

## **Pump Track Consultation - Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is a pump track?**

A pump track is a circuit of banked turns interspaced by rollers and other features that can be ridden on a bike without pedalling. It's an increasingly popular way to encourage children and young people to exercise, whilst developing balancing and bike handling skills in a safe environment, away from traffic. It provides great exercise for the whole family.

### **Who can use a pump track?**

Pump tracks use features which enable young people and adults of all skill levels and ages to enjoy. For example, a feature that a 5-year-old could roll through could be used as a gap jump for more advanced riders. In addition to bikes, pump tracks can also be used by scooters, skateboards, and roller blades.

### **Are pump tracks safe?**

Pump tracks are designed with safety in mind. They feature rounded edges, gentle embankments, and perfect geometry to ensure a safe ride. All riding surfaces and edges are low to the ground, so riders are not at risk of falling from a high point. The proposed anti-slip track at Liss would be 30% wider than the temporary track featured at the Liss jubilee celebrations, with a slightly lower profile, making it safer and easier to use. Learning and riding a bike on a track can contribute to skill and safety when later riding on roads

### **What are the benefits of pump tracks?**

In addition to being a free to use sports facility, and the opportunity to improve cycling/wheeled skills in a safe environment, pump tracks provide the opportunity for physical and social activity for all ages, leading to better mental and physical health and community cohesion. Having such an accessible facility would significantly increase sports participation, promoting healthy and active lifestyles.

### **Why is a pump track needed in Liss?**

Enhancements to West Liss Recreation Ground, which is currently under-utilised, are intended to complement the Pavilion and existing football pitch. A start has been made with the new children's play area. Outdoor exercise facilities for both adults and young people were identified as a gap in the village's provision as part of the consultation to inform the 2013 Liss Parish Plan. Further consultation in 2016 to inform recreational provision in the village identified lack of such provision for teenagers, and lack of opportunities for social interaction. Recent discussions with key stakeholders (including the Crossover, Bohunt School, family support services and the police) have identified a need for more informal recreational facilities for young people. This has therefore been included as a priority in the Recreational Strategy for the village.

The impact of COVID restrictions in recent times has proved that quality open spaces and outdoor facilities for recreation are vital to everyone in our communities to support physical and mental health and wellbeing.

### **What recreational alternatives have LPC considered?**

Whilst LPC has looked at a range of alternatives, the Crossover youth centre has advised that no other facility would be more beneficial to young people than a pump

track. They have pointed out that some young people have built dirt tracks locally so they have a fun space to play on their bikes, whilst others will simply scoot around the village. Having a pump track would give them a designated space to use their bikes/scooters/boards.

### **Where would a pump track be located?**

The proposed pump track would be located on the public open space at West Liss Recreation Ground. This site is close to the centre of the village, near to the railway station, and is host to the Pavilion, a young children's play area and a football pitch. The track would be set in the middle of the rear of the site, away from residential properties.

### **Why has this location been chosen?**

West Liss Recreation Ground is currently under-utilised in terms of leisure facilities, especially for older children. A pump track at West Liss Recreation Ground would allow the green space to be reimagined and used in a way which would benefit all the community. There would be sufficient open space and clearance around the track from the on-site car park, Pavilion, football pitch, playground area and road.

### **Why not locate it at Newman Collard Playing Fields?**

The Newman Collard Playing Fields Trust is working closely with Liss Parish Council on a Recreation Strategy for the village. As part of this, they have obtained funding for an all-weather Multi Use Games Area (MUGA). They see this, rather than a pump track, as their further contribution to meeting the needs of the whole community including children and young people.

### **Won't a pump track spoil the look of the recreation ground?**

The proposed site for the pump track would be at the back of the recreation ground (where the temporary one was for the Jubilee Weekend). Instead of being free-standing like the temporary one, it would be contoured with earth and grass to minimise the visual impact. The proposed track would be green in colour and landscaped accordingly to ensure that it was in keeping with the natural environment and aesthetically pleasing.

### **How would the pump track be funded?**

Most of the funding would come from 'community infrastructure levy' (CIL) funding which Liss Parish Council has received from housing developments, together with applications for other external funding. None of the funding would come from Council Tax.

### **How would the pump track be maintained?**

The modular track would be made of steel and fibreglass making it very robust. The track would require minimal maintenance in the long term, with the only possible short-term issue being leaves (from the surrounding trees) and mud on the track, which would require removal. To mitigate against this, the track would be positioned to protect tree roots and minimise leaf fall onto the track, whilst maintaining a gap between it and the football pitch. Mud would be kept to a minimum due to the creation of a hardstanding path which would link the track to the car park, making it more accessible. The track and surrounding area would be inspected on a quarterly basis

by an RPII accredited assessor, in addition to weekly checks by Liss Parish Council Grounds staff to ensure any issues were picked up.

### **Won't a pump track be noisy?**

LPC has been working with the designers to ensure there will be minimal noise from the track. Technical studies quoted by the manufacturer show that the steel framed composite model which is being proposed is quieter than the high-pitched noise from concrete pump tracks. The track would create less noise and resonance than the one used at the Liss Jubilee celebrations because of the earth and grass contouring and landscaping which would be put in place to mitigate against this, in addition to the steel frame and rubber shock absorbers. Locating the track centrally at the rear of the recreation ground would further minimise noise disturbance to surrounding properties.

### **Won't a pump track be a focus for anti-social behaviour?**

The Crossover youth centre has been closely involved in the planning stage. They are now involving young people in the design stage which will help get their buy-in and they plan to actively monitor and engage with young people at the pump track as part of their outreach work (alongside LPC extending the existing CCTV at West Liss Pavilion to cover the pump track site). From the Crossover's own experience, inclusive, multi-age leisure facilities increase community cohesion whilst reducing social exclusion and anti-social behaviour, which is often the result of boredom and frustration. In their judgement, a pump track at West Liss would alleviate anti-social tendencies and call outs to emergency services by encouraging social bonding, healthy standards, opportunities for involvement, and social and learning skills.

### **What evidence is there that a pump track will improve behaviour?**

Following the installation of a pump track in North Lanarkshire, Police Scotland reported a dramatic reduction in anti-social activity; Scottish Fire and Rescue said callouts had been minimised; and a neighbouring golf club reported a reduction in vandalism on its site. A track in South Wales, which nearly halved the number of anti-social behaviour incidents, was voted one of the best crime prevention initiatives in Europe. On exercise more generally, a 2003 Australian Sports Commission study found that physical activity encourages social development and reduces anti-social behaviour; UK Active report that 7 out of 10 parents and their teenagers say that anti-social behaviour is linked directly to boredom; and a very recent University of Hong Kong study found that physical activity is a "remarkable medicine" for young people with depression.

### **Would the pump track be lit?**

Liss Parish Council is not proposing to install lighting for night-time use as it would be inappropriate for this location and would conflict with the South Downs National Park Authority's 'Dark Skies' Policy.

### **Would the pump track need planning permission?**

Liss Parish Council has taken advice from the EHDC Planning Team with regards to the need for planning permission. Whilst it has been advised that a pump track would not require planning permission, LPC would apply to get a Lawful Development Certificate before any installation would commence.