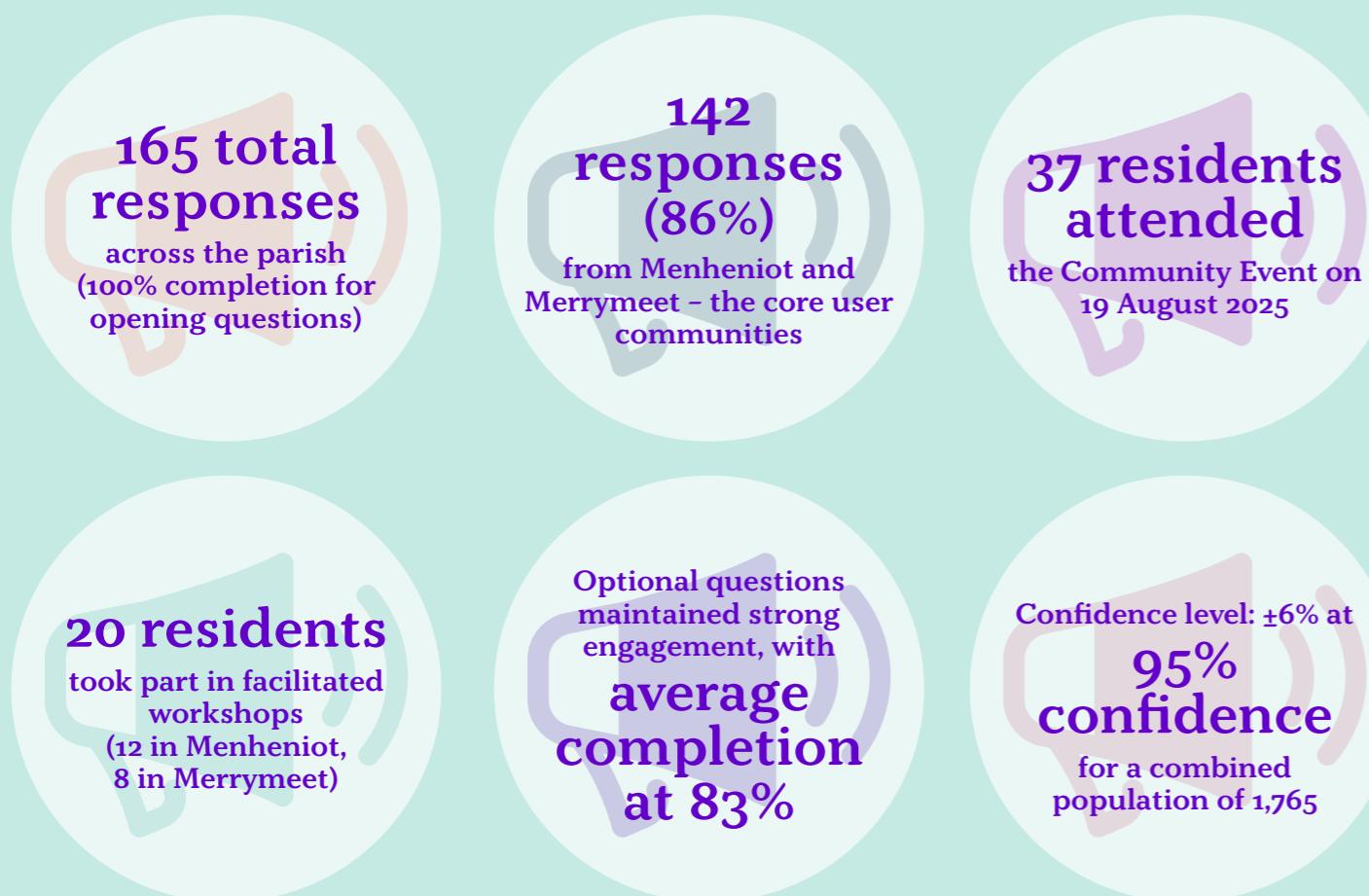
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COMMUNITY VOICE AT A GLANCE:

A SNAPSHOT OF WHAT RESIDENTS TOLD US ABOUT THE FUTURE OF MENHENIOT AND MERRYMEET'S GREEN SPACES

PARTICIPATION OVERVIEW



CORE "VOICE" THEMES

Theme Everyday Use & Value	What the Community Said The Recreation Field is central to parish life — used weekly or more for dog walking, children's play, and informal recreation	Strength of Voice 99% completion on use questions
Theme Family & Children Focus	What the Community Said The space is most used by children and families. Residents want modern, inclusive play equipment and shaded seating for parents	Strength of Voice 93% completion; 100+ mentions
Theme Play and Social Infrastructure	What the Community Said Strong appetite for visible upgrades: expanded play areas, seating, shelter, picnic/BBQ zones, and accessible routes — improving inclusivity without overdevelopment	Strength of Voice 72-91% agreement across Q11, Q21, Q27
Theme All-Weather & Accessibility	What the Community Said Desire for year-round usability: walking or running track, improved surfacing, and subtle lighting to improve safety and accessibility for all ages	Strength of Voice 90% completion; +50 comments
Theme Youth Provision	What the Community Said Teenagers are underserved. Interest in skate/bike ramps, basketball or MUGA improvements, and informal spaces that promote safe, social activity	Strength of Voice 84% completion; 48 comments
Theme Natural Character	What the Community Said "Keep it green, open and safe." Residents want improvements that respect the natural feel — trees, grass, and informal openness	Strength of Voice 91% completion; 44 comments
Theme Community Identity & Communication	What the Community Said The field symbolises local pride and community life. People value events like the Cherry Fayre, want inclusive naming, and ask for ongoing updates and shared plans	Strength of Voice 55-79% completion; 200+ related comments

ENGAGEMENT INSIGHTS


Sustained attention
20 of 30 questions achieved over 80% completion



Rich qualitative feedback
More than 1,100 open comments analysed across 30 questions



Balanced demographic
Highest participation from adults aged 25-64, representing family households and key user groups



Interest
55% of participants requested further consultation, showing willingness to stay involved in next steps


WHAT THE DATA TELLS US

The Recreation Field is a shared social space first, not a sports complex

Family-focused investment is widely supported where it enhances, not transforms, the space

The natural character is a defining community value to protect

Youth provision should grow, but balance noise, safety, and inclusivity

Digital tools for bookings or communication are welcome if optional and transparent

Merrymeet's priorities centre on community connection and gathering space, complementing Menheniot's recreation focus

Ongoing communication and visible progress will sustain engagement and trust

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Engagement

This community consultation was commissioned by Menheniot Parish Council to gather views of the Parish on the future use and development of the Parish Recreation Field in Menheniot. The Parish Council recognises that this green space holds considerable social, environmental, and recreational value, and wishes to ensure that any future investments or design proposals reflect the priorities of the people who use it most.

