



LONGRIDGE COMMUNITY BUILDING AND ST HELENA'S OPEN SPACE SURVEY

October 2025



LOCAL COUNCIL
AWARD SCHEME
QUALITY GOLD

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INTRODUCTION

This report summarises the output of a community survey undertaken between 11th September and 10th October 2025. There were two aims of the survey:

- 1) To gather views on proposed ecological / other improvements to St Helena's Field
- 2) To gather input on needs for a planned community building on Longridge

Paper copies of the consultation form were delivered to homes in the Cross Town and St John's Wood wards in early September. The survey was also promoted on the council website, social media and in local media.

There was a total of 99 responses to the survey.

Some qualitative analysis of text responses was undertaken using Google Gemini AI.

DEMOGRAPHY

RESPONDENT AGE

Age data was provided for responses. Table 1 shows the percentage of responses compared with approximate age profiles from the 2021 census data. Young people (u17) were significantly underrepresented, younger adults were (18-35) were underrepresented, middle-aged adults (36-65) were broadly represented and older residents (66+) were over represented. The number of responses from those aged 35 and under was low.

Age Range	Respondent %	Census % ¹
0-10	0	11.1
11-17	1.0	11.8
18-35	7.1	11.9
36-65	43.9	40.6
66+	49.0	24.6

Table 1 Respondent Profile: Age

¹ Approx. Census five year ages run 0-4, 5-9 etc

RESPONDENT GENDER

Age data was provided for responses. Table 2 shows the percentage of respondents by gender.

Gender	Respondent %
Male	49.5
Female	39.4
Non-Binary	6.1
Other/Not Disclosed	5.0

Table 2 Respondent Profile: Gender



ST HELENA'S OPEN SPACE

89 respondents completed this section of the survey.

The main question asked if respondents supported eight proposals for the space. There was strong support for benches and tree planting, with both proposals garnering support of 70% or higher. There was good support for all other proposals except paths where there was moderate support. All proposals

Gender	No.	%
Installing Benches	65	73.0%
Additional tree planting	63	70.8%
Leaving some areas unmown	58	65.2%
Planting a community orchard	57	64.0%
Recreating a pond	55	61.8%
Planting a native hedge	55	61.8%
Creating Hardstanding Footpaths	47	52.8%
Creating Mown Footpaths	47	52.8%

Table 3 Support for Proposals

An open question asked for comments on proposals and alternative/additional suggestions. These responses are summarised in table 4.

Two stakeholder organisations responded to the consultation. Great Places indicated their support for the proposals, but queried if the intention was for the space to still be used for humans and highlighting the use of the space by children of Longridge walking to school. The Designing out Crime Officer of Cheshire Police, outlining concern that the hedge and long grass may reduce natural surveillance.

Theme	Summary	Example Comment
Wildlife/Biodiversity Enhancement (General Support & Features)	Strong support for biodiversity/wildlife-friendly spaces, including trees, wildflowers, bat/bird boxes, and creating a meadow.	"The planting of large native trees will help connect St Johns Wood through to the Mere, providing a corridor for wildlife."
Opposing or Criticising Development / Proposals	Comments predominantly related to the development opposite the site.	"As much as possible should be done to mitigate the negative impact that this new development will have, which should not have been approved in the first place."
Preserving Open Space/Amenity Mowing	Arguments for keeping the space open, mown, and for recreational use.	"My overall comment is that the proposals on this survey have been made in the interests of nature to the detriment of the human use and enjoyment of the recreational open space. Please keep the OPEN space OPEN."
Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and Safety Concerns	Features like hedges, benches, and ponds could encourage ASB and pose safety risks.	"Benches may also encourage antisocial behaviour; the ones by the outdoor gym always have litter around them."
Hedges and Visibility	Specific concerns about hedgerows reducing visibility and encouraging crime/ASB.	"I would have concerns about any hedge row installation that would reduce the natural surveillance opportunities... Similarly with unmown heights"
Path and Access Improvements	Requests for improved, wider, and all-weather paths, while some caution against hardstanding.	"The 'unmade path' across St. Helena's field connecting Longridge to Higher Downs is not practical for them to use it when the ground is wet."
Drainage Issues	Multiple mentions of the ground being boggy, waterlogged, and causing road flooding.	"Drainage needs fixing too - it's boggy in Autumn."
Orchard Concerns	Worries about theft from the orchard and its location/detraction from the site.	"An orchard here might generate more trouble than it is worth unless maintained regularly."

