

## **Chedworth Playground Project Consultation Findings Report (April 2026)**

This report provides a summary of the findings from the consultation undertaken in relation to potential enhancement of play facilities at Chedworth Village Hall. It brings together feedback from:

- the community questionnaire;
- responses from consultation with the Hill and Valley Tennis Club and Chedworth Village Hall;
- Emails and comments given to the Parish Council over the last 6 months;
- the children's consultation undertaken at St Andrew's School; and
- Advice from the Society of Local Council Clerks (the professional body that gives advice to local council clerks and senior council employees (SLCC)).

The purpose of the report is to identify the principal themes arising from this exercise and to report such findings back to the village community.

### **1.Consultation Activity**

#### **1.1 Community questionnaire**

Individuals accessed the community questionnaire using a QR code, over the period 1 January 2026 to 14 April 2026. The community questionnaire was publicised in the following forums: the Chedworth Pop-Up Café, the Pop-Up Pub, in two issues of the Parish Magazine (the Hill and Valley) and, in the Minutes of the Parish Council meetings.

The questionnaire generated 71 responses in total.

Respondents predominantly were residents of Chedworth or Chedworth Parish. A smaller number (10) were from surrounding areas, including North Cerney, Rendcomb, Withington, Calmsden, Cheltenham, Compton Abdale, Cold Aston and Leckhampton.

#### **1.2 Children's consultation**

A separate children's consultation was carried out at St Andrew's School with 8 children, working in 2 groups, aged between 5 and 10 years old on 24 March 2026.

This consultation used discussion and drawing-based exercises to gather views on what children would like from an improved play space.

#### **1.3 Emails and Parish Council Meetings**

The chairs of the Village Hall and the Hill and Valley Tennis Club were approached directly, as was the SLCC. The playground has been on the Agenda of Chedworth Parish Council since May 2025, members of the public have been able to make their views known to the Parish Council in this public forum. Residents have also sent emails to the Parish Clerk.

### **2. Overall Level of Support**

#### **2.1 Community questionnaire**

Of the 71 questionnaire responses:

- 64 respondents supported the principle of additional items of play equipment at Chedworth Village Hall
- 7 respondents did not support the principle

This equates to:

- 90.1% in support
- 9.9% not in support
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These figures indicate a clear majority in favour of improved or additional provision, although a minority raised concerns about need, cost, scale, location and wider community priorities. Please see appendix for tabulated data.

## **2.2 Children's consultation**

The children's consultation did not use a formal yes/no vote. However, the feedback obtained was consistently oriented toward improving the play space and identified clear preferences about how this should be designed and used.

## **2.3 Emails and Parish Council Meetings**

The Hill and Valley Tennis Club and the Village Hall are broadly in support of enhanced playground facilities with caveats around design, insurance and maintenance. A small number of residents have regularly raised the same concerns with the Parish Council directly in email or at Parish Council meetings.

## **3. Existing Use of the Playground**

Among the questionnaire responses, use of the existing playground was mixed. From the responses provided:

- 25 respondents use it occasionally
- 22 respondents said they never use the existing playground
- 15 respondents use it regularly
- 9 respondents use it several times a week

This equates to:

- 35.2% occasionally
- 31% never
- 21.1% regularly
- 12.7% several times a week

These figures suggest that while a number of households do not currently use the facility, there is also a substantial level of regular and frequent use. **73.2% of respondents stated they would use the playground more regularly if the type or range of equipment was better.** A number of non-users still expressed support on the basis of community benefit, visiting children or grandchildren, or future use.

## **4. Main Themes from the Community Questionnaire and Comments from E-mails and Parish Council Meetings**

### **4.1 Age range of current provision**

The most frequent observation was that the current playground is primarily suited to younger children, especially toddlers and pre-school age groups.

A substantial number of respondents stated that the current provision lacks suitable equipment for:

- children aged 5+
- older primary school children
- teenagers

This was the most consistent theme in the consultation and appears to be a principal reason why respondents support enhancement.

### **4.2 Condition and usability of the current site**

A consistent theme was concern regarding the physical condition and year-round usability of the existing play area.

The most commonly raised issues were:

- muddy or boggy ground conditions
- limited usability during winter
- a small or constrained layout
- the area being shady or gloomy
- equipment appearing dated or in need of maintenance

Some respondents suggested that any future scheme should include improved surfacing and attention to long-term upkeep.

#### **4.3 Most requested equipment**

Respondents were asked to select up to three items they would most like to see.

