

Holding a consultation event

Introduction

There are many ways to engage with people face-to-face about their community and proposals. There are advantages to pop-up stalls at popular activities and places where you can speak to more people for a short time. At drop-in sessions in a space like a village hall you can present more information and talk to people in more depth, but fewer people may take part.

You will know your community best. These are a few things to think about and several tools you could use.

Set the scene

Help people understand why you are talking to them, what you hope to achieve and what effect their answers will have.

Having a clear and concise description of your purpose will help engage people and help when designing the event. Make sure this description features prominently in any display you create and in any promotional material.

Be loud and clear

If you have a pop-up stall make it very clear who you are and why you're there. Consider a banner like 'Tell us what would make 'Fictionham' a better place' and badges or clothing (t-shirt/hi-viz) with 'Fictionham Parish Council'.

The less you need to explain, the more likely people are to stop and talk – especially if they know quickly that you are not selling something.

If you are planning a drop-in, spread the word beforehand to as many people as possible. No one will drop in if they don't know you're there!

Where to go

If you plan a pop-up stall it should be somewhere you can meet many people and where they will have time to talk to you. Perhaps a coffee morning, a library or even a GP waiting room (but do ask permission first).

If you plan a drop-in, it should be somewhere that is well-known, convenient and easy for everyone to access. Make sure you've chosen a window of time that will suit people with different commitments.

Plan your questions

If you are running a survey, you could use your event to gather additional survey responses. You could also use the event as a way of gathering more nuanced views or feedback on specific aspects. Just be sure to capture the information and in a way you can include.

At the event

Do talk to people and explain the purpose of the event and how to take part. You may have as much valuable conversation as you get from people in writing – so take notes and discuss after.

Try to display enough information so that people can understand why you want their views on, what the questions are and how to give their answers (not everyone will want to talk).

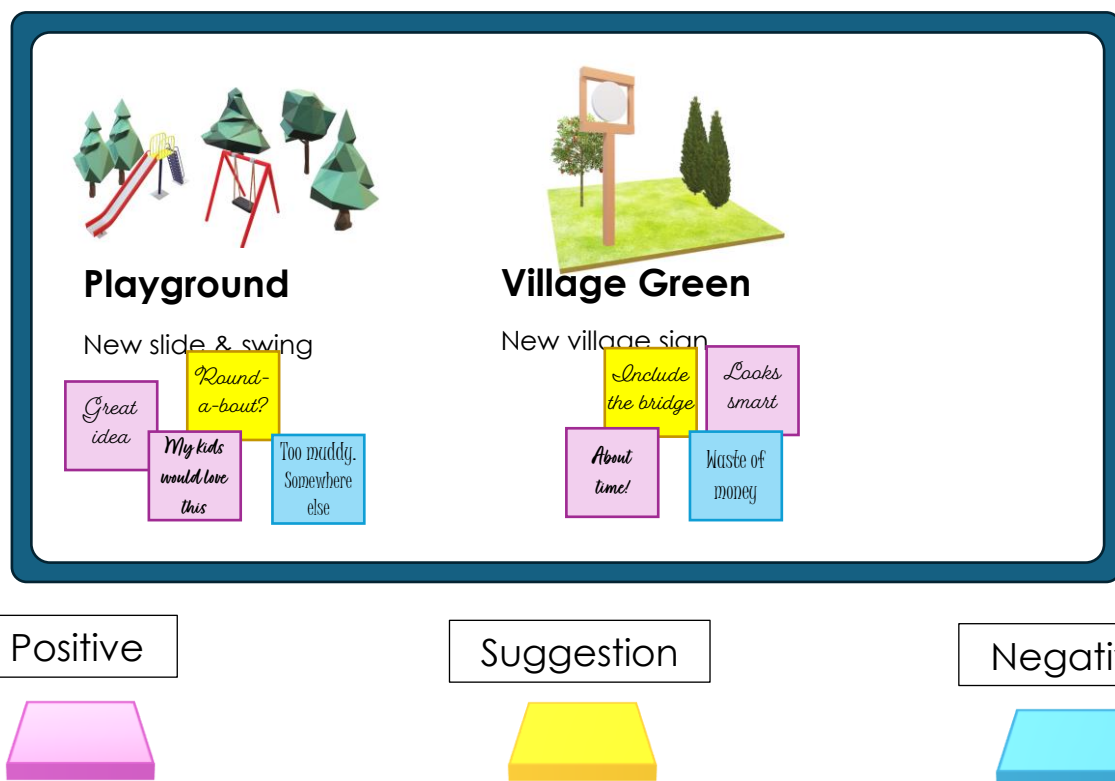
These are a range of options to get people involved.

Surveys

If you are talking to people, you can use your survey to structure your discussion and it boosts your responses. It is also something that people can do for themselves. You can combine these answers to the views of people who don't attend. However, don't make this your only option, you'll miss the opportunity for a richer discussion and unexpected ideas.

