

EAST BOLDON FORUM



East Boldon Junior School project

To make young members of the East Boldon Neighbourhood Forum area aware of the work of the Forum, a project was planned and completed over a two-month period between December 2018 and March 2019. The aim of the project was to engage pupils at East Boldon Junior School in the consultation process, covering aspects of village life and seeking opinions of young members of the community through a programme of interactive workshops. The Forum is grateful to Mr Sean Peacock, PhD student in Digital Civics in the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape at Newcastle University. Mr Peacock guided us through the planning process, giving us access to his document entitled “Planning the future”, a toolkit for engaging young people in town planning. The toolkit is intended to take some of the “mystery” out of engaging young people in the planning process. The suite of activities suggested was adapted to serve as a starting point for an engagement consultation exercise. Specific activities were created with a view to including young people who live or attend school in the forum area in decisions that affect them.

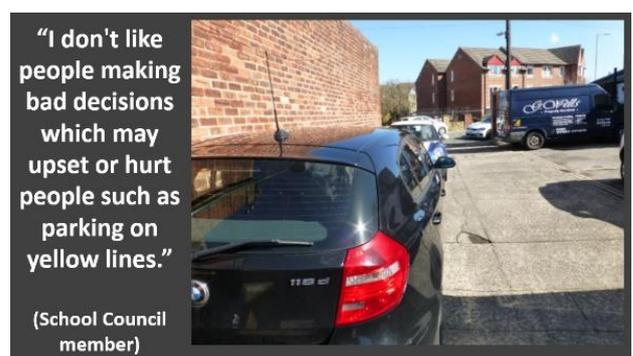
In line with the aims outlined in the toolkit, activities in the school project aimed to:

- introduce young people to the idea that the environment is planned.
- engage young people directly in decisions about the built environment that affect them.

- empower young people to evaluate their own environment.
- fulfil local democracy obligations by involving a hard-to-reach group in democratic decisions.
- complement current science, geography and citizenship teaching in schools.

An introductory session in December 2018 involved all 16 members of the School Council: 2 representatives from each of the 8 classes in the school, ranging from Year 3 to Year 6. In an icebreaker activity, visual images provided a stimulus for pupils of different ages to work together. Pupils were invited to talk about the village and the wider forum area and to give their opinions about the area at present and how it could change in the future. Their comments were collected and formed part of an assembly for all Year 6 pupils as an introduction to forthcoming activities.

Comments included:



The pupils were assured that their input was important and could help to shape the future of the village. To keep momentum and interest in the project, pupils were invited to enter a caption competition entitled “East Boldon, a great place to live and grow up in.”

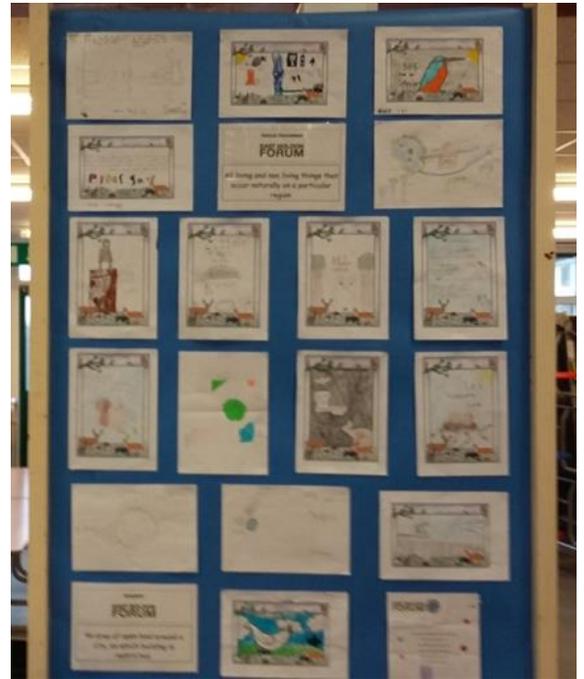
In March 2019, the project continued with 2 whole afternoon sessions for the entire cohort of Year 6 pupils. Topics for discussion, interactive activities and display were focused on biodiversity, the natural environment, wildlife corridors, endangered species in the forum area and the importance of green spaces. Pupils were encouraged to complete surveys of local birdlife and record their sightings for the RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch 2019.

All pupils completed a cognitive mapping activity. They worked cooperatively to produce displays of “a favourite walking route through the village”, highlighting architecture and the diversity of buildings in the village as they discussed design codes and living space. (see examples at the end of this document)

A final assembly to complete the project recognised winners of competitions and responses made by pupils and other family members. East Boldon Neighbourhood Forum is grateful to the Headteacher and staff of East Boldon Junior School for welcoming us into their school and providing opportunities for the children to share their views about their community and environment. We were pleased to make a donation to the school fund in recognition.

Pupils’ work was displayed at the 3rd consultation event on 16 March 2019.





Examples below of pupil comments cover some of the areas of the questionnaires prepared for the March consultation event. Their comments are taken from the many sources of work that the pupils produced.

Pictorial evidence exists of all student work and comments from them can be verified.

Pupil voices:

Parking issues

"I don't like people making bad decisions which may upset people such as parking on yellow lines."

"Crossing busy road going to school "

"People park right outside my house!"

"Some people park on the grass"

"Inconsiderate parking especially for the metro and around the shops."

"I live next to the Metro - very noisy."

Natural environment

"Don't like ugly pylons"

"Surrounded by Green Belt"

"I ride my bike on the cycle tracks with dad"

"S.O.S. Save our Special Species"

"It makes me happy to see the birds go into their bird boxes"

"I live on the Mundles. It makes me angry when they shoot at animals"

"If you save these animals you will notice more wildlife in East Boldon"

"Let nature live"

"Bring owls back"

"Please try and help me save all the hedgehogs in East Boldon"

"Around East Boldon squirrels climb our trees. We love them!"

"Save the wilderness, Save the world"

"Garden of my dreams includes pond for fish and frogs / bug house for insects / trees / wild grass / bird boxes."

Housing

"Good structure works to make people happy. Flowers on walls and cottages"

"I like the plants and bushes around the houses"

"Greenery on houses amazing"

"Could build new houses on M.O.D. site"

Vision

"Good community spirit and village feel"

Green spaces

"I like the park as there are always fantastic events and amazing things to do"

"I would like to see more green spaces"

"It's a great place to get close to nature in the parks and open spaces"

Boldon Flats "A nature reserve on our doorstep to see wild birds"

"Cricket Club, Squash Club, Archery Club could be a sporting hub and festival ground"

"Very good for wildlife"

Mundles Lane "Children can play whatever they want and be themselves"

Parks "we have picnics and families get together"

War Memorial "Remembering my grandad". Marches by Scouts, guides, Brownies and pipe band"

"I like the parks and dog walking"

"I don't like litter and dog poo on the ground"

Wellbeing

"Allotments for grandad with FRESH vegetables and fruits to grow"

"A Community centre based near the cricket ground for family events"

"Graffiti by vandals spoils the look of our beautiful village"

"School..... fun with education"

"Play park for all ages"

"Community centre for all the family, youth clubs"

"Lacking range of shops"

"I would like a theatre in East Boldon"

"I like bike paths"

"I don't like the traffic in East Boldon"

"Metro good for the village. Good links"

"I don't like speeding traffic"

Forum members taking part:

Sue Balmer, Delia McNally, Alan Younger, Roy Wilburn, Sean Peacock (Newcastle University)

01.05.2019

Cognitive mapping exercise – 6SW



Cognitive mapping exercise – 6LG