The four items most frequently selected were:

- Swings 54 (84.45%)
- Climbing frame 51 (79.7%)
- Obstacle trail 47 (73.4%)
- Monkey bars 36 (56.3%)

In addition, written comments frequently referred to:

- zip wire / zip line
- slides, including larger slides
- larger climbing structures
- seating and picnic benches
- equipment suitable for older children and teenagers
- ball-play features such as hoops, sports walls or informal games areas

A few respondents commented that new football goals and nets were required.

#### **4.4 Support for older children's facilities**

The responses indicate strong support for enhanced provision for older children. A large proportion of comments referred specifically to the need to extend provision beyond toddler-age equipment. This applied particularly to the 5–10 age range, with a number of responses also referring to a lack of facilities for 11–16 year olds.

#### **4.5 Layout and siting**

Views on the indicative layout and siting were mixed.

##### **4.5.1 Positive comments**

A number of respondents considered the indicative proposals to be an improvement on the current arrangement and supported moving provision to a more open and visible location. Some neighbouring properties unconcerned by noise.

##### **4.5.2 Concerns raised**

Other respondents and parishioners expressed concerns in relation to:

- proximity to the road
- equipment appearing spread out
- the ease of supervising children of different ages
- relationship to the football pitch and wider use of the field
- visual impact and coherence of the layout
- two parishioners have expressed concerns about the impact of noise
- one neighbour is concerned about being overlooked, concerned there may be a need for lighting and potential anti-social behaviour
- possible impact on dog walkers

Some respondents preferred all equipment to be grouped more closely together, potentially in an enclosed space. Others considered that moving away from the existing shaded site would improve usability and attractiveness.

#### **4.6 Wider community considerations**

A number of responses considered the project within the broader context of village life.

##### **4.6.1 Positive observations included:**

- improved opportunities for outdoor play and physical activity
- support for children's wellbeing and social interaction
- improved facilities for families and visiting children (especially disabled children)
- contribution to the role of the village hall as a community hub
- reduced need to travel to nearby settlements for suitable play facilities

##### **4.6.2 A small number of concerns included:**

- whether funds should instead be directed toward a wider community facility
- uncertainty about scale of demand
- future maintenance, insurance, cleanliness and management
- effect on other uses of the playing field
- possible impact on neighbouring residents (being overlooked, noise, lighting and potential anti social behaviour)
- the process of the consultation, the questions in the consultation, the way the consultation was publicised.

#### **5. Main Themes from the Children's Consultation**

The children's consultation involved 8 children in 2 groups at St Andrew's School, aged 5 to 10 on 24 March 2026. While the group size was small, the feedback was clear and internally consistent.

The children's views can be grouped into five principal themes.

##### **5.1 Inclusion**

Inclusion was the strongest theme in the children's consultation. Children indicated that the play space should work for everyone and should not exclude children with different abilities or needs. They referred to:

- equipment that multiple children can use
- opportunities to play together rather than separately
- a combination of active play and quieter spaces

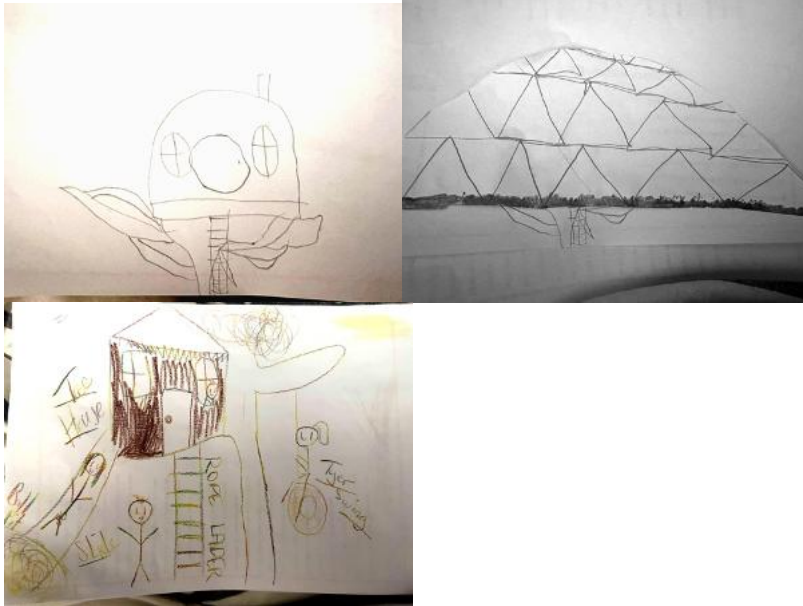
The children's comments suggest that inclusivity is understood not only in terms of physical access, but also in terms of social participation.