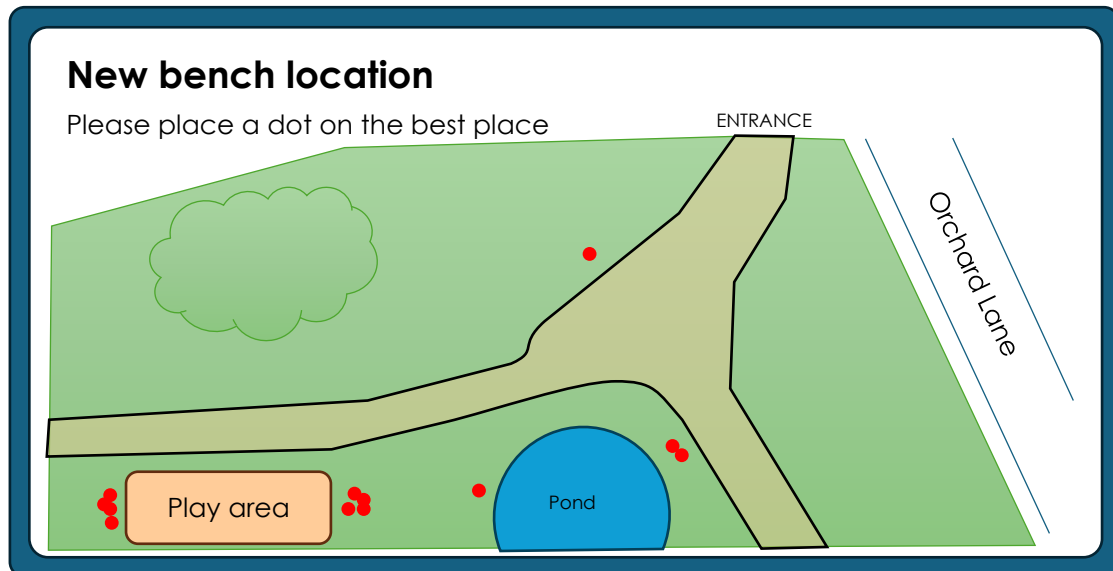
Feedback board

One simple and interactive way of gathering views on potential projects is with a feedback board. It gives an engaging visualisation of the feedback and the responses can be easily counted and recorded.



Voting

If you have proposals for which you want to test the support or want a steer on the design, voting can be a good way to engage people. Here are a few examples



Voting with stickers is simple and engaging, particularly for children. It shows people how others have voted (which can build trust, but might sway their decisions).



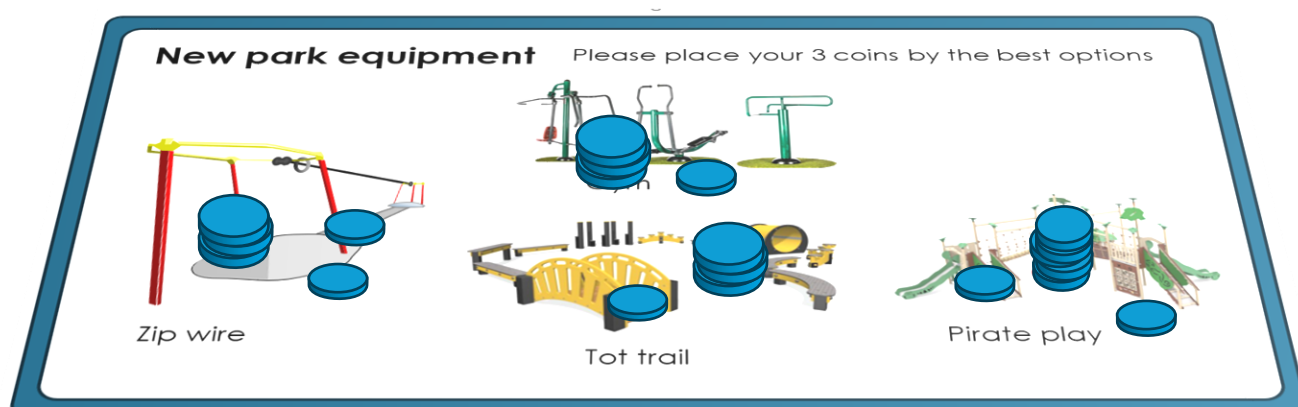
Consider how people will participate. If people help themselves, they will cast different numbers of votes. If you give each person 5 stickers, they could choose

1 for an idea they like and 4 for an idea they love. But another person might assume they have to vote for 5 different ideas - so be clear on the rules!

If you need to keep the voting on different displays separate, use different colours.

Token voting will be familiar to most people from supermarket grant funds. It can be an engaging format for children or people with additional needs because it can be developed into an activity where small groups have to decide how to spend their budget. This will help them talk through what they like and what's important (with some help).

Tokens require less dexterity than stickers so are more inclusive. You don't have to buy plastic coins; old Lego, games pieces or anything uniform can do the same job.



Word cloud

Word clouds are a visual representation of simple responses to an idea. The words people give to a question like – *"In one or two words, what does the park mean to you?"* form an illustration. The more often a word is given, the bigger it appears.

Equipment	Votes	Percentage
Zip wire	8	9%
Tot trail	32	40%
Pirate play	28	35%
Outdoor gym	11	14%
Swings	2	2%

Use this in your report back to residents, in your Parish Infrastructure Investment Plan and, where required, in funding applications.

Links

[Free online word cloud generator - WordClouds.co.uk](https://wordclouds.co.uk/)

[Word Cloud Generator: Mentimeter](https://www.mentimeter.com/) for live