

# CAPEL'S MILL WILD PLAY

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## Public Consultation Report

April - May 2022



Stroud Valleys Project  
8 Threadneedle Street  
Stroud

GL5 1AF

Registered Charity No: 900107

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# Summary

## Consultation Summary

- Over 100 people responded to our survey, either using the online survey function or via our onsite consultations.
- C. 60 children between the ages of 5 and 11 took part in an onsite consultation afternoon.
- 5 local interest groups were consulted

## Response Summary

The reactions to the provision of play equipment at Capel's Mill were largely positive, particularly when the overarching design principles were explained. The vast majority of respondents stated that play equipment would result in them using the site more frequently (50%) or that it would make no difference to their usage (37%).

However, some respondents were concerned about the disturbance that might result from the installation of any type of play equipment on the site, both to human and non-human site users/inhabitants.

## Key Considerations

Any play equipment/play areas should be :

- Sympathetic to the area's wildlife, industrial heritage and overall surroundings
- Should protect the area's habitats and biodiversity
- Not lose sight of the original objectives of the site's restoration
- Ensure that safety considerations are paramount, particularly in light of the adjacent road and deep water
- Make additional provision to deal with littering, dog fouling and potential anti-social behaviour/vandalism
- Be accessible and inclusive

The equipment itself should be:

- Aimed at junior and pre-school aged children, although this should not be too rigidly enforced
- Use wood/trees and planting, alongside incorporating recycled materials
- Use natural surfacing that enables inclusive accessibility
- Be comprised of several small, low-impact areas, rather than a concentrated play area in one place

# Background

On the completion of the housing development at Bowbridge Wharf in 2017, the developer made funds available for the installation of children's play equipment, under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act.

This recognised the significant lack of play provision for children in this vicinity, with the closest alternative play areas located some distance away.



A suitable site within easy reach of the housing development was needed, and the Capel's Mill site, adjacent to Doctor Newton's Way, was suggested. The site was formerly used for landfill in the 1960s but today is managed as a public and wildlife amenity by Stroud Valleys Project on behalf of the landowner, Stroud District Council.

Due its former use, the site comes with particular challenges which need to be borne in mind when considering the types of equipment that might feasibly be installed. For example, equipment that requires any real degree of ground penetration is not suitable for the site. Most importantly, respecting the importance of this site as a wildlife habitat is a key consideration. These two key considerations drive the overarching design principles for the site, namely that equipment should be sympathetic in design and placement to the biodiversity of the site, as well as its industrial heritage, and that it should be non-ground penetrating, yet robust enough to withstand attempts at removal or vandalism.

Bearing both of these aspects in mind, the proposal is for the installation of low level, nature-themed play equipment, which will have minimal site impact but still provide children with an immersive, interactive play experience.

During April and May of 2022, Stroud Valleys Project carried out a public consultation to gather the views of local residents and site users on the proposals for a Wild Play area at Capel's Mill.

This report details the methods used for the consultation and presents the results.

The next steps will be to build the outcome of this consultation into the design phase of the project.

# Approaches

## Onsite Consultations

Two onsite consultations were offered, on Saturday 23rd and Monday 25th of April. Representatives of Stroud Valleys Project were onsite for a total of 4 hours over the 2 days and spoke with passers by about the proposals and asked them to complete a paper-based questionnaire. The onsite consultations were advertised onsite, via social media, in our eco-shop and on our website. In total, over the 2 days, 40 site users completed a questionnaire and Wild Play leaflets (see below and appendix 2) were given to an additional c.20 users that were not able to stop and complete a questionnaire in person. The full questionnaire can be found in Appendix 1

## Online Consultation

An online questionnaire was compiled using the Jotform web application. Access to the questionnaire was via a link which was shared with the public via internal Stroud Valleys Project's volunteer bulletin *The Pigeon Post*, through posts on our social media channels that reached over 2500 people, in the *Stroud Times*, and via our website. We also provided a QR code that could be used to access the questionnaire and this featured on printed publicity materials that were displayed on site, in our town centre eco-shop and on the Wild Play leaflet. The leaflet was also distributed to c.100 households in the vicinity of Capel's Mill, was available in our eco-shop and was placed in the offices of the charity Allsorts in the Brunel Mall. In total we received 64 responses to our online consultation, the results of which are included in this report. To ensure that the questionnaire was available to all users, paper copies were made available and could be completed in person in our eco-shop.

### SHARE YOUR VIEWS

You can let us know what you think by  
Visiting us on site at Capel's Mill on the 23rd or 25th April  
Popping into our eco shop on Threadneedle Street and completing a questionnaire  
Completing the questionnaire online - just follow the QR code below



### WHERE IS CAPEL'S MILL?

Capel's Mill is located just off Doctor Newton's Way in Stroud's town centre, across the road from the Waitrose store.



### WILD PLAY AT CAPEL'S MILL

A new play area for Stroud's Town Centre

Stroud Valleys Project  
[www.stroudvalleysproject.org/projects](http://www.stroudvalleysproject.org/projects)

### WILD PLAY AT CAPEL'S MILL

Playing in nature is proven to be good for children's mental and physical well being, but many children are spending less and less time outside. With the support of Stroud District Council, Stroud Valleys Project is planning on improving the play provision for children in the town centre. Equipment will aimed at encouraging children to engage in immersive and imaginative play. It will also be designed to make best use of the area, recognising and respecting the rich wildlife that makes the site its home, as well as the site's industrial heritage



### WHAT IS HAPPENING?

We are looking to get the views of local people on what we should include on the site. In line with the objectives of the project however, equipment must be made of natural, sustainable materials, and be sympathetic to the site. Some examples of the types of equipment that would be suitable are given here. As the site is a former landfill area, structures that penetrate the ground are not suitable, so swings and climbing frames are not an option here.



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# Children's Consultation

The children from Stroud Valley Primary School have a long running relationship with the Capel's Mill site, having been involved for some years in active conservation activities such as tree planting as well as using the area for regular forest school type learning.

On 4th of May, 60 children from the school, along with teachers and assistants, visited the site. The children were aged 5-6 and 10-11, representing those that are currently using the site and children who had used the site in the past and are due to move to secondary school this autumn.

We ran 4 activities on the site in order to gain the views of the children on the proposals. The children were split into 4 teams of otters, kingfishers, dragonflies and newts. Each group worked with a member of the Stroud Valleys Project team to complete the various activities, which were:

- They were presented with photographs of examples of equipment that might be suitable for the site and were each given three stickers, corresponding with their team name. Each child then chose their top 3 favourite pieces of equipment and stuck their sticker alongside the photographs of the equipment they would most like to play on.
- They were asked to go around the site and think about where they would like to play. They were given a laminated sign saying 'I would like to play here' that they were able to write their team name onto. A member of the Stroud Valleys Project team then took photographs of the children in their chosen locations.
- They were then given a postcard each along with pastels and were asked to draw pictures on their postcards inspired by their surroundings. These were taken back to school and each child could either keep their postcard or use it to record anything they had forgotten to share with us on the day.