##### **5.2 Nature and environment**

A clear preference was expressed for play space that feels connected to nature. Children referred positively to:

- natural materials
- trees and greenery
- play features integrated into the landscape rather than separate from it

Drawings included treehouses, organic forms and natural features, indicating a preference for a play environment that feels embedded in its surroundings.



### 5.3 Fairness and shared access

The children identified fairness as an important aspect of play. In particular, they referred to frustration when equipment can only be used by one or two children at a time, resulting in waiting.

This suggests a preference for:

- multi-user equipment
- layouts that reduce queuing
- opportunities for several children to participate at once

### 5.4 Collaborative play

The children's responses also placed emphasis on playing together.

Examples included interest in:

- obstacle courses
- climbing structures
- shared environments
- spaces that support teamwork and joint activity

This indicates that children value play equipment not only for physical activity but also for social interaction.

### 5.5 Quiet and sensory spaces

The children's feedback also included reference to quieter or more enclosed spaces.

These included:

- quiet areas
- spaces to retreat or regulate emotions
- sensory elements
- enclosed or semi-private spaces

This suggests that, from the children's perspective, a successful play space should offer a range of experiences, not only active or energetic play.

## 6. Comparative Findings

There is a notable degree of consistency between the adult and children's consultations.

Themes common in the consultation findings include:

- a desire for more varied and higher quality play provision
- stronger provision for a wider age range
- interest in climbing, obstacle-based and shared play
- the importance of creating a welcoming and usable environment
- interest in a setting that supports social interaction and community use

Themes more emphasised by children include:

- inclusion as a primary principle
- fairness in access to equipment
- nature-based design
- quiet and sensory spaces

Themes more emphasised by adult respondents include:

- surfacing and drainage
- maintenance and long-term management
- exact siting and relationship to the road, football pitch and neighbouring properties
- funding priorities and scale of provision

## **7. SLCC**

The SLCC gave the following recommendations regarding consultation:

- **Consultation Process:** There is no formal consultation requirement for the establishment of new play areas. The Parish Council retains discretion to determine what is appropriate and suitable based on identified community needs.
- **Working Party Authority:** a key consideration is the status of the working party. If it is constituted as a council working party, it does not have delegated authority to approve expenditure, as such meetings are not public meetings with published agendas. The working party would be limited to making recommendations to the full council for consideration and approval.
- **Planning Considerations:** play areas are generally classified as permitted development by planning authorities. However, this may be affected if any portion of the land is held by the village hall trustees. It would be advisable to seek clarification from the relevant planning authority regarding the specific circumstances.
- **Consultation Responses:** the council should ensure that decisions are informed by broader community sentiment rather than being disproportionately influenced by a limited number of responses, particularly where there is evidence of wider support for the proposals.

## **8. Conclusion**

The consultation findings indicate a clear majority of support within the questionnaire responses for improving play provision at Chedworth Village Hall, with 90.1% of respondents supporting the principle of additional equipment.

The adult consultation suggests that the current provision is widely regarded as limited in age range, constrained in layout, and affected by poor surfacing and maintenance issues. The strongest demand is for equipment suitable for children beyond toddler age, particularly climbing, swinging and obstacle-based play.

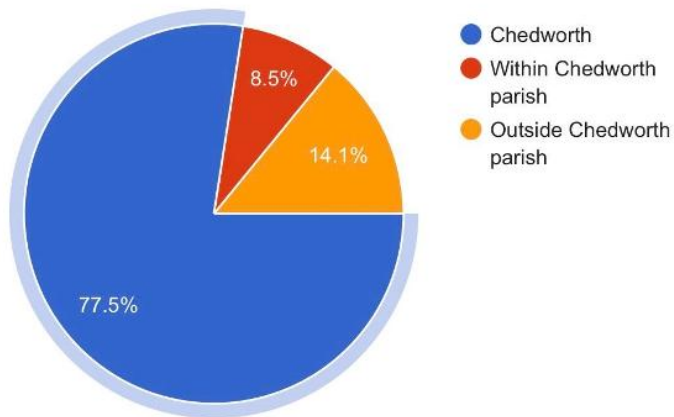
The children's consultation, while smaller in scale, adds a clear design perspective. It indicates that children value play spaces that are inclusive, nature-based, fair in access, and suited to collaborative play, while also providing opportunities for quieter use.

