

Community
Action in
Mile End

MILE END YOUTH CONSULTATION

Several groups and agencies operating in Mile End, Colchester, were concerned about a shortage of provision aimed at young people particularly in the context of a rapidly growing population. They got together to find out more from youths themselves, especially those who use the Mill Rd recreation ground, the focal green space.

This report shows the results of that consultation and recommends ways of addressing the findings.

SUMMARY REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

DECEMBER 2006

Community Action in Mile End: 101 Nayland Rd, Mile End, Colchester CO4 5EN
Chair of Board: Charlotte Dickens, Community Development Officer: Jo Wheatley
CAM is funded by 4 registered social landlords and Colchester Borough Council

Mile End Youth Consultation Summary Report and Recommendations

(i) General Information and useful contacts

For further information about this report please contact a member of the working party:

Group/Organisation	Contact info	email
Myland Community Association	Ray Gibbs 01206 843926	Raymond359gibbs@btinternet.com
St. Michael's Church	John Chandler 01206 366930	John@jchandler.net
Mile End Methodist Church	Jane Mason 01206 570361	itsjanemason@hotmail.com
Cllr Anne Turrell	01206 752418	Cllr.anne.turrell@colchester.gov.uk
Community Action in Mile End	Jo Wheatley 01206 853439	Jo.wheatley@colnehousing.co.uk
Advice and Support from :		
Essex Youth Services	Hannah Powney 01206 573174	Hannah.powney@essexcc.gov.uk
YMCA	Pam Harris 07906 277453	outreach@colchester.ymca.org.uk

The report has been produced by Community Action in Mile End on behalf of the Mile End Neighbourhood Worker Group which comprises the above members and also has representation from the following:

Police
Housing Associations
Myland Parish Council
Health Visitor
Councillors

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1 Background

In 2001 at the last Census the population of the Mile End ward was 6215 and there were 2536 households. Large scale development and planned regeneration is bringing rapid change to this once semi rural community. The November 2006 distribution of Myland Parish Council's magazine, The Mylander, has been to 3950 homes which is about 80 more copies than the July issue. The Parish Council boundary is slightly different from the ward one as it excludes the Braiswick area but includes an area in the Highwoods ward, known as 'Little Rome'. Overall the population of the two areas is thought to be roughly similar. Using the recommended multiplier of 2.37¹ people per dwelling the current ward population is estimated to be around 9,500. In 2001 around 22% of the population were under 19 making them a significant group.

In 2001:

Age	Number of children	Percentage of population
0 to 4	453	7.3%
5 to 7	208	3.35%
8 to 15	530	8.5%
16 to 19	195	3.13%

The Mile End Neighbourhood Worker Group (NWG), coordinated by Community Action in Mile End (CAM) and with representation from many organisations working in the area, has been meeting for over a year to consider and begin to address issues in the community with the aim of supporting community cohesion. Concerns about increasing levels of anti social behaviour became the priority and this led to holding some parties at Christmas last year with the aim of supporting new residents to meet together and consulting with families and young people. The session for younger children and their families was well attended. However poor attendance at the evening DJ workshop for ages 9+ led the group to research more effective methods of consultation and engagement with young people.

The NWG wanted to find out about needs for youth provision on the Mill Rd recreation ground in particular, as some money is available from Colchester Borough Council and CAM to put towards provision there. The group decided to start with a consultation to get evidence of need and begin to engage with older children about this area and also get views on other issues and aspects of life in Mile End

2 Project Aims

At the consultation event: To gather views from the 10+ age group and particularly young people who may not be already attending groups and organised activities in Mile End

¹ Office of National Statistics originating from the 2001 Census

Soon after event: To develop a Youth Group to analyse the results from the consultation and to develop and start to deliver an action plan that responds to the issues raised.

Over the next year: Work with Myland Parish Council and Essex Youth Service to establish a youth council for Myland and provide support for this new group to sustain the delivery of the action plan.

3 Methodology

A working party from the NWG carried out research, planning and organisation for the event which took around 6 months and gained the active support of two local residents from two different areas - Turner Rise and Hakewill Way. Research into other youth consultation projects around the Borough showed that the offer of free food as an incentive to attend a consultation event was very successful. A questionnaire was devised (see appendix a).