Pond Concerns	Concerns about the pond's safety, its proposed location, and whether it's needed.	"We have lived near St. Helena's field for 37 years and in all that time there has never been a pond... Please do not create any pond here."
Sport/Play/Exercise Equipment	Suggestions for play areas, sports posts, and exercise equipment.	"Some football posts would be useful to encourage sport and to complement the adult exercise items."
Historic/Archaeological Significance	Requests to acknowledge and preserve the area's history and potential archaeological remains.	"St Helena's field has historic significance dating back beyond Henry the Eighth, this should be recognised"
Positive/General Support	General approval of the proposals.	"All fantastic ideas."
Management/Maintenance Comments	Concerns about maintenance costs and practical suggestions for biodiversity management.	"I object to you creating an unsafe open space for residents that we will have to pay more Knutsford Council tax to resolve."

Table 4 Summary of Other Comments



LONGRIDGE COMMUNITY BUILDING

There were 59 respondents to this section of the survey.

Table 5 contains a summary of responses to the question “How would you like to be able to use the new community building?”. 47 respondents provided an answer to this question and 18 indicated they would not use the building. Responses suggested a range of potential uses as a community space, venue for classes/fitness, and a space for accessing services.

A question asked respondents if they knew any groups which need a new home and could use the building; The Welcome was the most cited (9) followed by the Scouts (3) and Hope Central (3). A number of other local or national charities/services were also highlighted e.g. Mind, Just Drop In and Citizens Advice.

A question asked “The new building could be a hub for different community activity, services and events. Are there any services or activities you feel are needed in this part of Knutsford which the building could serve”. The services highlighted were:

- Health and Wellbeing e.g. medical services, exercise, job clubs, youth clubs, counselling
- Children, Family and Youth e.g. youth club, activities for young people, after school activity
- Fitness, Exercise and Practical Skills e.g. fitness classes, adult education
- Arts, Drama and Entertainment e.g. live music, cinema nights, performances, band practice

From the different questions, the survey highlights that the proposed building should be a flexible multi-use building suitable for a range of different activities. There would be support for it as a space to hire for classes and group activity, as well as it providing services and community events.

Theme	Summary	Example Comment(s)
Opposition to Building/Location	The building shouldn't be built, or should be located elsewhere, preserving the green space – there was some confusion in comments that the proposal was for the green space.	"I think the investment should be directed at improving the landscape and facilities at Longridge shops"
General Community Hub/Meeting Space	Used as a central hub for various community activities, meetings, events, and private hire.	"The space needs to be flexible to cater for local groups (e.g. scouts) and be usable for functions (e.g. birthday parties)."
Activities/Classes (Education, Arts, Crafts)	Space for educational classes, workshops, arts, and hobbies.	"Adult education, drama groups, wellbeing events, knit & natter, youth club."
Children/Youth/Scouts Focus	Used specifically by youth groups, children's clubs, and family activities.	"Toddler groups and places for families to meet up."
Health, Fitness & Sports	Facilities for exercise, fitness classes, gym equipment and sports.	"Minimum size of main hall should allow a badminton/Pickel ball court." "A studio space for organised groups e.g. exercise classes."
Café and Refreshments	Inclusion of a café for general community use.	"A cafe with a toilet would be handy."
Social Services/Welfare	Use as a base for essential support and welfare services.	"Support with benefits , housing and bills."
Financial/Fundraising Use	Used for sales and events to raise money for good causes.	"Fundraising events for community groups."
Logistics and Building Requirements	Specific non-use requirements for the building's design and accessibility.	"Insist on adequate car parking space."

Table 5 Summary Uses for Community Building

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