- Finally, using Stroud Valleys Project's *Wild Classrooms* app for inspiration, children toured the site looking for the top 4 wildlife species to spot in May.

Additionally, the older children were using the consultation and site visit as the basis for a project that they needed to complete as part of their final year assessments.

# Interest Group Consultation

In addition to the consultations already detailed, SVP project officer Sharon Gardham met with or contacted representatives from several interest groups who own, use or work on the canal, as follows:

- Stroud Canoe Club
- Cotswold Canals Connected
- Stroud Canal Company
- Allsorts
- Stroud Valleys Project

We discussed the high level concept for the site, along with any particular concerns that these interest groups may have about the installation of play equipment on the site (for example, safety, access, site disruption). We also asked the representatives if they had any ideas for suitable play equipment.

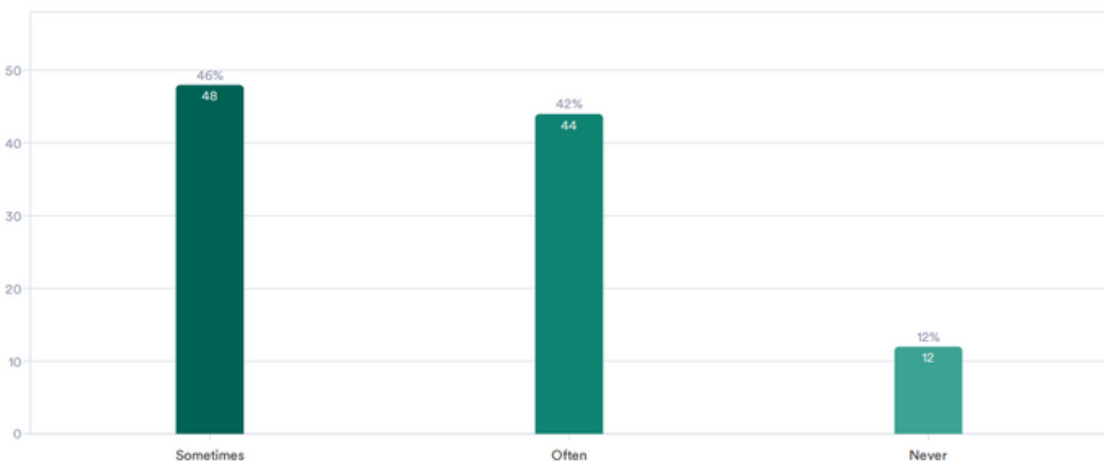


# Online/Onsite Survey Responses

Respondents were asked questions to determine their level of use of the site, the way they used the site currently and whether the placing of play equipment would encourage or deter them from using the site in future.

How often do you use the Capel's Mill site at present?

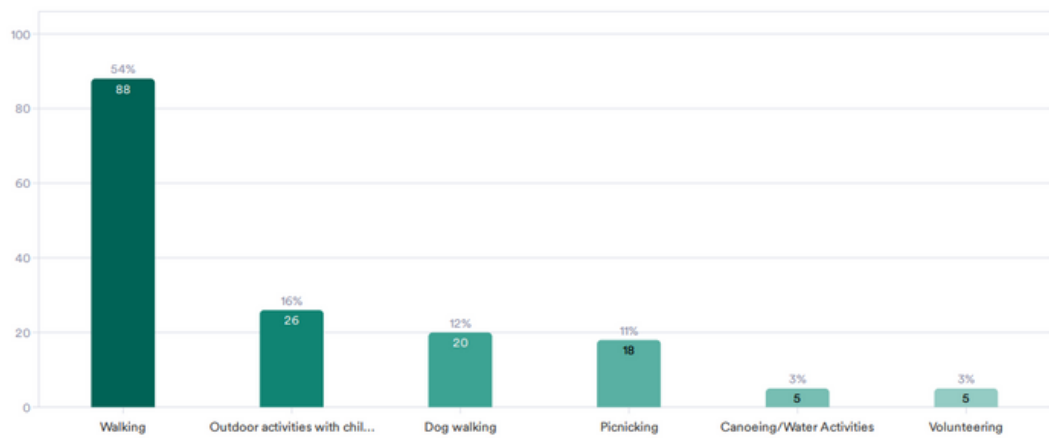
104 Responses



The majority of survey respondents use the site frequently or occasionally.

What are your primary activities when you visit Capel's Mill?

162 Responses- 4 Empty

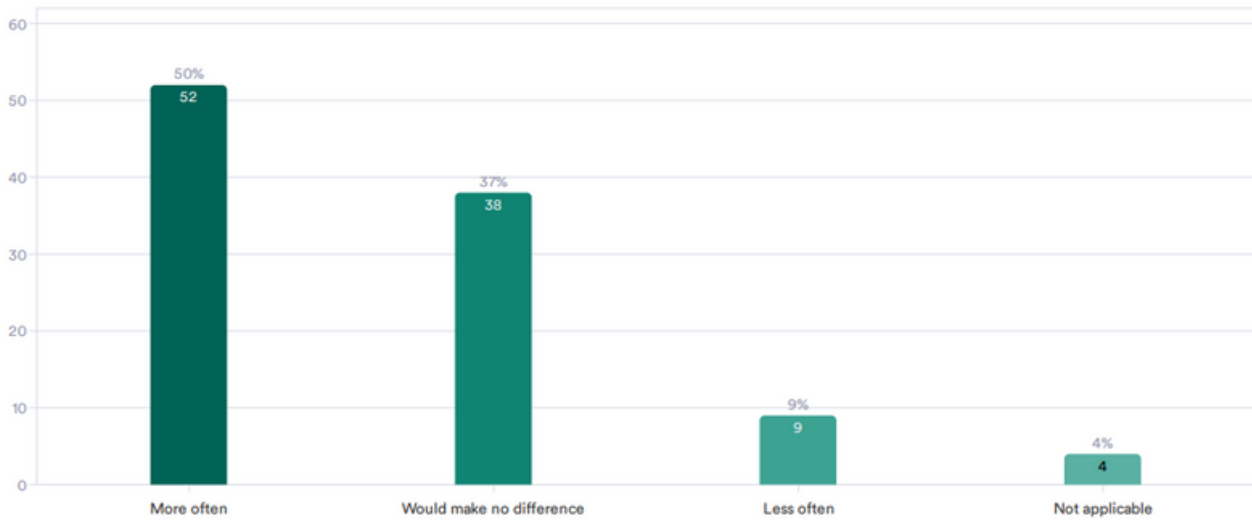


Many site users pass through the site on foot, using it as a thoroughfare to get to and from the town centre. Respondents were also given an 'other' option and several mentioned that they used the site to appreciate and observe its wildlife.