The consultation forms part of a wider strategy to understand how local needs have changed over time and to assess what facilities, features, and values the community would like to see retained, improved, or introduced. In doing so, the project aims to support inclusive access, intergenerational use, environmental stewardship, and a shared sense of place.

Commissioning Body

The consultation was delivered on behalf of Menheniot Parish Council, with facilitation, design, and reporting undertaken by independent engagement specialists working closely with the local authority and community stakeholders.

Summary of Approach and Methodology

The consultation was built around a mixed-method approach, combining:

- *A Community Survey, promoted both online and in printed format*
- *A Parish-Wide Community Event (19 August 2025)*
- *Street Canvassing and Doorstep Conversations*
- *A tailored Community Workshop for Merrymeeet residents (2 September 2025)*
- *Two facilitated Working Group Workshops in Menheniot (9 September 2025)*

This layered approach allowed for broad reach and deep listening, ensuring that both general impressions and more nuanced perspectives could be captured. The survey collected quantitative data on usage patterns, priorities, and views on potential improvements, while the facilitated sessions explored the trade-offs, concerns, and aspirations behind those views.

Particular care was taken to reach underrepresented groups through in-person engagement, and the working group sessions were specifically designed to test tensions between competing priorities, enabling participants to deliberate and reflect on the implications of different options.

Overview of Engagement Activities and Participation Levels

The engagement process took place over a six-week period from 28 July to 17 September 2025, resulting in a substantial volume of feedback from across two primary communities (Menheniot and Merrymeeet) served by the Recreation Field.

Community Survey

Total Responses: 165

Proportion from Menheniot and Merrymeeet: 86.1% (142 responses)

Other respondents came from surrounding hamlets or nearby parishes with some connection to the space.

Community Event (19 August 2025)

Attendees: 37

Activities included: opinion walls, voting stations, sketching ideas, design prompts, informal interviews.

Street Canvassing (August 2025)

Carried out at key locations in Menheniot

Following scoping, canvassing in Merrymeeet was not attempted and was replaced by a dedicated workshop as the more effective method for that setting.

Menheniot Working Groups (9 Sept 2025)

12 residents across two facilitated sessions

Themes explored: Multi-Use Games Area location, anti-social behaviour, football provision, quiet areas, and walking track design.

Merrymeeet Community Workshop (2 Sept 2025)

8 residents participated in a dedicated session

Themes explored: community hub, orchard and play space, dog walking routes, lighting, and car parking.

This represents a strong and multi-modal consultation for a rural parish. While a full-parish (population 3,648) benchmark of $\pm 5\%$ at 95% confidence would nominally require ~348 survey responses, the core user communities of Menheniot and Merrymeeet (population estimate: 1,765) generated 142 survey responses, which, when triangulated with the event and workshops —

provides a robust and credible evidence base for local decision making.

Interpreting the Findings

In small communities like Menheniot and Merrymeeet, even marginal differences in feedback can reflect important shifts in local sentiment. A $\pm 6\%$ margin of error at a 95% confidence level means that the data offers statistically reliable direction of travel, strong trends and majority views can be confidently acted upon. Equally, areas where opinion is divided or ambiguous are useful flags for further exploration or phased implementation.

COMMUNITY CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

Overview of the Recreation Field and Merrymet Green Spaces

The Parish Recreation Field, situated within the village of Menheniot, is a large, multi-functional green space that has long served the community as a place for informal play, sports, picnics, dog walking, and social interaction. It is also home to a number of established features, including a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA), outdoor gym equipment, and a football pitch. The field borders the village's tennis courts and village hall, creating opportunities for shared use and potential enhancements to the interface between indoor and outdoor spaces.

Despite these assets, there are growing calls from residents to review how well the space currently meets local needs. Children's play equipment is seen by many as outdated and inaccessible to older children. Football provision is limited to informal use, and anti-social behaviour, particularly around the more secluded treeline area, has shaped perceptions of safety and space. At the same time, the field remains highly valued for its "natural" character, which many residents feel could be compromised if upgrades are not sensitively designed.

In Merrymet, the situation is different but no less pressing. The village has two small green spaces, one a children's play park and the other referred to as the "village green", but neither currently provides the scale or functionality required for broader community use. There is no formal community hub, and residents have expressed clear aspirations for a space that could host events, classes, and informal gatherings. Issues of maintenance, accessibility, and a lack of formal dog-walking routes also shape how people currently interact with these spaces.

Across both locations, the spaces are recognised not only as functional assets but as extensions of home life, particularly for residents without private gardens or easy access to transport. As such, questions about future use are deeply bound up in questions of identity, inclusion, and what it means to live well within the parish.

Why This Engagement Was Commissioned Now

The consultation was commissioned by Menheniot Parish Council in response to a growing volume of anecdotal feedback, informal proposals, and resident-led requests for change. The Parish Council recognised that while individual ideas had merit, they needed to be understood in the context of broader community priorities and potential trade-offs. There is also a requirement to 'future proof' provision in light of future housing development in the surrounding area.

At the same time, national and regional funding opportunities are increasingly being geared towards "shovel ready" community led projects, those which are clearly scoped, backed by local evidence, and demonstrate a genuine commitment to inclusion and co-design. In this context, the Council wished to ensure that any future proposals for capital investment, whether through grant funding, match finance, or public fundraising would be credible, legitimate, and reflective of the views of those who use the spaces most.