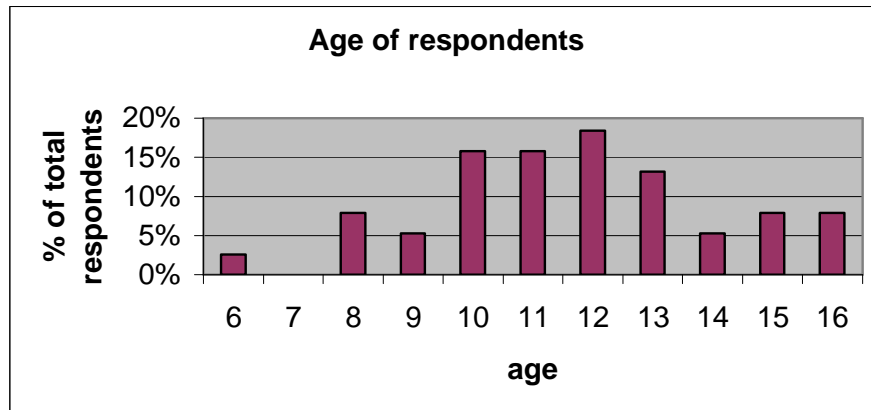
Promotion of the event to 10 to 18 year olds was achieved primarily through outreach work by a few group members, ie giving out promotional flyers in the areas where youths hang out over several evenings in the week prior to the event. Myland Primary School was supplied with flyers for year 6 children. An article was published in The Evening Gazette and East Anglian Daily Times.

The event took place on a Friday evening on the corner of Mill Rd recreation ground near to the cycle/footpath and road. A burger van agreed to be on site. Young people were asked to complete the questionnaire in return for a meal and drink.

4 Event outcome

43 young people completed questionnaires with only 1 questionnaire spoiled and there was a very high response rate (at least 80%) to all the substantive questions (1 to 14). 29 respondents gave contact details for follow up activities. With 12 adult helpers at the event there was plenty of opportunity to engage in conversation with attendees who seemed mostly very eager to share their views and make suggestions about improvements they would like to see. As figure 1 below shows, the majority of respondents were in the 10 to 13 age bracket. Most came from the immediate vicinity of Mill Rd recreation ground, Defoe Crescent and the new Hakewill development with a few from Boxted Rd and Mile End Rd.

Fig 1.



5 Key Findings of the survey

5.1 In general

Whilst Mill Rd recreation ground and the other significant open space at Fords Lane were identified as a positive aspect of their lives, for most respondents these areas and Mill Rd in particular also cause the most dissatisfaction and concern, due to inadequate facilities, the occurrence of bullying and the poor general quality of the environment (see fig 2 below).

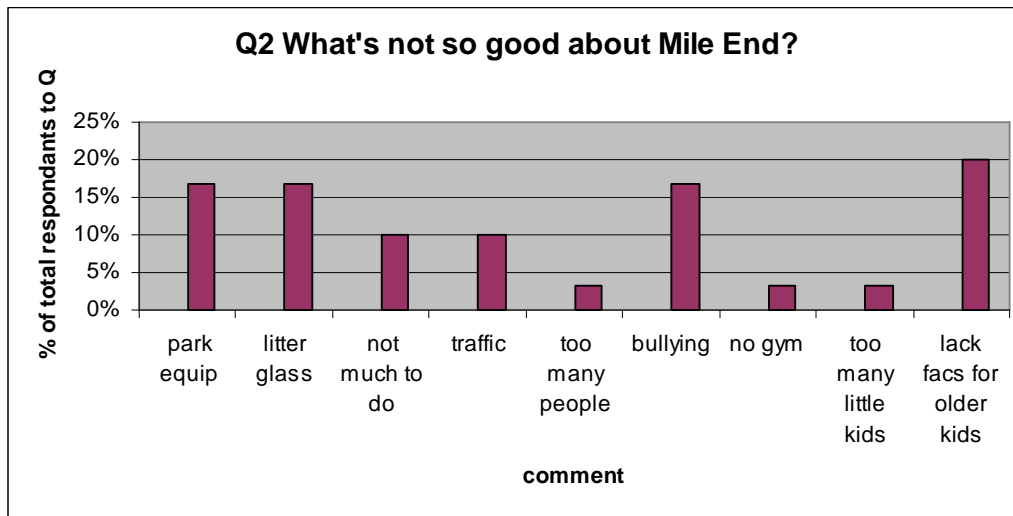
All respondents had something good to say about Mile End but while just over 50% (22 respondents) mentioned play and park spaces other points such as schools, friends, shops and the environment were each raised by only 5 or fewer respondents.