### If children's play equipment were installed at Capel's Mill would you use the site

103 Responses- 1 Empty



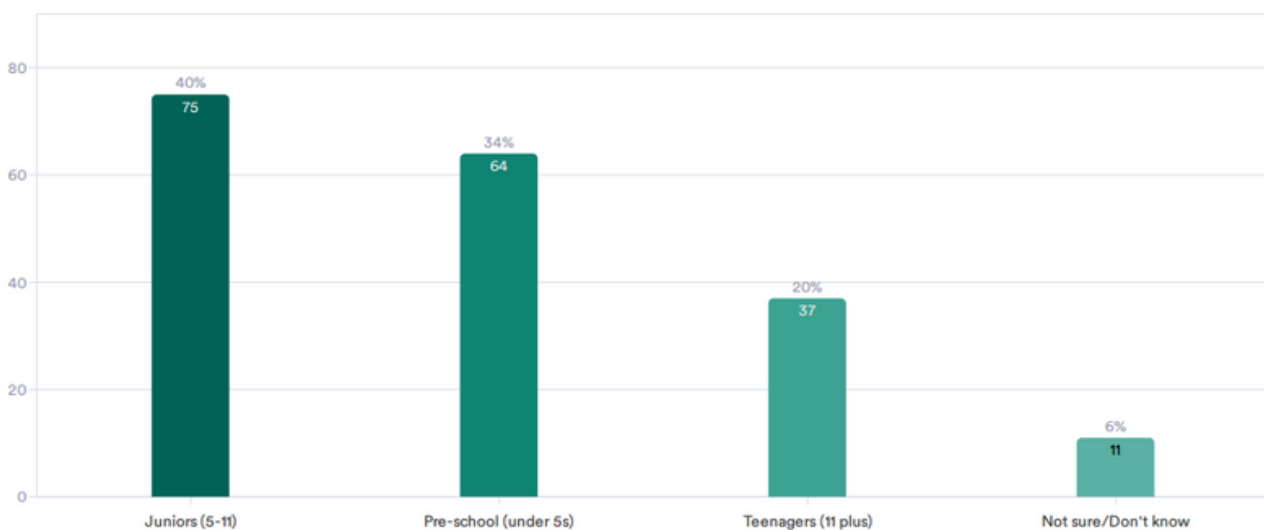
The majority of respondents (87%) stated that they would either use the site more frequently if play equipment was installed, or it would make no difference to their usage.

We then asked respondents about the play equipment itself.

74% felt that we should focus our equipment on junior or pre-school aged children. However a good number responded that we should make some provision for older children. Respondents were allowed to choose more than one option here and many felt that we should make provision for different age groups across the site.

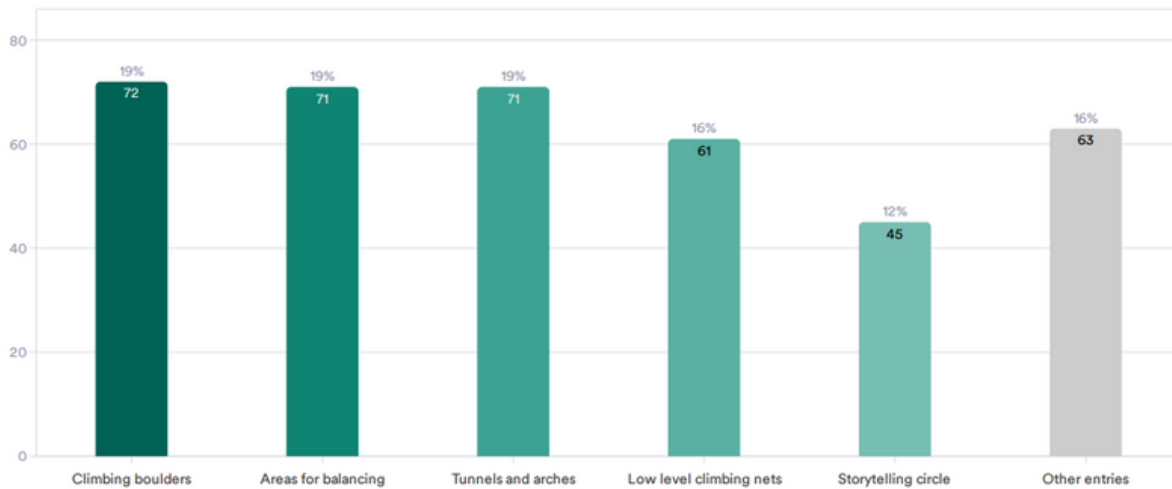
### What age group should play equipment be designed for at Capel's Mill

187 Responses- 2 Empty



### What type of play equipment would you like to see at Capel's Mill

383 Responses- 6 Empty



Respondents were asked to choose from a range of equipment which aligns with the overarching design principles for the site and asked to say which they thought would be suitable. Again, respondents were given the chance to choose multiple answers to this question.

There was no real clear preference for one type of equipment over another, although as can be seen, climbing boulders, areas for balancing, and tunnels and arches were slightly more popular than climbing nets or a storytelling circle. Respondents could also provide a text response with their own ideas.

7 respondents stated that they would rather not see play equipment installed on the site at all, citing concerns regarding wildlife disturbance, noise, and a lack of compatibility with the original biodiversity aims of the site's restoration.