The timing was also influenced by:

- *The need to assess the planned MUGA expansion in Menheniot and how it aligns with wider community expectations.*
- *The visible ageing of play equipment across both Menheniot and Merrymet, and growing requests for upgraded provision.*
- *A recognition that neither green space has a long-term vision document or masterplan in place.*
- *Community interest in exploring new usage models (e.g. hubs, covered areas, gardens, events spaces) that require cross-community support and funding readiness.*

What Success Looks Like

The consultation was designed to go beyond surface-level feedback and enable a genuinely deliberative process. For the Parish Council, success was defined in three parts:

1. Community Ownership

That local residents from across age groups and user types would feel they had been heard, had influenced the debate, and had played an active part in shaping the vision for these spaces.

2. Practical Ideas and Trade-Offs

That the process would generate not just a list of requests, but a set of principled, prioritised, and deliverable ideas. This includes recognising where consensus exists, where opinion is split, and what compromises might be acceptable.

3. Design and Funding Readiness

That the consultation would create a clear platform from which the Parish Council, and potentially new community led groups, could develop detailed plans, costings, and funding applications. This means understanding not just what is wanted, but why, by whom, and what will be needed to deliver and sustain it.

This report sets out the findings from that process, drawing together survey results, facilitated workshops, street level canvassing, and community conversations. Each section aims to build a clearer picture of what the community wants, what's possible, and what steps may follow next.

METHODOLOGY AND ENGAGEMENT PHASES

This community engagement process was commissioned by Menheniot Parish Council to support informed decision-making around the future of the Recreation Field in Menheniot and the green spaces in Merrymee. A mixed method, multi phase approach was adopted to ensure breadth, depth, and inclusivity. The process was designed to move from open invitation (survey), through facilitated dialogue (community event), to deliberative participation (workshops), with each phase building upon the insights of the last.

Parish-Wide Community Survey

Launch date: 28 July 2025

Responses as of 20 August 2025: 165

The consultation began with a digital survey, distributed via the Parish Council website, social media, and local networks. The survey was designed to establish baseline sentiment, gather open responses, and test the appetite for different improvements, additions, and ideas. Paper copies were made available upon request to ensure accessibility for residents without digital access.

The survey included both closed and open questions, allowing residents to express preferences across play, sport, nature, community facilities, and anti-social behaviour concerns. Respondents were also asked to identify their location, age bracket, and household composition to support demographic analysis and geographic targeting in later engagement phases.

Geographical Reach

Of the 165 responses, over 86% came from Menheniot and Merrymee residents:

- Menheniot: 85.4% (140 responses)
- Merrymee: 1.2% (2 responses)

- Other nearby areas (e.g. Doddycross, Lower Clicker, Pengover Green): 5.1%
- Responses from outside the parish boundary (e.g. Liskeard, St Neot): 7.3%

This geographic concentration ensured that findings reflected the views of those most likely to use the Recreation Field and Merrymee green spaces.

Representativeness

Given the core users population estimate of 1,765, the achieved sample, in combination with in-person engagement (the Community Event and the Menheniot/Merrymee workshops), provides a sufficiently reliable basis for local decision-making. See 3.5 Participation & Confidence for the consolidated confidence interval explanation.

Street-Level Canvassing

Delivery period: 15–18 August 2025

Lead: Independent Evaluators, supported by Parish Council liaison

Recognising that some residents may not engage digitally, a street-level canvassing exercise was conducted across Menheniot village. This involved one-to-one conversations at key locations (e.g. the Co-op, village square, and primary school area), using a structured prompt sheet and printed survey themes to guide discussion.

Whilst the number of additional responses was limited, this phase proved valuable in surfacing concerns from residents who had not participated online. It also reinforced certain patterns already seen in the survey, particularly around teenage provision, antisocial behaviour, and the sense of loss felt by older residents about changes to the "feel" of the park.

Following discussions, canvassing in Merrymee was not attempted; instead, we delivered a dedicated Merrymee workshop as a more effective and proportionate method for that community.

Community Event (19 August 2025)

Location: Menheniot Recreation Field

Attendance: 37 residents (including families, older residents, and young people)

Format: Open drop-in, with structured zones for engagement

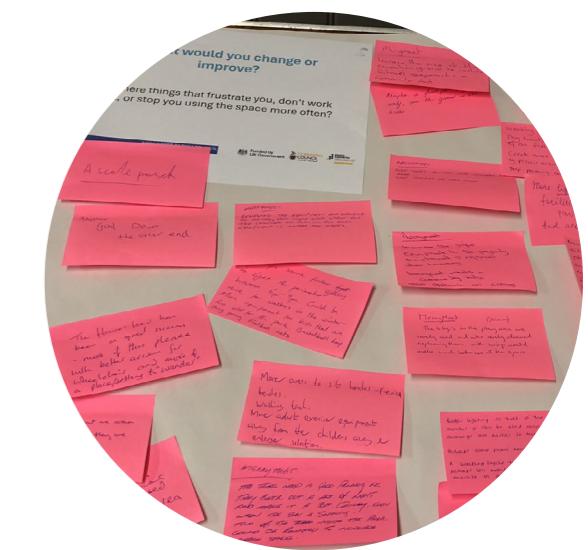
To create a highly visible and accessible consultation touchpoint, a dedicated Community Engagement Day was held at the Recreation Field. Residents were invited to contribute their views using interactive tools, including:

- Opinion Walls – "What We Love", "What We'd Change", "Big Ideas", "Worries or Concerns"
- Voting Stations – prioritising suggestions across four themes: i) New Facilities, ii) Community-Led Activities, iii) Maintenance Priorities, iv) Design & Layout Preferences

The tone of the day was positive, with residents welcoming the opportunity to reflect on how the space is currently used and what might improve it. However, tensions and trade-offs also emerged, such as:

- Balancing natural character with new infrastructure
- Concerns about antisocial behaviour, particularly in the treeline area near the MUGA
- Divergent views on the need for lighting, community buildings, and activity levels

Data and reflections from the day informed the design of the next phase of workshops.



Workshops (Menheniot and Merrymeet)

Format: 90-minute small group workshops

Facilitation team: Independent Evaluators

Attendance:

- Menheniot: 2 sessions on 9 September (12 participants total)
- Merrymeet: 1 session on 2 September (8 participants)

Workshops used a facilitated dilemma format, where participants were presented with trade-offs and encouraged to reflect on why they held particular views, not just what they thought. These sessions aimed to move beyond voting and toward structured conversation, especially on themes that had proven divisive or complex.