In our survey, Mill Rd recreation ground was the most popular location for hanging out for 80% (32) of respondents to question 13, 'Where do you hang out in Mile End?'. The chip shop was the next most popular (21), Fords Lane recreation ground and Hakewill Way 16 and 15 respectively. 9 said they hung around Squirrels Field and 6 the Bergholt Rd Recreation area. Not surprisingly the main reason given for their choice was to be with friends (32 respondents) and for 28 because that location was near to home. 16 respondents wanted to play sports and 13 said there was nowhere else to go.

While there seemed a generally upbeat attitude, and the turnout of such good numbers at the event in itself clearly a positive thing, adult helpers report being particularly surprised at the level and depth of concern around bullying and anti social and intimidating behaviours experienced by many attendees.

Attendees expressed a wide range of concerns about all aspects of their environment as the graph below shows.

Fig 2.

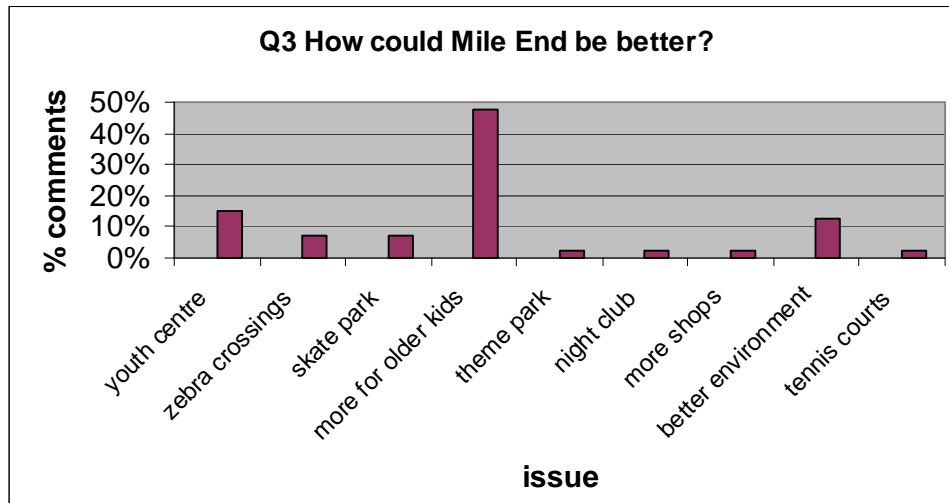


The response to question 10, 'What youth facilities would you like to see at the planned Community Stadium (e.g. wide range of sport, dance/music studio)?' was fed back to the consultants writing the business plan. The three suggested youth activities in the question were all well supported, with over half wanting a wide range of sports provision. Other suggestions included a youth centre and skate and BMX park.

5.2 Play provision/equipment

The most significant and consistent message of the consultation event was that there is completely inadequate provision for 'older' i.e. secondary school age children such as swings for their age group and other appropriate static play equip, activity facilities like basket and netball posts or skateboard and bmx bike ramps. 50% of respondents answering Q3 'How could Mile End be better?', see fig 3, want to have more for older ages in Mile End generally and a similar number want more for this age group specifically on Mill Rd recreation ground.

Fig 3



5.3 Need for structured activities

From a given range of organised activities in question 5 'Please circle any of the following organised activities that you would go to?' 51% (22) of respondents to this question chose football, 44% pc/internet opportunities, 40% dancing, 38% fitness. A third chose boxing. Equal numbers, around 28%, selected health and beauty, DJing, arts and craft and drama.

The question asked for the two favourite activities and football and dance were chosen.

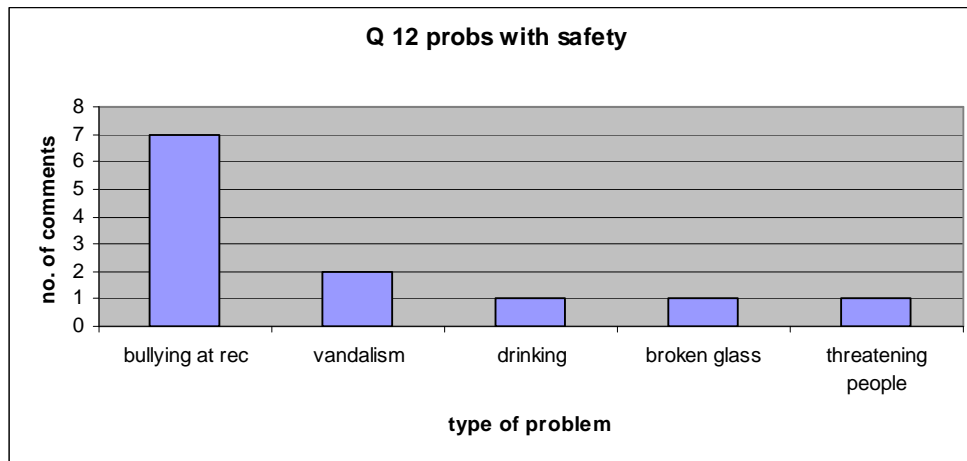
Question 8 asked 'How else could Mill Rd recreation ground be improved?' Several respondents asked for organised, outdoor activities to take place there including more to do in holiday and weekend periods.

