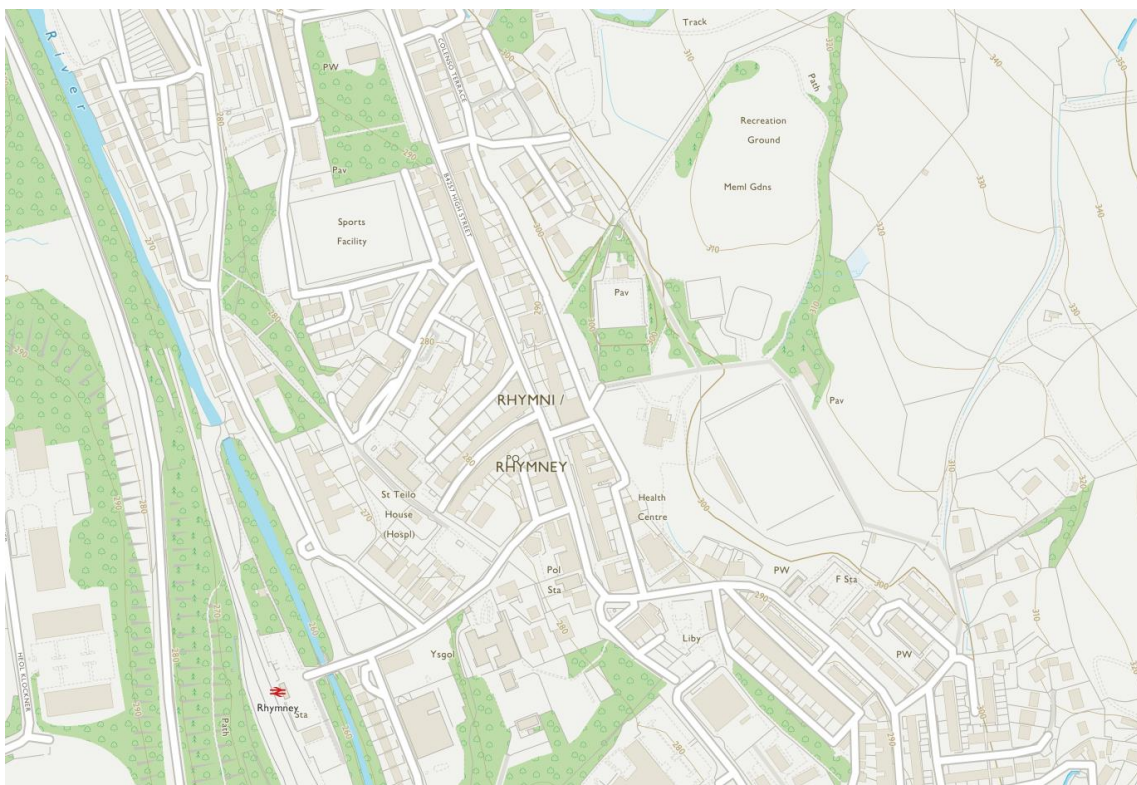


31st July 2021 Engagement Summary

Rhymney War Memorial Park, officially opened in 1925, is a large public park consisting of football (formerly also cricket) field, a bowling-green and pavilion, used by two clubs, a recently upgraded children's playground, and a disused tennis court area.

Around the park is a path with an entrance/exit that leads onto Bryn Oer/Rhymney Hill. Adjacent to the park is Rhymney RFC's pitch (with changing rooms and stand) and a clubhouse. There are two main entrances from the High Street area, the main one up from Royal Arms Hotel and the other from where the former Castle Hotel was situated.



The Park occupies a key central location within relatively easy walking distance of all parts of the town, being close to the High Street as well as local primary schools, the Railway Station, and Rhymney Integrated Health and Social Care Centre. As such, it is a key community asset that should contribute significantly to enrich social life and wellbeing in the community.

Current Usage of the Park

The Park appears to be enjoyed by people for walking and use of the playground as well as sporting activities. However, it is felt by some that the park is currently underused by the community with some citing anti-social behaviour and some wariness about entering the park around the entrance close to the Royal Arms Hotel as a contributory factor to that.

In early 2021, a group of individuals from various bodies and organisations, including Integrated Wellbeing Networks (ABUHB), Parks, Arts Development, the Youth Service and Caerphilly Cares from within Caerphilly CBC, Upper Rhymney Primary School (and its walking group), Bryn Awel Primary School, Valleys Gymnastics, the Parent Network, Head for Arts, and GAVO came together to see how usage of the park might be increased including the development of a schools-led sensory garden behind the bowls pavilion.