Workshop Design

Each workshop was structured around 2–3 core dilemmas, supported by printed materials, maps, and group prompts.

In Menheniot, discussions explored:

- Whether to prioritise nature or new facilities
- Managing antisocial behaviour and the role of the MUGA
- The needs of children vs. teenagers, including football and skate park provision
- The importance of inclusive design, avoiding overdevelopment

In Merrymeet, the dilemmas focused on:

- The feasibility of delivering multiple community priorities on limited land
- The possibility of a community hub, including design and funding options
- Concerns about parking, lighting, and the impact of new development
- Balancing peaceful village character with the need for activities and social space

These sessions allowed residents to surface conflicts, build understanding, and suggest compromises, laying the groundwork for a shared vision in both locations.

Participation & Confidence

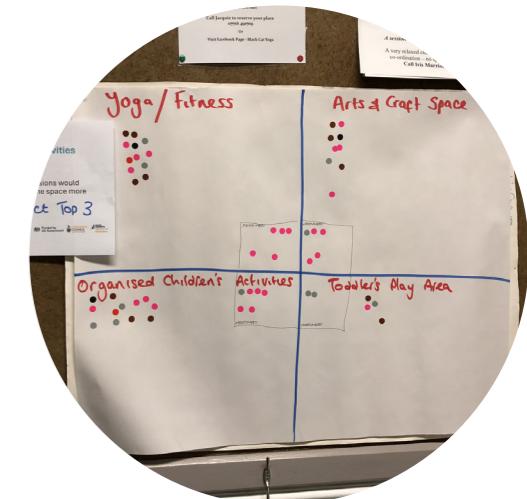
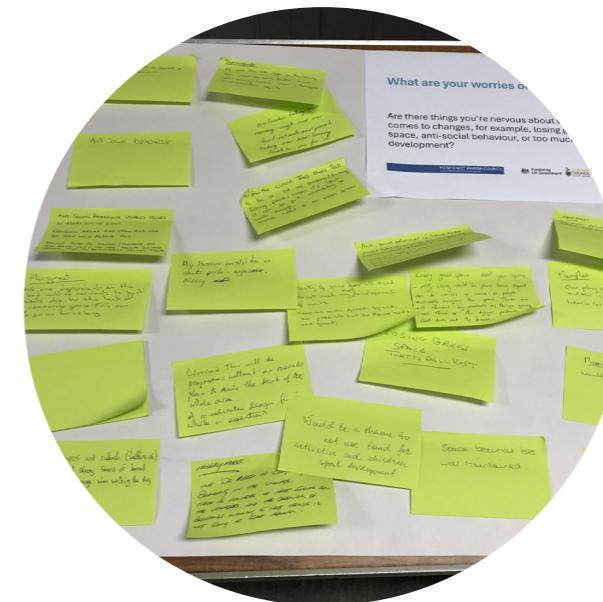
To support proportionate, evidence-led decisions, we interpret survey results primarily against the core user communities of Menheniot and Merrymeet (population estimate: 1,765). With 142 survey responses from these communities, supported by the community event (37 participants) and three workshops (20 participants total), the dataset provides statistically reliable insight into overall patterns of support.

Confidence interval (how to read the figures)

- In small communities, even marginal differences can signal meaningful shifts.
- As a rule of thumb: if an option records c60% support, the true level of support is very likely to sit in the 54 to 66 range, once sampling confidence is accounted for.
- Clear majorities (60%+) can be acted upon with confidence. Tight splits (e.g., c50/50) should be explored through piloting, phasing, or further targeted engagement.

Triangulation

We combine survey data with qualitative evidence from the event, canvassing, and workshops. This triangulation increases confidence where findings align and helps explain nuance where views diverge (e.g., lighting, football provision, potential skate/bike features).



THEMATIC ANALYSIS: WHAT WE HEARD

Analysis of Survey Results

The community consultation survey received a strong response, with 165 participants completing the mandatory questions and **high completion rates across most optional questions**. Where response levels fell, this often reflected the degree of importance residents attached to the issue; in this way, the pattern of responses itself provides a valuable guide to community priorities.

Overarching Narrative

Across all questions, one message recurs: the Menheniot Recreation Field is already a cornerstone of community life and should remain a flexible, green, and inclusive space. Residents are open to change, but **improvements must respect the balance between tradition and innovation**, openness and organisation, and sport and social connection.

Who responded

The majority of respondents (c.85%) live in Menheniot village, with smaller groups from Merrymee, Doddycross, Island Shop and Pengover Green, and a handful from neighbouring towns. Responses were spread across all age groups, though the **highest participation came from**

adults aged 25 - 64, reflecting the demographic most likely to balance family use with community.

Current use of the field

Almost two-thirds of respondents use the field at least weekly, confirming its role as a well-used and valued community asset. The dominant activity is dog walking, noted in over 20 comments, alongside children's play, exercise, community events, and informal socialising. This demonstrates the multi-purpose character of the field: **it is valued not only for organised sport but also for everyday recreation, wellbeing, and social connection**.

Organised sport and football

Whilst the Tennis Club was cited by the majority of those who participate in organised sport, only around 30% of all respondents answered this question, suggesting that **formal club use is important but not the primary driver of engagement**. Football received mixed responses: nearly half supported its presence, while a third were unsure and one in five opposed it. Where suggestions for development were offered, these overwhelmingly focused on age-appropriate, informal opportunities for children rather than adult or league provision.

Aspirations for new facilities

A strong response was recorded for questions about potential new facilities.

Priorities included:

- *Expanding and modernising children's play equipment.*
- *Creating seating, shaded and social areas for parents, carers, and older residents.*
- *Providing accessible paths, running or walking tracks, and better facilities for teenagers.*
- *Introducing extra tennis courts, and community BBQ or picnic areas.*
- *Enhancing the natural environment through trees, planting, and wildflower areas.*

Responses to the idea of a running track captured the balance of opinion across the survey. Many saw value in creating accessible, all weather exercise opportunities, while others raised concerns about cost, impact on open space, and compatibility with events and dog walking. This reflects a wider theme: **residents are open to new investment but cautious about overdevelopment**, wishing to preserve the field's natural, flexible character.

