

South Wonston Young People's Parish Plan

Introduction

In the summer of 2006 both the South Wonston Primary and the Henry Beaufort Secondary School Head Teachers, Richard Coleman and Jonathan de Sausmarez respectively, kindly co-operated in enabling their pupils to make a contribution towards the South Wonston Parish Plan. Firstly focus groups were held at both schools and the results were incorporated into a questionnaire. At the primary school with the considerable help of a parent governor, Kevin Hopkins, the questionnaire was computerised and completed by 179 of the primary children. At the secondary school, paper questionnaires were distributed and 43 were returned which accounted for about 30% of the number of South Wonston children then attending the school.

On 10th June 2008 the first meeting of the South Wonston Parish Youth Council met with nine members, representing five different organizations, and this Plan formed the basis of the initial discussion. Four members were secondary age or at work, and the rest were primary aged children. Their main concerns were the facilities at the Recreation Ground, such as the state of the Tennis Court, the inadequacy of the 'kick around' football pitch, and apparatus in the young children's play area. Two members agreed to speak to the Parish Council about their needs and ask whether the Parish Council would agree to them making these changes out of their budget.

Breakdown by age and gender of the student responses to their questionnaire

Gender/Age	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	Total
Boys	3	26	27	21	19	8	6	5	2	1	118
Girls	2	26	19	27	19	9	2	8	0	0	104
Total	5	52	46	48	38	17	8	13	2	1	222

The eight questions answered by the students were as follows:

1. What activities do you currently take part in, after school, at week-ends and during the holidays?
2. What additional leisure facilities would you use, and how often?
3. How far do you travel for different activities at present?
4. What mode of transport do you use to get to Winchester, Basingstoke and Southampton?
5. In your own words, what do you like most about South Wonston?
6. In your own words, what do you like least about South Wonston?
7. If you wish for any change in the village what would it be?
8. The last question covered such information as age and gender, and asked if they would be interested in joining a Youth Council?

A summary of the responses to questions 5, 6 and 7 can be found at the end of this report.

:

Most popular after-school activities

Taking 50% as a cut off point, after-school activities were fairly predictable

<i>Activities</i>	<i>Boys %</i>	<i>Girls %</i>	<i>Combined %</i>
Play at home	87	83	85
Listen to music or watch TV	53	61	57
Surf the net or play computer games	46	63	54
Do homework	75	86	80

See friends in the village	74	81	77
Kick a football about with friends	61	39	51
Use or hang out at play park at Recreation Ground	32	49	40
See family and friends	69	70	70
Go into Winchester	52	56	54

It was perhaps surprising to find that more girls than boys surfed the net or played computer games, contrary possibly to expectations. Girls also show more social tendencies and that is why the use of the Recreation Ground was included in this table. Furthermore, girls are ahead of boys when it comes to 'roller skating or skateboarding' 42% to 30%; 'uniformed groups like Scouts and Guides', 44% to 29%; and 'drama, ballet, dancing', 47% to 10%. The latter was no surprise, but the response to roller skating, was.

Most popular weekend and holiday activities

<i>Activities</i>	<i>Boys % Weekends</i>	<i>Girls % Weekends</i>	<i>Boys % Holidays</i>	<i>Girls % Holidays</i>
Play at home	88	88	77	88
Listen to music or watch TV	59	76	57	67
Surf the internet/ computer games	67	73	50	57
Do homework	58	63	26	28
See friends in the village	73	88	68	81
Walk around the village	58	71	50	63
Cycle around the village	69	63	54	58
Cycle or walk on paths or bridleways	55	59	53	54
Cinema/Theatre	54	69	61	79
Kick football around with friends	66	43	53	32
Hang out at the Recreation Ground	44	60	39	58
Swimming	45	68	36	66
See family & friends	80	94	81	91
Holidays away from home	28	33	81	87
Go into Winchester	88	93	66	76
Go into Southampton	63	78	46	70
Go into Basingstoke	56	77	52	73

In all the major activities in which young people are engaged in the village, the girls are more active than the boys except for 'kicking a football around' but including walking or cycling round the paths and bridleways. Could this mean that the respondents to some of the later questions where young people said they were bored be more related to boys than girls?