5.4 Bullying and anti social behaviour

The survey revealed a high level of concern about bullying, anti social behaviours and generally intimidating behaviour. This was both through written responses to the questionnaire and through conversations at the event. Several short recorded interviews were done with three attendees to provide evidence for a Housing Association bid for funding for a youth community work awards scheme. All expressed concerns about bullying in the area and wanted to do something about it.

In response to Question11 'Do you generally feel safe and comfortable in Mile End?' 28 said 'yes', 9 'no', and 5 'sometimes' meaning over a third of respondents to this question don't feel safe some or most of the time. A third of respondents to question 12, 'If not, why, and where are the problems?' see fig 4, cited the Mill Rd recreation ground. Specific concerns included problems with older (late teens/twenties) people drinking, broken drinks bottles but most comments were made about bullying behaviours.

Fig4



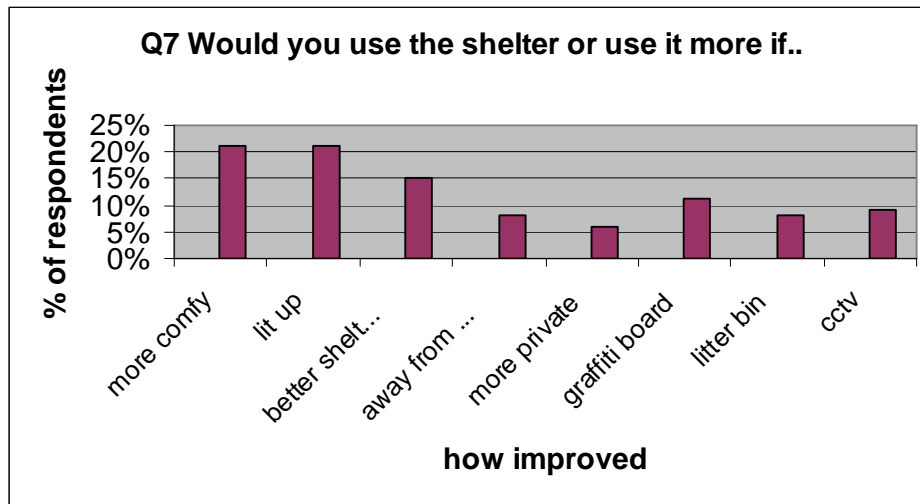
5.5 Provision on Mill Rd recreation ground

22 young people said they used the 'youth shelter' on Mill Rd recreation ground. A further 15 also gave ideas about how to improve this particular aspect of youth provision, implying that many more would be interested to use this facility.

In question 7 'Would you use it [the youth shelter] or use it more if it was: ', followed by a list of possible improvements, almost 80% (28 respondents) want a more comfortable youth shelter on the recreation ground (see fig 5) i.e. one that is better designed and suited to its purpose and the same number also want some lighting. 20 respondents ask for it to be better sheltered from the elements. 11 wish for it to be sited away from the young children's play area and to have a litter bin to hand. 15 would like the inclusion of a graffiti board.

The top two requested non-organised activities from the list provided in question 4, 'Which of the following (outdoor, unsupervised activities) would you like to see more of in Mile End?', which could typically occur in a location such as Mill Rd recreation ground, were **sports** such as basket or net ball posts, bmx and skate ramps and **youth shelters**. The list offered: 'youth shelters, seating, sports, swings, other'.

Fig5



5.6 Safer, better environment

There is a clear need for an improved environment and safer roads. Over 15% of respondents to Question 2, 'What's not so good about Mile End?', made comments about the amount of litter and broken glass around Mile End generally and a similar percentage called for environmental improvements to Mill Rd Rec.

Road safety was a concern for several participants who expressed a need for safer road crossings such as zebra crossings, and more cycle lanes

15% of respondents to question 8 which asked about improvements to Mill Rd recreation ground referred to safety issues and called for better lighting and a greater police presence.