Community values and identity

When asked about the most important aspects of the field, residents consistently emphasised its role as **an open, green, safe and inclusive space**. It is valued as a free facility for families, a place for dogs and exercise, and a venue for community events such as the Cherry Fayre. The strongest cross cutting message is that the field's identity should remain rooted in being a shared, multi purpose green space, not a single sport or commercialised venue.

The question of naming revealed both attachment to tradition and interest in new ideas. Whilst many favoured retaining "the football field," others suggested names such as Menheniot Community Park, Trelawny Field or The Heart of Menheniot. This highlights the importance of identity: the community **wants a name and vision that reflects both heritage and pride of place**.

Management, access and engagement

Residents showed interest in systems to improve organisation, such as online booking tools, but repeatedly stressed that these must not undermine the principle of open community access. Suggestions included simple calendars, clear rules, and offline options for those without digital access. The **tension between better organisation and preserving spontaneity was a recurring theme**.

Communication was another strong theme. Respondents want to be kept informed through a range of channels - Facebook, the Parish & Village magazine, noticeboards, the Parish website, and public meetings. The clear message is that **inclusive and transparent communication is vital** for trust and community ownership of decisions.

Volunteering potential is present but needs nurturing

While only 17% said they would definitely help, more than half (54%) said "possibly." This represents a large pool of residents willing to engage if opportunities are accessible, purposeful, and well structured.

Barriers and improvements

Half of respondents identified ways to make the field more welcoming, with priorities including seating, shaded areas, accessibility improvements, dog management, and facilities for teenagers.

Barriers to use were relatively few, with many saying nothing stopped them from visiting. Where obstacles were mentioned, they centred on a lack of facilities for certain age groups, dog related issues, safety concerns, and limited awareness of activities.

Wider facilities

When asked to consider facilities across the parish, residents stressed that **provision should reflect the needs of different communities** rather than adopting a 'one size fits all' approach. Communication, affordability, and maintenance were seen as key. This shows that whilst Menheniot Recreation Field is a central asset, residents also recognise the importance of balanced provision across the parish.

CROSS-CUTTING THEMES
1
The Field as a Multi-Purpose, Everyday Community Space
Evidence:

High frequency of use (Q3), dog walking dominance (Q4), children as main users (Q10), and strong emphasis on informal recreation (Q25).

Theme:

The field is not defined by a single activity, it is simultaneously a play area, exercise route, dog walking space, event ground, and social hub.

Implication:

Any future plan must maintain this flexibility; investment should enhance, not fragment, the range of uses.

2
Families and Children at the Core
Evidence:

Calls for expanded play areas (Q11, Q21), shaded seating for parents (Q11, Q27), children's informal football and play equipment (Q8, Q13), and the recognition that children are the heaviest users (Q10).

Theme:

The family friendly character of the field is central to its identity. Adults often use the field indirectly through supporting or supervising children.

Implication:

Prioritising child and family focused infrastructure (play, seating, shade, safe routes) will meet the needs of the largest user group.

3
Openness, Green Character and Identity
Evidence:

Repeated calls to keep the field's "natural feel" (Q14, Q25), concerns about over development (Q12, Q26), strong support for open access rather than restrictive booking (Q19-Q20).

Theme:

The community values the field's green, safe, open character as much as any facility within it.

Implication:

Physical improvements should be designed to blend with the environment and preserve a sense of openness, avoiding fencing off or excessive hard surfacing.

4
Balanced Development - New Facilities but with Caution
Evidence:

Interest in extra tennis courts, walking/running tracks, BBQ/picnic areas (Q11-Q13, Q21); but also caveats around cost, maintenance, and space (Q12, Q26, Q28).

Theme:

Residents welcome new investment if it adds value across age groups and supports inclusivity but are wary of projects that could crowd out existing uses or alter the field's core identity.

Implication:

Proposals should be tested against clear criteria: does this facility enhance inclusivity, preserve openness, and reflect broad community demand?

5
Inclusivity, Accessibility and Social Connection
Evidence:

Requests for wheelchair/pram access, seating and shade, teenage facilities, safer access routes, dog management (Q12, Q13, Q21, Q27, Q28).

Theme:

Residents want the field to be welcoming for all demographics -young children, teenagers, adults, older people, and those with disabilities. They also want it to be a place where people gather socially, not just exercise individually.

Implication:

Accessibility features, seating clusters, and youth appropriate spaces are as important as sports infrastructure in building community value.

6
Mixed Views on Organised Sport and Football
Evidence:

Tennis Club prominence (Q5, Q13), divided support for football (Q7-Q9), strong emphasis on informal play over formal league provision (Q8, Q9).

Theme:

Organised sport is part of the field's fabric but is not the dominant driver of use or identity. Football in particular divides opinion.

Implication:

Investment should recognise and support organised clubs but not allow them to dominate the narrative; casual play and family recreation remain higher priorities.

7
Management and Control - Keep it Simple, Keep it Open
Evidence:

Support for booking tools (Q19-Q20) but paired with resistance to restrictions; repeated calls for transparency and open access (Q19, Q20, Q26).

Theme:

Residents want better organisation but fear over-management. Booking systems, rules, or external providers are acceptable only if they facilitate access rather than constrain it.

Implication:

Governance should be light-touch, transparent, and responsive, ensuring community trust is built rather than eroded.

8
Communication, Transparency and Trust
Evidence:

High support for multiple communication channels (Q22), demand for further consultation and draft plans (Q26), comments about lack of awareness as a barrier (Q28), and feedback about Parish Council engagement (Q29).

Theme:

How decisions are communicated is as important as what decisions are made. Residents want visibility, honesty, and inclusion at every stage.

Implication:

A structured communication plan using Facebook, the Parish magazine, noticeboards, and public meetings will be critical to sustaining trust and buy-in.

CROSS-CUTTING THEMES
9
Volunteering and Community Involvement
Evidence:

Only 17% offered definite help (Q23), but 54% said “possibly.” Residents also stressed the need for shared decision-making (Q26).

Theme:

There is latent capacity for volunteering and co-production, but people need clear roles, achievable tasks, and reassurance that their input will shape outcomes.