Taken together, the findings support the view that there is community appetite for improved play provision. They also indicate that any future proposal would benefit from careful attention to layout, accessibility, age range, surfacing, long-term maintenance, and the relationship of the play space to the wider site (particularly to adjacent neighbours) and surrounding uses.

## Appendix: Charts derived from responses to some of the questions in the community questionnaire.

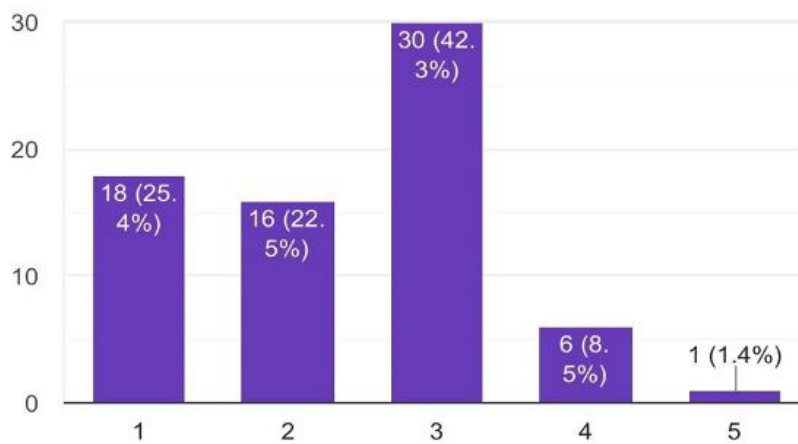
Where do you live?

71 responses



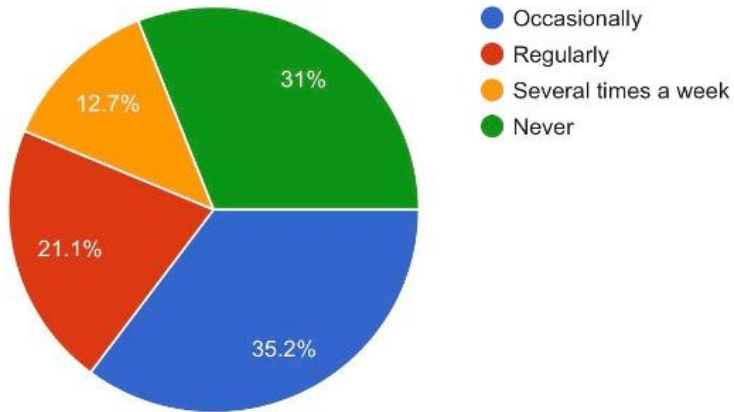
How do you rate the existing playground facilities?

71 responses



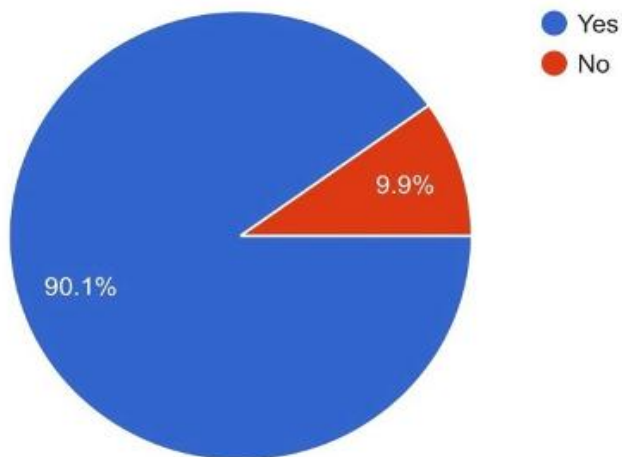
How often do you use the existing playground?

71 responses



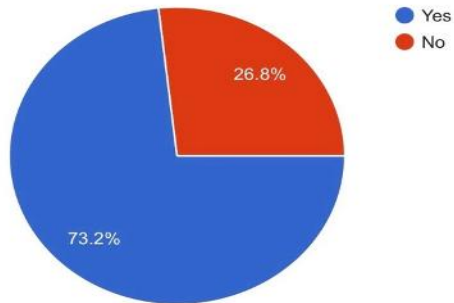
Do you support the principle of additional items of play equipment at Chedworth Village Hall?

71 responses



If the type or range of equipment was better, would you use the playground more regularly?

71 responses



Please choose up to three items that you'd like to see at a new or enhanced playground

64 responses