In addition to several ensuing group discussions, through an Arts Council of Wales Connect and Flourish-funded project, Caerphilly CBC Arts Development worked with the local primary schools (including Ysgol y Lawnt) to develop ideas for the sensory garden and ideas such as trails in the wider park.

The group also set up an informal Friends of Rhymney Park groups with a presence on Facebook with a view to potentially establishing a formal group going forward to ensure greater community ownership.



LOVE! RHYMNEY PARK!

**ARTS
AFTERNOON**

An afternoon of arts and crafts across Rhymney Park (War Memorial Park) with an opportunity to say what you think about the park, and what you'd like to see there in the future.

SATURDAY 31ST JULY ★ 13:00 - 16:00

www.facebook.com/groups/friendsofrhymneypark

On Saturday 31st July between 2 and 4 pm, Caerphilly CBC Arts Development to conclude Connect and Flourish-funded project led a creative focused **Love The Park** event with partners to gather wider community input and ideas on the development of the sensory garden and associated potential initiatives.

To support this and obtain a better understanding of how the community of Rhymney wishes to see the park be used and further developed, the group under an informal 'Friends of Rhymney Park' (to facilitate engagement) banner conducted a Planning for Real exercise.

Planning for Real is an interactive community consultation and engagement tool that involves using a large map of the proposed area or building.

Participants were provided with a menu indicating possible activities, events or issues and were asked to place a post-it note on a particular area on the map of the park to indicate a preferred activity, event, or issue.

Participants were also given the option of writing and adding their own ideas and opinions.

This document provides a summary of the responses received on the day at the event and should provide a basis for gaining wider community input and involvement going forward.

Planning for Real Responses

We had a good response on the day engaging with local people as they attended the other activities or just visited the park. We have grouped the responses under the following headings

Sport

There were 41 responses in total with Football and Running having the greatest response and both receiving an equal number of responses (3). Others include for example:

- Cricket received 2 responses
- 5 a side Football
- Rugby received 2 responses
- Golf received 2 responses
- Tennis received 2 responses
- Hockey received 2 responses
- Badminton received 2 responses

- Bowls received 2 responses
- Circuit Training received 2 responses
- Archery received 2 responses
- Gymnastics received 2 responses
- Quoits received 2 responses
- Track & Field received 2 responses
- Shot Put received 2 responses
- Frisbee Golf received 1 response

Recreation

There were 67 responses in this category with music festival receiving the highest number of responses (6) and tabletop sale receiving the next highest number of responses (4). Other activities include for example:

- Party in the Park receiving 3 responses
- Community Walking Group 3 responses
- Geo Caching in the Park 3 responses
- Arts & Crafts Fair 3 responses
- Fetes 2 responses
- Mindfulness, Yoga & Tae Chie all received 2 responses
- Family Fun Days 2 responses
- Picnic in the Park 2 responses
- Carnivals 2 responses
- Open Air Cinema 2 responses
- Outdoor Arts Activities 2 responses
- Den Building & Bush Craft 2 responses
- Play Days 2 responses
- Cardio Exercise 2 responses
- Swap Shop 2 responses
- Talent Contests 2 responses
- Kite Flying Contests 2 responses
- Radio Controlled Cars and Planes 2 responses each
- Kids Make a Scarecrow Trail 1 suggestion
- Farm Animals 1 suggestion

Environment

There were 45 responses for the environment category, with nature awareness trail receiving the highest number of responses (4). Other responses include for example:

- Nature Awareness Area 2 responses
- Community Garden 2 responses
- Woodland 2 responses
- Biodiversity area 2 responses
- Bird Watching 2 responses
- Litter Picking 2 responses
- Conservation Skills 2 responses
- Woodland Management Skills 2 responses
- Nature Volunteering 2 responses
- Mini-beast Hunt 2 responses
- Nature Scavenger Hunt/Quiz 2 responses
- Nature Photography 2 responses
- Nature Museum 2 responses
- Wild Foraging 2 responses
- Harvest Festival 2 responses
- Nature Reflection Spot 2 responses
- Nature Storytelling 2 responses
- Sensory Garden 2 responses
- Nature Watch 2 responses
- Dipping Pond 1 suggestion

Overall, the Recreation category received the highest number of responses. However, most people said that they would like to see the park used more and that there should be regular, organised events and activities on the park to promote its use.

As such some people indicated that they thought all the events and activities suggested on the menu provided were good ideas and selected everything on the menu (see APPENDIX 1).