Implication:

Volunteer engagement must be nurtured with small, visible wins (e.g. community clean-up days, fundraising events, co-design workshops).

10
Identity, Naming and Pride of Place
Evidence:

Q30's variety of suggested names, from “football field” to “Menheniot Community Park” and “The Heart of Menheniot.”

Theme:

Names matter because they symbolise the balance between tradition and change. Some want continuity, others want a new identity that signals inclusivity and pride.

Implication:

Naming could be used as a community-building exercise in itself, creating a sense of ownership and consensus.

Interpreting the Findings

For Menheniot and Merrymeet, the +/-6% range achieved means that:

- *Strong majorities (e.g. over 60% support) can be acted upon with confidence as reflecting genuine community priorities.*
- *Narrower divisions are better viewed as signals for further exploration, piloting, or phased implementation.*

Taken together with the event, canvassing, and workshops, the consultation delivers a balanced picture of what matters most to residents, how the Recreation Field is valued, and the conditions under which future improvements will be supported.



DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS: WHAT THIS MEANS FOR THE FUTURE

This section draws together design relevant insights from across all phases of engagement and translates them into practical design implications for subsequent concept planning and prioritisation.

The breadth and depth of the Menheniot Parish community engagement process—spanning surveys, in-person events, and deliberative workshops—has provided a nuanced and at times contrasting picture of local priorities. Whilst ideas for new infrastructure, improved facilities, and wider use of both the Menheniot Recreation Field and Merrymeet green spaces were welcomed in principle, they were often accompanied by important caveats about character, capacity, and sustainability.

This section draws together design-relevant insights from across all phases of engagement. It does not propose a final layout or plan. Rather, it identifies design considerations that can be carried forward into the next phase of planning and prioritisation by Menheniot Parish Council and its partners.

Natural Character vs Infrastructure Development

The strongest and most consistent theme across all forms of engagement was the desire to retain the natural feel of the Menheniot Recreation Field. Whether expressed as concern about “urbanising the space”, a resistance to overdevelopment, or a preference for grass and trees over tarmac and fences, there was wide agreement that the field’s open, informal quality should be protected.

However, there was also a clear appetite for upgrades, including:

- *Safer, more inclusive pathways and walking routes*
- *New or improved play equipment for toddlers and young children*
- *An updated or relocated MUGA with better visibility and lighting*
- *Seating areas, picnic tables, and outdoor fitness equipment*

Participants recognised that delivering these improvements will require careful design to avoid changing the overall ambiance of the space. There was strong support for naturalistic design approaches e.g. gravel or rubber paths instead of tarmac, planting used as screening, low level lighting, and sympathetic materials such as wood and natural stone where feasible.

In Merrymeet, the challenge was slightly different. Whilst residents were open to a wider range of new facilities, including a community building, they expressed concern that this should not lead to over-cluttering the village or introducing high-footfall facilities that would fundamentally alter its scale and tranquillity.

All-Weather Use, Lighting, and Safety

The issue of lighting prompted nuanced responses. Whilst some residents, especially dog walkers and parents of younger children, noted that darker winter afternoons reduced the field’s usability, others were clear that preserving the dark skies and peaceful evenings was important to the village character.

The most supported compromise was low-impact, solar powered or motion activated lighting, particularly along any new walking track or

pathways intended for year round use. Residents in both Menheniot and Merrymeet stated that lighting should be functional and subtle, rather than resembling urban street furniture. Similarly, there was strong support for improving all-weather access, particularly around the perimeter of the field.

Participants suggested this would:

- *Enable year round dog walking and social use*
- *Improve access for those with mobility challenges*
- *Create informal opportunities for walking groups or older residents to exercise*
- *Support better integration with any distributed outdoor gym or play equipment*

Any upgrades in this area should be accompanied by attention to safety and visibility, especially if use is expected in low light or by vulnerable users.

Play, Sport, and Youth Provision

Provision for children and teenagers was a recurring theme, albeit with diverging views. Most participants agreed that the current play area is:

- *Too small for the volume of use it receives*
- *Outdated, with wooden equipment requiring constant maintenance*
- *Not suitable for older children or more adventurous play*

There was clear support for expanding and upgrading the play area in Menheniot. This included:

- *Better equipment for toddlers and early years*
- *Inclusion of accessible and inclusive features*
- *Age-appropriate features for older children (e.g. climbing frames, zip wires, gymnastics bars)*

In both Menheniot and Merrymeet, the question of football provision was raised. Residents supported:

- *Maintaining an informal kickabout space for children*
- *Introducing smaller, age-appropriate goalposts*
- *Exploring the feasibility of an under-10s or under-13s pitch layout*

However, there was limited appetite for reintroducing full-scale football clubs unless they were run by outside providers with an existing user base.

Volunteers in the village expressed fatigue with maintaining organised clubs, and questioned whether duplication with nearby clubs (e.g. in Liskeard) was justifiable.

The idea of a skate or bike ramp was polarising. While some families with older children expressed enthusiasm, citing current informal use of slopes around the village hall, others were concerned about noise, visibility, and antisocial behaviour. Some groups suggested composite materials to reduce noise, or partially sunken ramps to lessen visual impact.

Community Buildings and Gathering Spaces

The idea of a community hub or gathering space received high levels of support across both Menheniot and Merrymeet. In Menheniot, this often referred to a covered, outdoor space suitable for yoga, fitness, or social gatherings, rather than a full indoor hall. In Merrymeet, the ambition was more substantial, with residents expressing a strong desire for a small community building.

In Merrymeet, discussions included:

- Whether the disused church could be purchased and converted (barriers: Grade II listing, cost of roof and steeple repairs, access to toilets and kitchen)
- A preference for a purpose-built or modular building with capacity for 30+ people
- Locating the building within walking distance, ideally near the existing play area
- Early-stage discussions about forming a Community Interest Company (CIC) to lease land and secure funding independently of the Parish Council

Residents were open to temporary structures (e.g. converted containers) as a first step, provided they were designed for longevity and minimal disruption. In both settings, the importance of 'shovel readiness' was noted. To secure external funding, communities will likely need to develop concept plans, identify landowners, estimate costs, and demonstrate local governance arrangements in advance.