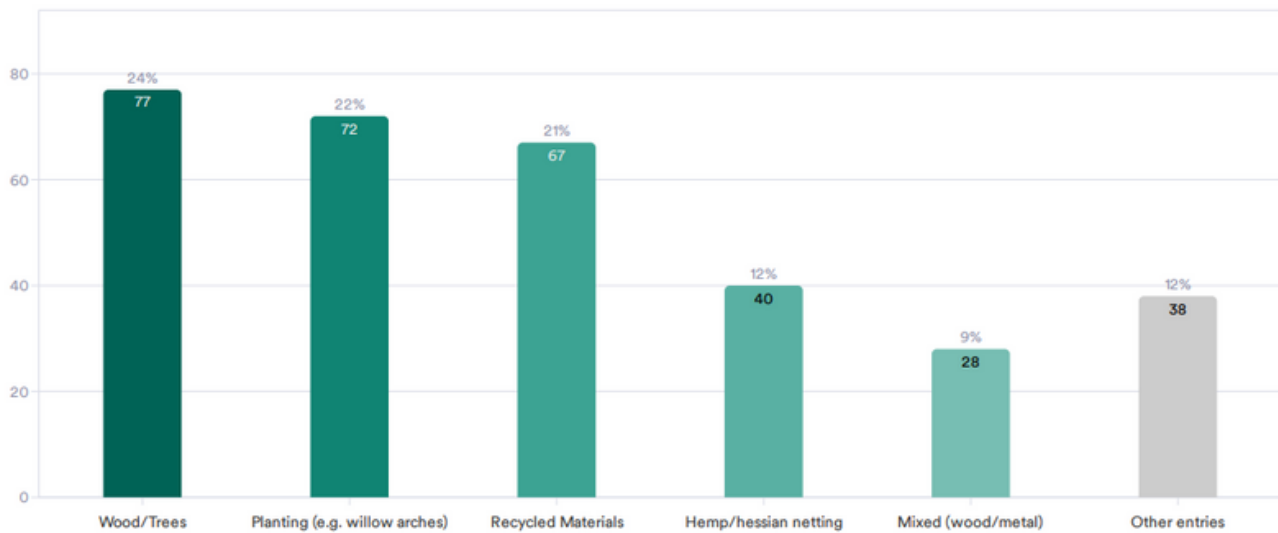
Some ideas provided would not be suitable for the site, for example, swings or skateboarding ramps, due to the level of ground and/or wildlife disturbance they would create.

Several respondents thought that 'trim trail' type equipment may be suitable, and there were also suggestions relating to sensory equipment, accessible equipment and wildlife/food growing educational focuses.

A full list of the text responses can be found in Appendix 3.

### What type of materials would you like to see used for the play equipment

322 Responses- 1 Empty



Respondents were asked what type of materials should be used for the play equipment. The options offered were again in line with the overarching design principles, and once again, respondents could choose more than one option if they wished.

Wood, trees, planting and recycled materials were the most popular.

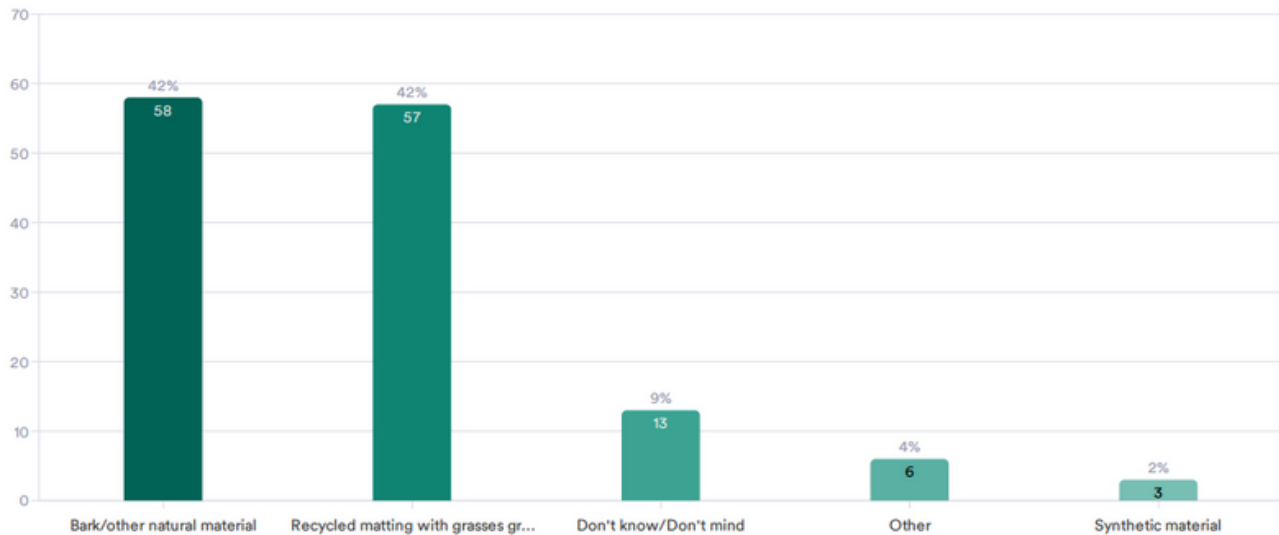
In the comments section, 3 respondents stated that there should be no play equipment at Capel's Mill.

The remaining comments were primarily around ensuring the materials used were sustainable, and as natural as possible.

A full list of the text responses can be found in Appendix 3.

### The surface of the play area should be

137 Responses- 1 Empty

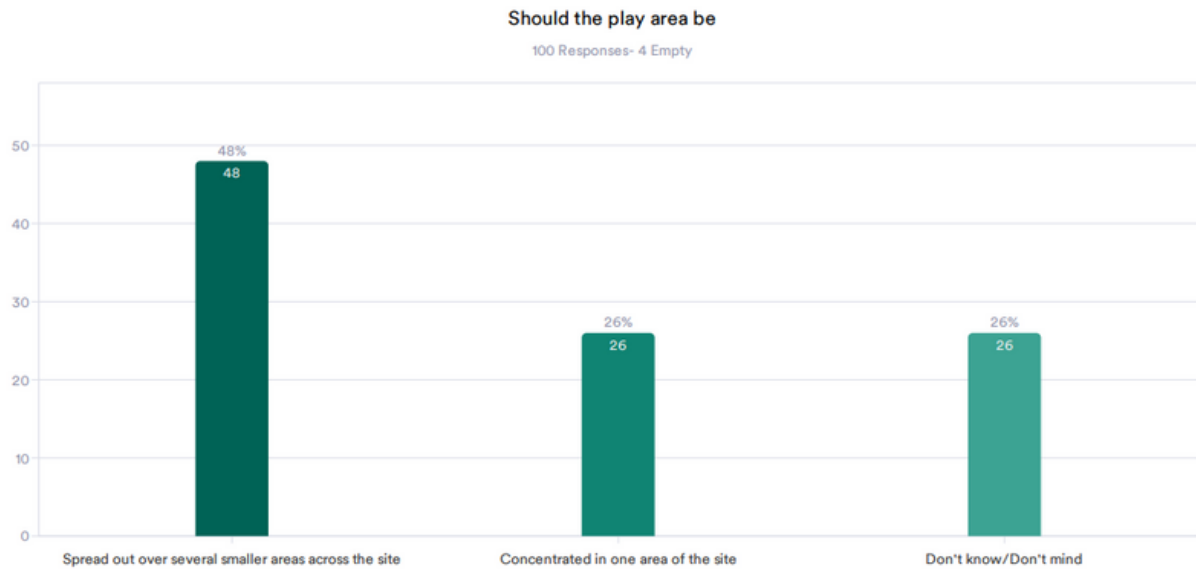


Respondents were given a limited range of options with regards to surface materials, once again reflecting the nature of the site and the overarching design principles. They were free to choose multiple options and were able to provide additional comments if they chose to. Bark, natural materials or a surface that would allow the grass to grow through it were overwhelmingly the preferred choices, with few opting for synthetic materials.