Modes of Transport

84% of the respondents travel to Winchester, Basingstoke and Southampton by car, and for just Winchester, this rises to over 90%. This looks like a lot of ferrying for parents. More girls however, travel by bus into Winchester than boys.

The figure of over 20% cycling into Winchester is surprising knowing the condition of the only road, although from the main survey we know that there are more cycles than cars in South Wonston and possibly some children cycle to Winchester with their parents. There is little bus use into Basingstoke and Southampton, although there is some evidence of train use to both these destinations.

What do children do in Winchester, Basingstoke and Southampton?

There is very little difference between boys and girls when it comes to shopping – 88% and 90% respectively in Winchester – and this probably reflects the age in which we live. Swimming in Winchester comes next in popularity with girls, 85%, followed by meeting friends, 82%. For boys after meeting friends, 85%, the Cinema is the next most used facility, 64%, in Winchester. The Cinema at Basingstoke attracts equal numbers of boys and girls, 64%, and on the same site are Ten Pin Bowling, 58% and 64%, a magnificent Swimming Pool, 31% and 43%, and an Ice Skating Rink, 48% and 69% respectively. Southampton is less used by young people except for shopping and watching football.

What facilities would young people like in South Wonston?

Top of the list is a Swimming Pool, 56%, followed by general improvements in the playground/adventure area, 45%, at the playing field/Recreation Ground, including public toilets, 37%. How much a café, and/or an internet café would be used, 35%, is open to question, but it is interesting to note that there is some interest there. In addition, it is noted that an all weather sports pitch, 38%; an indoor games centre, 36%; and a covered shelter in the playing field, 35%, all attracted considerable interest.

Questions 5, 6, and 7 addressed what young people liked ‘most’ and ‘least’ about South Wonston, and what changes they would like, and were completely unsolicited. The many hundred responses have been categorised and are as follows:

What do you like most about South Wonston?

<i>Categories of ‘likes’</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>
The Recreation Ground	96
Village shop	37
Nice school	20
Opportunity to meet friends	19
Friendly people in the village	19
Opportunity to play football at the Rec.	12
Walking, cycling, footpaths & bridleways	12
Peaceful place	10

The Swifts football team, fun place to live and the BMX track were other minor observations.

What do young people like least about South Wonston?

<i>Category of 'dislikes</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>
Nothing	22
School	20
Nothing to do here	16
Litter & rubbish	14
Dog poo	11
Busy roads	11
Improvements to the Recreation Ground	7
Bullies	5
Bus frequency	5
Smallness of shop	5
Building of flats	4
Lack of places to go	4

Amongst several other dislikes were the cost of both houses and buses; motocross and motorbikes, and jobs and chavs. On the whole however, likes far out weighed the dislikes although some issues raised by children do need further consideration.

Finally, what changes would you like to see in the village?

<i>Categories for change</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>
Improvements to & more playing fields & rec. grnd.	28
More/better shops	16
Café/Internet café provision	14
Swimming pool (2 said heated by solar panels)	14
Improved football facilities (probably informal)	10
Bigger shop than at present	9
Ice rink	9

Then 5 each for 'repairs to BMX track'; 'toilets at the Recreation Ground'; 'a skate board park'; 'reducing litter and dog poo', and 'provision for animals and a vet'. Four youngsters raised the issue of more frequent buses, and there were at least ten other minority proposals.

Summary

It would probably be fair to say that most of the 222 children of South Wonston who responded to the Youth Questionnaire, expressed an interest in better, and increased, facilities, and these were largely centred around the existing Recreation Ground which in Question 5 obtained a ringing and unsolicited, endorsement. After that shopping loomed large in their category of interests, both locally, and when they venture further afield.

The Parish, District and County Councils should be prepared to look seriously at some of the points raised. The children are initiating a lot of car journeys. They identify that buses should be more frequent and cheaper – thus reducing car usage – or the village should provide more facilities if they are to remain here for longer, and cut down car ferrying. Better, safer and more useful cycling provision could also contribute to less car use, and quite a number of the children do cycle.