Parking, Footpaths, and Connectivity

Concerns about parking and access were raised frequently, especially in Merrymeet.

Residents noted:

- Regular parking on grass verges due to lack of formal spaces
- A desire for 6-8 spaces to accommodate community hub use or occasional events
- Support for designated dog-walking and pedestrian routes, to improve safety and reduce road walking
- Opportunities to enhance connectivity between the village green and play area, or to co-locate future facilities on a larger, more coherent site

In Menheniot, connectivity was also discussed in relation to:

- Linking new facilities via a walking loop
- Improving surfacing around the field edge to allow year-round access
- Exploring new footpath links to surrounding housing estates, especially as the local population grows

These elements were seen not only as functional infrastructure, but also as part of the overall user experience, encouraging longer stays, broader usage, and safer navigation.

Long Term Stewardship and Ownership

Many participants expressed concern that new infrastructure would bring new responsibilities, for maintenance, cleaning, insurance, and general oversight.

Suggestions to support long-term stewardship:

- Phased development, starting with manageable "quick wins"
- Seeking external providers to run sports or activity programmes, rather than relying on local volunteers
- Creating a Friends of the Field group or volunteer rota
- Using a CIC model in Merrymeet to hold leases and manage activity independently
- Working in partnership with the Parish Council to explore land acquisition or licensing

There was a mature understanding across the groups that ownership is more than just having the facilities, it requires long term planning, community governance, and alignment between ambition and capacity.

SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

The consultation produced a rich set of ideas, concerns, and aspirations for both the Menheniot Recreation Field and the Merrymeet green spaces. Across all engagement phases, residents demonstrated a strong appetite for improvement tempered by realism about cost, maintenance, and the importance of preserving the Parish's rural character.

The findings can be grouped into short-term, medium term, and long-term priorities. Each category reflects the balance between community demand, deliverability, and the level of planning or partnership required.

SHORT-TERM PRIORITIES (0-12 MONTHS)

These are improvements that require limited capital investment, can be led locally, and would provide visible progress while larger plans are developed.

Priority	Description	Why This Matters	Potential Lead / Delivery Route
Seating, shade & social areas	Install benches, picnic tables, and shade structures in key locations.	Responds to the most frequent survey request; supports parents, older residents, and inclusivity.	Parish Council / community volunteers; potential small-grants funding.
Dog management & signage	Introduce clear signage, dog bins, and communication of shared-use etiquette.	Recurrent barrier to use cited by families and older residents.	Parish Council; community "Friends of the Field" group.
Communication channels	Relaunch Parish website section, noticeboards, and Facebook updates to report progress.	Builds transparency and trust; keeps momentum after consultation.	Parish Council / Communications Working Group.
Community volunteering events	Organise clean up or planting days linked to visible "quick wins".	Converts "possible" volunteers (54%) into active participants; reinforces ownership.	Volunteers / local groups with Parish support.

MEDIUM-TERM PRIORITIES (1-3 YEARS)

Projects requiring modest design work, permissions, or external funding but with strong consensus on need and benefit.

Priority	Description	Why This Matters	Potential Lead / Delivery Route
Play-area upgrade (Menheniot)	Expand and modernise existing play zone with inclusive, age-appropriate equipment (0-12 yrs).	Most consistent request across all engagement methods; key to family use.	Design concept, costings, supplier quotes, and safety certification.
Perimeter walking / running track	Introduce low impact path around the field with seating and lighting as appropriate.	Supports all weather, low cost exercise for all ages.	Feasibility on route, surfacing type, lighting design.
Low impact lighting	Solar or motion activated lighting for key paths and gathering points.	Enhances safety and usability without compromising dark-sky character.	Technical design, energy feasibility, environmental surveys, planning permissions.
Youth recreation features	Identify space for teenage play (e.g., climbing, zip wire, small bike element).	Addresses current gap for 11-17 age group; reduces anti-social behaviour.	Co-design with young people; noise / siting assessment.
Friends of the Field / stewardship group	Formalise volunteer group for light maintenance, events, and liaison with Parish Council.	Builds local ownership and capacity for future projects.	Terms of reference and volunteer induction.
Merrymeet community hub concept	Develop concept and outline design for a small community building or modular space near existing play area.	Addresses clear community aspiration and absence of shared indoor space.	Land agreement, site surveys, planning consent, early-stage feasibility study.

LONG-TERM PRIORITIES (3-5 YEARS +)

Strategic investments or structural changes that depend on external funding, partnership, or sequential delivery of earlier phases.

Priority	Description	Why This Matters	Potential Lead / Delivery Route
Comprehensive Recreation Field Masterplan	Produce a phased, costed design integrating play, sport, access, and landscape improvements.	Provides a single strategic vision; required for major funding bids.	Commission landscape architect / designer; adopt via Parish Council.
Formal youth sport provision	Evaluate small scale junior football pitch or shared use area if demand and volunteers align.	Balances inclusive sport opportunities with maintenance capacity.	Volunteer club partner or external operator.
Merrymeet land acquisition / lease	Secure long-term tenure to enable community-hub build and grounds improvement.	Ensures sustainability and eligibility for capital funding.	Parish Council / CIC partnership; legal support.
Renewables / energy efficient infrastructure	Integrate solar lighting, water-harvesting, or EV ready cabling into new facilities.	Aligns with Cornwall's Net-Zero objectives and reduces operating costs.	Design integration at capital stage; grant funding (e.g. SPF).
Long-term maintenance & governance model	Create a sustainable model combining Parish oversight with community delivery (e.g., CIC or Friends Group).	Ensures continuity, transparency, and manageable volunteer load.	Legal advice, capacity-building, and governance training.

Cross-Cutting Design and Delivery Principles

Irrespective of timeframe, the following principles emerged repeatedly and should guide all future decisions:

- 1. Preserve the green, open character of the Recreation Field and village greens - no over hardscaping or over lighting.**
- 2. Design for inclusivity and access - paths, seating, and play for all ages and abilities.**
- 3. Promote flexible, multi-use spaces rather than single-purpose zones.**
- 4. Phase investment to match community capacity and available funding.**
- 5. Embed communication and transparency in every step to maintain trust.**
- 6. Plan for stewardship from day one - maintenance, insurance, and governance considered early, not after build.**

Summary Commentary

Taken together, these priorities illustrate a parish that values quality of experience over quantity of infrastructure. Residents want spaces that feel welcoming, well kept, and true to the village character, rather than urbanised or over-engineered.