In the comments section however, a number of respondents mentioned that the use of shredded or recycled tyres might be good, perhaps having experienced using them on the Dudbridge to Nailsworth cycle path.

One respondent mentioned the need to consider accessibility and that bark in particular was unsuitable for wheelchair users and buggies. This was advice echoed by the Allsorts organisation who advised that sand or other soft surfaces are not suitable for wheelchair users.

3 respondents stated that they did not want play equipment at Capel's Mill for the reasons previously stated.



Finally respondents were asked to state whether they would prefer play equipment to be located in one area of the site, or spread over several smaller areas.

This question resulted in the highest number of Don't Know/Don't Mind responses for the whole survey. Of those that did express a preference, 48 thought that several smaller locations was preferable, compared to 26 who thought a single area would be better.

Respondents were also asked to record any further considerations that should be taken into account and 66 people took this opportunity. Responses were analysed, grouped and are listed below in order of occurrence. Full comments can be found in Appendix 3

<b>Additional Considerations</b>	
Ensure sympathetic to the area	11
Safety	10
Dog Bins/Fouling	6
Vandal-Proof/Concerns about vandalism	6
Sustainability/Natural Materials	6
Accessibility	6
Concerns about wildlife disturbance	6
Littering/Litter Bins	5
Seating for parents	4
Connectivity/Inclusiveness	4
Include educational elements	4
Play Trail/Multiple Areas	3
Objections to plans	3
Design with children's input	3
Supportive of project	2
Community farming/growing	1
Climbing areas	1
Locate in one area	1
Consider current user needs	1
Provide shelter	1
Provide lighting	1
Issues with current structures	1

Finally, respondents were given the opportunity to share any further thoughts, ideas or comments with us, and 33 chose to do so. Responses were analysed, grouped and are listed below in order of occurrence. Full comments can be found in Appendix 3

<b>Other comments</b>	
Support for project	7
Ensure sympathetic/reflective of site	5
Dog fouling	4
Concerns about wildlife disturbance	4
Objections to project	4
Littering	3
Natural materials	2
Include interest/adventure	2
Consider long term maintenance	2
Concerns about Anti-Social Behaviour	1
Concerns about existing structure	1
Seating provision	1
Community farm/growing	1
Appreciation for Capel's Mill	1
Photographic record of project	1
Concentrate in single area	1
Involve Wildlife Trust	1
Provide adult play areas	1
Use recycled materials	1
Safety	1

# Children's Consultation Results

## Exercise 1 - Top 3 equipment types

The children were each given 3 stickers and asked to pick their top three pieces of equipment. The images below are shown in order of popularity.



The equipment shown in this image was a clear winner, with many of the children making this their first choice.

The children liked this equipment because of the variety of different play opportunities it offered



Again, the variety of the equipment in this image appealed to the children



This natural den-type arrangement appealed to the children, along with the log stepping stones



Balance beams weren't as popular, but this natural design, using tree trunks, was greatly preferred to the more polished version presented which scored poorly



This den/arches design was not as popular as the design shown above



None of these images scored particularly highly with the children, perhaps reflecting their preference for images showing a variety of play opportunities



## Exercise 2 - 'I'd like to play here'

In this exercise the groups of children toured the site and images were taken of the places they said they would most like to play. We also chatted with the children about what their preferences were, and the reasons for these preferences.

### Flat Areas

Most of the ideas were for climbing frames and nets and other play equipment on the flat grassy areas because this meant trees didn't have to be felled and because the areas were flat and therefore suitable for equipment. They also noted that adults could see children playing easily in these areas. There was also a request for a flat open space here for doing things like gymnastics.



## In amongst the trees

Lots of the children liked playing amongst the trees, following the paths between them; many suggested putting logs etc. to make stepping stones and some also suggested quiet areas in amongst the trees where older kids could 'chill'.




A group of children wearing high-visibility yellow and green safety vests are participating in an outdoor activity on a grassy slope. In the foreground, a child in a red hoodie and yellow pants sits on the grass, looking towards a sign. Another child in a green shirt and dark pants stands nearby, looking down. In the background, other children in safety vests are engaged in similar activities, with one holding a white sheet of paper. The setting is a natural area with tall grass, various plants, and a line of trees under a cloudy sky.

## On the slopes

The children had plenty of ideas here for using the slope to site slides and even tunnels, with more climbing equipment proving popular.



A dirt path leads through a grassy area with graffiti on a brick wall. The path is flanked by green grass and yellow dandelions. In the background, there are trees and a blue structure. The brick wall on the right has large, stylized graffiti. A white card is lying on the ground in the foreground.

**Under the arches**  
One group suggested play equipment here, just beyond the arches, but the second group discussed that this area could be prone to vandalism.



# Interest Group Feedback

## Stroud Canoe Club

The Stroud Canoe Club operate weekly sessions on the canal at Capel's Mill.

Their representative was broadly supportive of the project and had some interesting and useful suggestions for the design.

He was particularly keen that we investigate possibilities for the area underneath the arches, as this would provide a sheltered area for groups to meet. He also suggested that the arches themselves would make an ideal climbing wall. The arches area and the arches themselves are however owned by Network Rail, not Stroud District Council, so this may prove to be out of the scope of this project, although improvements to this area should be considered in any future phases.

He suggested that we should ensure we tie in the play area(s) with the equipment that is already on the ground at Frome Banks. This supports the idea of having a play/nature trail along the canal from the Stroud Valleys Project owned Arundel Mill to Frome Banks, via Capel's Mill.

Tunnels, arches and areas for hide and seek in the woodland areas were also useful suggestions.

From a user group point of view they would have no concerns about play equipment, as long as the access to the canal is kept clear and the parking area remains accessible.

## Stroud Canal Company

The representative of the Stroud Canal Company explained the ownership boundaries of the canal and we discussed concerns around citing equipment too close to the water, both from a safety perspective and a boundaries/ownership point of view.

All and any play equipment would necessarily need to be sited a reasonable distance from the canal for both of these reasons.

We discussed the problem of littering on the site and he suggested that perhaps an approach to the Waitrose store to sponsor or fund littering solutions may be fruitful, as part of their local corporate responsibility strategy.

# Allsorts

The Allsorts charity is based in Stroud and provides support and activities for families that have children with additional needs. They were contacted to ask for advice on making sure the site was suitable for all children.