Suggestions for general improvements included:

- Refurbishing the children's playground for 3–7-year-olds and more events for the kids.
- A family play area for disabled children
- Solar lighting
- Employ a park manager/ranger on site

One suggestion was to use the tennis court area to create a five aside football pitch and another person suggested that the space be used to extend the playground. Other suggestions included:

- More open spaces and a café or facility for light refreshments were also suggested.
- A monthly or annual themed treasure hunt on Halloween, bonfire night, Easter etc.
- Wooden recycled sculptures and wildflower areas to break up the spaces in the park.

Issues

- Lack of litter and dog fouling bins on the park
- A number of people made reference to the tenants at the Royal Arms Hotel causing anti-social behaviour on the park
- The entrance adjacent to the bowls pavilion was highlighted as having a problem with water puddling and mud during the winter months which made that entrance difficult to use.

Conclusions

It is interesting to note that the results of the Planning for Real consultation showed that having organised activities on the park for recreation and social purposes is extremely important, where the Recreation category received sixty-seven responses. By far the highest number of responses of any category. The next highest was the Environment category with forty-five responses, indicating that environmental awareness and the need for nature conservation was relatively high amongst respondents.

Of the young people who responded to the Planning for Real, the focus was on the Sport category. Three young people suggested that being able to play football at the park was important to them. This ties in with the suggestion that the old tennis court could be redeveloped as a five-a-side football pitch. For adults, responding to the Sport category, three respondents suggested running should be an organised activity at the park. Organised running groups may be seen as a safety behavior where a number of respondents suggested that the park is unsafe during the evening due to anti-social behavior. As such, running at the park during the evening may be seen as safer when this activity is

conducted in organised groups.

There seems to be some consensus amongst those responding to the Planning for Real that there are particular issues with using the park, particularly anti-social behavior and misuse. Some respondents identified a lack of facilities at the park, such as the lack of litter and dog-foul bins and the availability of refreshments. Others suggested that the park lacked facilities and activities for young children, with the playground being somewhat inadequate in its current state. Some respondents felt that the park was lacked areas of interest to break up the spaces and that the park might benefit from the addition of sculptures and wildflower areas.

In conclusion then, the results of the Rhymney Memorial Park Planning for Real strongly suggests that increasing the use of the park was extremely important. This was reflected by the fact that a significant number of people signed up to volunteer and become members of the Friends of Rhymney Park. Many people seem to feel that the park was a community asset with a great deal of potential. However, anti-social behaviour tended to cause a genuine fear of using the park, particularly during the evening but also during daylight hours. As such, the overall results of this Planning for Real consultation suggest that the community values the park and would like to use it more, but at present feel that the offer in the Park could be improved what it needs in terms of events, activities, and safety in order for them to use it with any degree of commitment.

The opportunity is there therefore to work with the community to increase activities and enhance facilities in the Park. A next stage could be establishment of a more formal Friends group to help with that and on the day, a reasonable number of people signed up to support the idea to become Friends.

APPENDIX 1

RHYMNEY PARK ACTIVITIES

You can choose an activity from the list that you would like to do at the park in the future and how you would like the park to be used and developed. Write on your preference on the post it note and place it on the location on the map of the park where you would like the activity to take place or, alternatively, you can write down your own suggestions

SPORT	RECREATION	ENVIRONMENT
Football	Picnics in the Park	Nature Conservation Area
Rugby	Family Fun Days	Community Garden Area
Cricket	Fetes	Woodland Biodiversity Area
Tennis	Carnivals	Bird Watching
Badminton	Car Boot Sale	Litter Picking
Hockey	Adventure Play Area	Conservation Skills
Golf	Yoga in the Park	Woodland Management Skills
Running	Tai Chi in the Park	Nature Volunteering
Gymnastics	Mindfulness in the Park	Mini-beast Hunt
Shot Put	Community Walking Group	Nature Scavenger Hunt/Quiz
Quoits	Meditation in the Park	Nature Photography
Bowls	Cardio Exercise in the Park	Nature Museum
Circuit Training	Party in the Park	Wild Foraging Harvest
Track & Field	Music Festival	Nature Awareness Sessions
Archery	Swap Shop	Nature Reflection Spot
	Arts & Crafts Fair	Nature Story Telling
	Talent Contests	Sensory Garden
	Open Air Cinema	Nature Watch
	Outdoor Arts Activities	
	Geo Caching in the Park	
	Bushcraft in the Park	
	Den Building in the Park	
	Kite Flying Contests	
	Radio Controlled Car Circuit	
	Radio Controlled Aircraft Flying	
	Area	