Immediate attention to quick wins, seating, shade, signage, communication, will demonstrate responsiveness and build confidence, while parallel work on design concepts and funding readiness will position both Menheniot and Merrymeet to take advantage of regional and national grant programmes as they arise.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEXT STEPS

The engagement process has produced a coherent vision and a credible evidence base for future investment in Menheniot's Recreation Field and Merrymeet's green spaces. The next phase is to turn that vision into a co-produced, fundable, and manageable plan. This section sets out practical recommendations structured around four delivery themes:

1

Design Co-Production and Community Involvement

Purpose: To translate community priorities into clear, deliverable design concepts that retain legitimacy and reflect local ownership.

Form a Design Working Group

- a). *Membership: Parish Councillors, representatives from the Menheniot Working Group, Merrymeet residents, young people, and key user groups (e.g. tennis club, parents).*
- b). *Function: act as a sounding board for concept layouts, materials, and phasing.*
- c). *Output: endorsement of a single coherent "Design Brief" to inform professional design input.*

Undertake a Co-Design Exercise

- a). *Commission a landscape designer or architect to produce outline options based on the priorities in Section 6.*
- b). *Use open sessions and digital feedback to refine options before any masterplan is finalised.*

Engage Young People Early

- a). *Build on enthusiasm shown in the survey and workshops by running a "Design Your Park" workshop for primary and secondary pupils.*
- b). *Outcomes: concept boards, naming ideas, and design principles that feed directly into professional plans.*

Maintain Transparency

- a). *Publish meeting summaries, draft drawings, and decisions through the Parish website, noticeboards, and social media.*
- b). *Use consistent branding "Our Field, Our Future" to keep communications recognisable.*

2

Feasibility, Funding Readiness and Partnerships

Purpose: To ensure both sites are ready to attract external investment once designs and priorities are agreed.

Develop a Feasibility and Costing Report

- a). *Commission outline designs, budget estimates, and maintenance cost forecasts for each priority area.*
- b). *Include site surveys (topographical and utilities) to de-risk future works.*

Align with Funding Opportunities

- a). *Short-term: Cornwall Council's Community Infrastructure Levy, National Lottery Awards for All, local business sponsorship, or Section 106 where applicable.*
- b). *Medium-term: Shared Prosperity Fund, National Lottery Community Fund, and Sport England's "Places and Spaces".*
- c). *Long-term: Funding for this type of project remains unclear. The recent lack of funding in Cornwall to help Communities from a national government strategy is indicative of this.*

Formalise Delivery Partnerships

- a). *Establish memoranda of understanding with local clubs, schools, or community organisations willing to manage elements of future activity.*
- b). *Explore collaboration with local colleges for design input or youth volunteering schemes.*

Prepare a Funding-Ready Masterplan Pack

- a). *Components: design layout, community evidence (this report), costed phases, letters of support, maintenance plan, and governance arrangements.*
- b). *Use this pack to accompany grant applications and to support planning permissions.*

3
Governance, Stewardship and Long-Term Management

Purpose: To ensure new investment remains sustainable, safe, and community-driven.

Create a 'Friends of Menheniot Field' Group

- a). Operate as a voluntary partnership under Parish Council oversight.
- b). Responsibilities: light maintenance, planting days, communication support, and small-grant fundraising.

Explore a Community Interest Company (CIC) Model for Merrymet

- a). Where a new building or lease is envisaged, a CIC could hold tenure and attract funds not available to local authorities.
- b). Early legal advice should clarify structure, liabilities, and insurance requirements.

Adopt a Phased Maintenance Plan

- a). Begin with immediate upkeep tasks (paths, signage, bins) and build towards longer-term cycles for play equipment and surfacing.
- b). Maintain an annual maintenance reserve within the Parish budget to avoid reactive repairs.

Establish Clear Roles and Reporting

- a). Define which aspects sit with Parish Council (statutory duties, insurance, budgets) and which with volunteers (events, planting, communication).
- b). Publish an annual progress statement summarising improvements, volunteer hours, and upcoming priorities.

4
Communication, Transparency and Ongoing Engagement

Purpose: To maintain the trust built through this consultation and to ensure residents continue to shape delivery.

Publish an Annual Engagement Schedule

- a). At least one open meeting per year dedicated to the Recreation Field and green spaces.
- b). Use these sessions to review progress, capture feedback, and re-prioritise as needs evolve.

Develop a Consistent Visual Identity

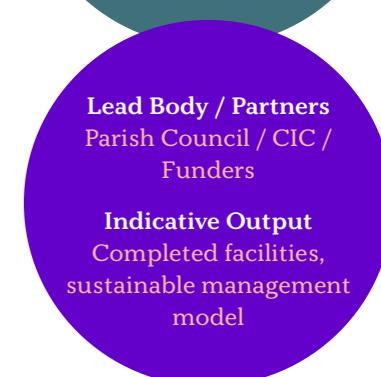
- a). Use one design style for posters, updates, and online materials, helping residents recognise project news instantly.
- b). Reinforce key messages: inclusive, sustainable, community-led.

Showcase Quick Wins

- a). Use photos and short stories to celebrate completed actions (new benches, planting days, accessibility improvements).
- b). Visible progress maintains momentum and encourages further volunteering.

Evaluate and Adapt

- a). After each major milestone, gather short feedback through mini-surveys or "field days."
- b). Track use patterns and satisfaction to guide maintenance and future funding bids.

SUMMARY ROADMAP


Closing Comment

Menheniot and Merrymeet now have the foundations of a shared, evidence based vision for their recreation and green spaces.

The recommendations outlined here are intended not as a fixed blueprint but as a living roadmap, one that can evolve with continued resident involvement and transparent leadership.

See separate PDF for appendices.

“By combining clear community priorities, structured design co-production, and a pragmatic approach to funding and governance, the Parish can progress from consultation to delivery with confidence.”



With thanks



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