From an accessibility perspective, they advised that adjoining paths to the area should not comprise of sand, gravel or other soft surfaces as these are unsuitable for wheelchair users.

They also suggested that a den in a shaded area would provide a good resource for children that have sensory issues, offering a space where they can take 'time out'. Additionally, raised areas, such as a sandpit are particularly suitable for children who are wheelchair users.

They also advised us to get in touch with the Barnwood Trust at the design phase, as they are often able to provide expert advice in this area.



## Cotswold Canals Connected

Cotswold Canals Connected take care of, amongst other things, the towpaths and footpaths that adjoin the canal.

They were concerned that any works we undertake should not churn up or disturb the towpath too much.

We also discussed the abandoned barge at the bottom end of the Capel's Mill site, as it is becoming increasingly degraded. They were not in favour of removing the barge all together due to its heritage value, but did suggest that it might be sympathetically restored.



# Stroud Valleys Project

The staff and volunteers of Stroud Valleys Project have been intrinsic to the restoration of the Capel's Mill site since 2014. They are also responsible for the ongoing management and maintenance of the site.

As a local environmental charity, they are primarily concerned with ensuring that any play equipment development has minimal or no impact on the rich wildlife habitat that the site represents.

The overriding concern for the project is therefore that the needs of different site users (including those of other species) are noted, respected and taken into account. Any equipment must be therefore sited sympathetically and designed to have a low impact on its surroundings.

Stroud Valleys Project also has a clear remit to serve and support its local community and as such is supportive of the installation of play equipment at the site, to improve the provision for local children. By installing natural play equipment in a biodiversity rich setting it is hoped that children can be provided with with an opportunity to become immersed in nature, thereby encouraging a love and advocacy of natural places.

They would also like to note that some improvements are required to the access area of the site, and whilst these are out of the scope of this current project, they should be considered for any future work on the site.



# Next Steps

This report will be passed on to Stroud District Council and will be made available to members of the public via the Stroud Valleys Project website.

A decision will then be made about whether the project should proceed or not.

If the decision is made to proceed with the project, the results of this consultation report will feed into a high level design for the play equipment at Capel's Mill.



## Capel's Mill Wild Play Area

We would welcome your views on proposals for a nature-themed play area/play trail at the Capel's Mill site in Stroud. Please provide your answers below. All submissions will be treated confidentially and personal details will not be stored or shared unless you give your email address and ask to be kept up to date with our work. Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

### How often do you use the Capel's Mill site at present?

- Often
- Sometimes
- Never

### What are your primary activities when you visit Capel's Mill?

- Walking
- Picnicking
- Canoeing/Water Activities
- Volunteering
- Outdoor activities with children
- Dog walking

### Please provide details of 'Other'

### If children's play equipment were installed at Capel's Mill would you use the site

- More often
- Less often
- Would make no difference
- Not applicable

### What age group should play equipment be designed for at Capel's Mill

- Pre-school (under 5s)
- Juniors (5-11)
- Teenagers (11 plus)

Not sure/Dont know

**What type of play equipment would you like to see at Capel's Mill**

- Areas for balancing
- Low level climbing nets
- Tunnels and arches
- Climbing boulders
- Storytelling circle
- Quiet spaces
- Other (please provide details below)

**Please provide details of 'Other'**

**What type of materials would you like to see used for the play equipment**

- Wood/Trees
- Recycled Materials
- Hemp/hessian netting
- Metal
- Planting (e.g. willow arches)
- Mixed (wood/metal)
- Don't know/Don't Mind
- Other

**Please provide details of 'Other'**

**The surface of the play area should be**

- Bark/other natural material
- Recycled matting with grasses growing through
- Synthetic material
- Don't know/Don't mind
- Other

**Please provide details of 'Other'**

**Should the play area be**

- Concentrated in one area of the site
- Spread out over several smaller areas across the site
- Don't know/Don't mind

**What are the most important considerations for the play area at Capel's Mill (please feel free to add multiple answers)**

**Is there anything else about the proposed play area at Capel's Mill that you would like to share with us?**

**Name**

First Name

Last Name

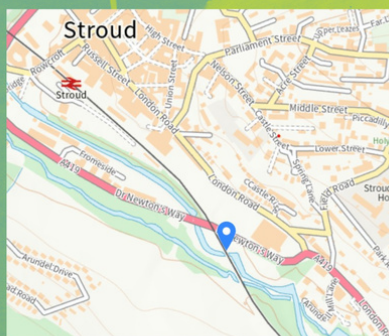
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located just off  
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the road from the  
Waitrose store.



## WILD PLAY AT CAPEL'S MILL

A new play  
area for  
Stroud's Town  
Centre

Stroud Valleys Project  
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In line with the objectives of the project however, equipment must be made of natural, sustainable materials, and be sympathetic to the site.

Some examples of the types of equipment that would be suitable are given here.

As the site is a former landfill area, structures that penetrate the ground are not suitable, so swings and climbing frames are not an option here.



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## Equipment Comments

- It would be good if consideration could be given to the accessibility of the space and equipment neg for children with disabilities.
- 'Climbing art' - ie, site appropriate wooden sculptures that can be climbed and sat on, I have seen large animal sculptures like this elsewhere that have been a great success.
- Ask the young people - huge range of possibilities
- Games such as skittles? Interaction for teenagers. Climbing wall
- Natural materials and equipment - wood, ropes etc. Sympathetic with the environment
- Willow
- Low equipment
- Swings, hammocks, slide (made of polished wood tree trunk)
- Need parental supervision
- How about a sensory area with noise tubes etc.?
- Skateboarding in a discreet area
- Skateboard ramps
- "Toddler swing (maybe the type an adult can sit on too - like a see saw design)
- Slide"
- "Imaginative seating
- Shelter from the sun/rain"
- "Slides
- Variety - anything that doesn't need deep footings"
- As the wildflower meadow and planted tree areas are such important habitats I feel there should be no increased intrusion into these areas. So the only area at the site suitable for equipment I feel would be under the arches.
- The site is too valuable and too small to support the burden of play areas. Any space given over to play is less space for the precious community of plants and animals. Please do not do this destructive thing.
- I am totally against further destruction of what was originally intended to be an unimproved calcareous grassland restoration . This was grant funded and I am sure that a child's play area was not the original intention
- Don't think play equipment is needed but if you must install some maybe "travelling play" such as balance beams and clambering rocks along the side of the path for children to be encouraged to utilise whilst passing through the site rather than making it a destination for formal play.
- Nature observing equipment.
- none
- "Instruction in growing things. Trees, vegetables, etc. Let them grow & eat their own produce.
- Training for self defence would be popular.
- Training in how to look after & treat the old. Let them talk to old people who have so much knowledge to share."
- None, leave it to nature.
- Calasthenic equipment is challenging and very "now".
- The quiet spaces could have benches carved with the local animals on like the dippers they could find along the river

## Equipment Comments (cont.)

- I'd love to see somewhere that children and adults can hang and swing! Brachiation (hanging/swinging) is very important for humans. Actually it's suggested that it's a biological imperative (ie we aren't able to fully flourish physically without hanging/swinging). However there aren't many places around town where it's possible. It doesn't need to be particularly complex. Something you can traverse (eg monkey bars) are great, but a single fixed bar (or maybe some at varying heights, to suit two or three heights of person) are still effective, and really really good for us.
- Junk yards are quite effective with tyres, wood etc to create structures and promote team work. A water area for tinkering/splashing in warm weather. Things that discourage vandalism such as an area specifically for mark making. Labelling the different areas with names like a map so that they can identify with the themes and use geography in their play
- Litter bins and cigarette butt bins.
- swings
- Den areas (willow tee pees etc)
- "Low level activities for younger, less mobile children.
- Toys that make sounds e.g. xylophone
- Animal sculptures that could be explored/climbed on
- Swings are a park favourite of most children and there aren't any very close by to this site."
- Need areas for teens to hangout safely, exercise .. trim trails? MUGAs?
- Swings
- Slides
- Wooden climbing frame
- Tunnels and tracks for toy cars etc"
- I would prefer not to see play equipment there. It would create noise and disturbance.



## Materials - Comments

- Stone
- Should be environmentally friendly
- Upcycle and reuse
- Sustainable and durable
- How about a community planting area?
- Stones
- "Natural materials
- Sleepers"
- I think that the metal sculpture and climate cairn at the site look like inviting structures for children to play on and climb but are dangerous if used for this purpose. So, I think it would be best to remove them. Due to the height, sharp metal and possibility of fingers being caught in the design of the sculpture, I'm surprised not to have heard yet of serious injury.
- Preferably none.
- I have seen this area blossom from what was originally a rubbish dump to a restored grassland area rich in plants and invertebrates. In the past two years it has started to deteriorate as more trees have been planted and many of the butterfly foodplants have started to die out.
- Boulder
- None. Again no option to answer 'none'
- It'd be nice to minimize/eliminate plastic wherever possible.
- Willow arches would be lovely but I think they'd get damaged
- if there is to be a play area I feel it should be natural materials

## Surfacing - Comments

- Again, natural surfacing is obviously good but surfaces like wood chipping would not be wheelchair or buggy friendly.
- The use of as many recycled materials as possible would be excellent."
- As natural and non-polluting as possible. I guess long term maintenance is a consideration also.
- It should blend in
- Sand?
- Recycled tyres
- Recycled tyres
- Not synthetic materials
- Shredded tyres
- Ideally, should not exist
- I am quite sure that the Magnificent Meadows project who helped create the site would be horrified to see what is now proposed.
- Grass. Research has shown that children need to learn natural risk assessment and putting "safe" surfaces under and around play equipment leads to greater risks being taken with higher rates of serious injury.
- None, leave it to nature.
- We prefer wood chip playgrounds because the popular grass ones can't cope with heavy footfall
- Surface suitable for crawling children

## What are the most important considerations for the play area at Capel's Mill?

- "Sustainability eg consideration for natural habitat, recycled materials, opportunities for nature based play / interaction
- Accessibility
- Safety"
- "Safety.
- There is an art piece that simply screams to be climbed, but is sharp and dangerous."
- It would add to the already lovely area, especially for parents with young primary aged children.
- Safety! It's obviously close the road and water so would be slightly wary of relaxing whilst children played - some form of boundary would be a good idea
- Natural space for children to explore
- The layout needs to 'make sense' in terms of connectivity. There is no point having items lost if they are out of site of other features, but equally the opportunity and area needs to be taken full advantage of
- I think it's really important to know where our dipper and our kingfisher nest and totally avoid that area. The Dipper is at the end of its range and it would be tragic if we lost them. Similarly the kingfisher. I saw a springwatch once where a treasure hunt went past a kingfisher nest at a crucial moment and the baby kingfishers died of cold; it was heartbreaking.
- Robust. Away from Road. Something with some character
- Footpaths across field link the Rodborough neighborhood directly to Capel's Mill. Young people from this area often spend time along the river or near by on the fields and paths. We could encourage them to use the new site respectfully through our Youth Club activities, which are based at Rodborough Community Hall. We have members in year 6/7/8/9 so 11-14 years. This age group love to play outdoors, they just don't call it playing. Please make them welcome them to this site.
- User friendly for whole families so you can go in with a dog as well as children
- "Safety considerations
- Churchdown play area is a good example"
- Fruit trees, community orchard. Food planting, harvest your own community gardening spots
- Wildlife areas with educational element
- If party has several age groups easier for parents/guardians to oversee children in one area
- Wildlife should be taken into consideration
- Need to be careful of vandalism
- "Bear in mind dog use - dog bins needed and more litter bins
- More picnic tables"
- Smaller areas - can be divided between different age groups would teenagers use anything provided?
- "Cater for different age groups
- Road safety

## Other considerations (cont.)

- Respecting the area"
- Adventurous and easy to use
- "Blend in with wildlife areas
- Children to enjoy playing in nature"
- Needs to be enclosed and perhaps a climbing wall for teenagers
- "Respect for the area
- Pick up dog foul"
- To fit within the overall environment and context
- "Information boards for children
- Litter and dog bins"
- Encourage social interaction
- Climbing areas
- "Safety - road and water
- Regular checking of equipment needed"
- Both have advantages
- "Different areas by age group
- Fire pit"
- Not an eyesore - should blend in with its surroundings
- "Water-based activities
- Minimal signage
- Sturdy - doesn't get damaged
- Seating"
- Dog free area (hygiene and safety risk, especially for young children)
- "Safety - road and water
- Seating for parents"
- "Safety
- Seating for Adults"
- "Safety of children
- Fence to the road"
- Need a litter bin
- A play trail
- Any play areas shouldn't intrude / have a negative impact on the natural areas.
- Any such areas must not encroach on the precious habitat at Capel's Mill. This is impossible. It is a tiny site. There is no room for play areas. Please do not do this.
- Provide a variety of challenges/opportunities for children of various ages; be well maintained; perhaps have in the area info boards re the natural history of and around the site.
- Maybe a sheltered area in case of rain. Not with picnic benches but just some space under cover like a bandstand
- "Natural in feel so that it fits with the ambiance.
- Vandal proof as area used at night by youths."
- Something like the play trail would be lovely. Encouraging children to go for a walk in nature and play along the way.
- "Accessible to all ages and also accessible to all abilities of parents/carers, ie wheelchair accessible.
- Keeping it simple and natural with design means it would be good for all ages. Doesn't need to be complicated!"
- Don't call it a Play Area, anything but that.
- As low an ecological impact as possible.
- There should be no play area. Who wrote this survey.

## Other considerations (cont.)

- A safe space to occupy teens that doesn't invite anti-social behaviour. Natural in appearance, sustainable where possible but current and inviting to local people young and older.
- Consider the areas used by current users eg wildlife, canoeist, walkers etc
- A natural play area (boulders, logs, etc) would likely mean that many ages could play in the same area/no need for distinct areas according to age. I would prefer that over a very structured area (eg plastic swings) which often work best as distinct zones because of people's expectations (ie "this swing is designed for 2-5 yr olds, so that must mean older kids aren't allowed in this area"). I have noticed that more natural play areas seem to encourage people to be more mindful and look out for each other, respecting the shared space.
- "Open ended play. I would ask children what they want rather than assume what they need so that it is a play area designed by children for children. A competition involving schools would be great marketing strategy. Or invite children to post their requests into a postbox at Stroud valleys.
- I think making sure the area is free from serious risk to enable the freedom to roam is important so that the parent/carer can relax afar whilst the children can immerse themselves in their play without interruption. But there must be a little risk taking involved! You almost want to give them the sense that they are unobserved"
- Educational as well as play e.g. simple interactives that give info on pollinators, wildlife, plants. At Newark Park there is a 'tree' with doors in it that have nature facts inside. Perhaps a trail to follow made of wooden signs with info on.
- "My concern is that it's an area we already see excess littering, ASB and sometimes drug paraphernalia. It's not an area currently I would take my grandchildren to play.
- We have had reports of youths swimming in the canal which we would not recommend."
- does it fit in with the site; does it come across as eco/ the green choice; is it fun; is it accessible; can kids of all ages play?
- Needs to be designed for its audience. Might be nice to design some aspects with a group of children if not already planned? Materials need to weather well and future investment for maintenance needs to be planned.
- People damaging it
- Natural play that promotes imagination, cooperation and exercise (including coordination)
- "Sustainable
- Future proof"
- I think it should be aimed at 0-5 years as it's those children who are out at the parks every day whilst the older siblings are at school. It needs to be safe for them to play but challenging enough to make them want to go back. Little houses /shelters / hidey holes are always popular as they use them for imaginative play.
- To have adequate fencing to stop toddlers being able to run into the road or water. A play area is no fun if the parent is constantly worrying about traffic/water etc.
- Natural materials so it blends in
- It should not be too big. Any litter should be cleared. It should not infringe on the wild flower area and places where any wild life might thrive (Kingfishers do come up from the river)
- "Not to encourage noise or affect the serenity of the lovely site.
- Not to disturb the planting that has been carefully selected and maintained."
- A contained area with no dogs - dog poo is a serious issue in the grass area and on the footpaths.

## Is there anything else about the proposed play area at Capel's Mill that you would like to share with us?

- We often take children from Stroud Valley Community school on learning walks and to teach them about the local wildlife. A play area would be a bonus for the children to have a play after their outdoor lesson.
- Concerned as the area is often used by people drinking and taking drugs, have previously found used needles left around the benches. A serious clean up and frequent checks would be needed.
- It would be good for the equipment and layout design to be inspired by the story of the site - eg, canal related history and or wildlife interest. It needs to have a Capel Mill area theme to make it different and thought provoking.
- I would say keep it natural, and keep it up at the Waitrose end of the site.
- Great project - could set example for improving other play areas locally. I am Chair of the voluntary management committee for Rodborough Youth club. We employ youth workers and team up with volunteers and specialists to deliver a programme of mostly Friday evening sessions over the year.
- Keep it interesting and adventurous
- "Good idea to have play equipment here. My grandson climbs on the metal sculpture which is not appropriate and he hurts himself. Much better to have purpose built equipment.
- "Concerned about rubbish and dog fouling
- Don't spoil the place
- Consider wildlife - would need careful management
- "Benches
- "Like watching the birds
- What about a community farm or wildlife areas?
- This is a lovely area to spend time in
- "Perhaps ask the history of Stroud Group to track the project with photographs?
- "Don't impact the wildflowers
- More restoration of butterfly habitats
- Encourage more wildlife
- "Natural style would be great. We love the railway arches ... maybe the arches should be echoed somewhere in the design.
- Not many play areas around here - nearest one is currently Slad Road!"
- Dogs mess ins
- Litter and dogs mess problems
- Nice place for a playground
- Yes, I will no longer be monitoring this site if the play area goes ahead. It is so sad to see such a species rich area so close to the centre of Stroud being steadily destroyed. I would be much more inclined to support some kind of children's educational facility on the site, maybe with wildlife workshops led by a warden where children would learn to value and improve their environment. Your title "Go Wild" says it all.....
- I would question the need for it. Who is asking for it? Who are the anticipated users ?
- "Designing it so it's enhances the child's exploration of nature as a pose to distracting them from the fact they are in nature with flashyvequipmenf would be nice. Maybe a persepex dal over the pond/ canal or a big house with a magnifying glass looking into it or bird boxes with live can they can watch at home to see when fledgling are coming etc.
- A wildlife scavenger hunt on a sign of things to look out for in which season.."

### **Other comments (cont.)**

- I've said to keep it in one area because when you have multiple children it's easier to keep an eye on them when they're engaged in one space. Especially with babies and toddlers. But also would be good to have the teenager bit slightly away.. Hanging bars, balance beams, logs as seats. They would be good for older ages
- The area is a wildlife haven. Leave it that way.
- Maybe involve the local wildlife trust?
- The question: "What age group should play equipment be designed for at Capel's Mill" could include a selection for Adults too. It's so good for adults to play!
- I think incorporating recycled materials would be cool as the site was previously a rubbish dump and so that can bring it back to people's attention of what can change.
- Greta idea - we need more outdoor spaces for children to emerge them into nature
- It's a great idea!! More of this sort of thing needed by the canal
- Very excited by this project!
- Just a reminder that using natural materials requires on going repair, maintenance and replacement. Therefore long term finance required.
- There's a play area similar to the one being proposed not far along the river in the Frome Banks nature reserve. It's a shame that this other area has been left unmaintained to the point that it is not usable. I hope that the long-term maintenance of the site is considered and maybe some of the materials can be reclaimed from the other play area of reuse.
- "Safe to keep children away from water.
- Low fence to discourage dogs in play area, since owners do not always pick up poo."
- I personally would rather not see one but if there is to be one then please not too big, visually blending in with the landscape.