6 Recommendations (Action Plan for delivery see section 8)

a) Mill Rd recreation ground should be improved with a range of play equipment for children aged 10+ as a matter of urgency. This should include:

- A well designed fit for purpose youth shelter
- Swings and other play equipment for ages 10+
- A basketball/netball post

b) A range of activities should be provided in the locality, both indoor and outdoor provision, particularly at key periods such as school holidays, weekends.

c) Young people and those groups working to improve the quality of life for young people should be supported to have a voice in the planning and delivery of this provision and in the broader regeneration of Mile End.

7 Conclusion

Residents aged 10 to 16 are particularly vulnerable in this community. Mile End is growing at an enormous rate with no associated social infrastructural development. With very little to do, severely limited safe spaces to congregate and no clubs or activities targeted at their age groups (for those not wishing, or able due to waiting lists, to attend guides or scouts) this situation will contribute to increased frustration and disillusionment. The pressure on young people is severe and will inevitably lead to increased problems.

It was clear to the working group who met with the participants at the consultation event that they are desperate for activities and an environment that they can engage with in a positive way. Young people in Mile End clearly want to live in a pleasant, safe and vibrant community and furthermore many agreed they would like to help make things happen.

8 Action table for delivery of recommendations

Target	Lead & Key partners	Key steps	Timescale	Outcomes
a) Mill Rd recreation ground should be improved with a range of play equipment for children aged 10+ as a matter of urgency				
Equipment for Mill Rd recreation ground for ages 10+	Community Action in Mile End (CAM) CBC Parks & Recreation + support from key local organisations (MPC, MCA, Churches Police, RSLs)	Prioritise youths wish list Apply for funds	2007	Improved youth equipment/facilities at Mill Rd recreation ground for ages 10+ Reduced anti social behaviour
b) A range of activities should be provided in the Mile End area, both indoor and outdoor provision				
Create a part-time role for a Youth Project Worker (YPW) for Mile End	CAM + support from key organisations	Define role of YPW Agree employer & support structure Secure funding Consider how to sustain post	Post holder start Summer 07	Youth Project Worker for area Activities for young people set up Less anti social behaviour
c) Young people and those working to improve the quality of life for young people should be supported to have a voice in the planning and delivery of this provision and in the broader regeneration of Mile End				
Set up the Mile End Youth Group	CAM + Key organisations	Support youth group to meet regularly Agree targets & actions Gain resident involvement	Started Oct 06	Active youth group for area Start to address needs Gain local support Young people actively engaged Less anti social behaviour
Create a Youth Council for Mile End/Myland	Myland Parish Council (MPC) Youth Project Worker CAM	MPC create youth portfolio Research best practice in setting up and sustaining a Youth Council	Youth Council hold first meeting Autumn 07	Youth Council for Mile End Young people have a say about issues in their community

Establish clear communication channels between community groups and the Development Team (This team decide Section 106 priorities – developer contributions spent on capital projects)	CAM CBC (Bridget Tighe, Matt Sterling)	Agree a simple guide for communities to Section 106 Create template for community groups to submit capital projects outline to BT & MS	Feb 07	Community groups build relationship with Dev Team via contact with BT/MS Dev Team better informed & up to date on local needs Community optimise chance to gain match funding for 106 amounts
Explore intended future provision from statutory organisations so we can work together to meet the needs of young people	CAM MPC, MCA, Churches	Approach following organisations: ECC: Essex Youth Services Education, Extended Schools, Childrens Centre CBC: Parks Leisure Enterprise & Communities Registered Social Landlords	Mar 07	Clear understanding of planned youth provision Better shared understanding of local needs Improved opportunity for partnerships to deliver where appropriate Avoid duplication of effort
Establish communication network with regeneration partners and the community	CAM CBC Planning, Parks, Bridget Tighe	First group meeting, invite key community organisations	Feb 07	Provision reflects needs of young people in the community

MCA Myland Community Association, **MPC** Myland Parish Council, **RSL** Registered Social Landlord

Appendix a

HAVE YOUR SAY ON MILE END

15th September 2006

- 1 What's good about Mile End?
- 2 What's not so good about Mile End?
- 3 How could it be better?
- 4 Which of the following (outdoor, unsupervised activities) would you like to see more of in Mile End?
 - More covered areas with lighting & seating e.g. 'youth pod'
 - More benches and seating in open areas
 - More sports facilities eg basketball, skateboard/BMX ramps
 - More swings/play equipment
 - Other, please state:

What are your top 2 preferences?
- 5 Please circle any of the following organised activities that you would go to:

Football	boxing	dancing	fitness
health and beauty	DJing	arts/crafts	drama
PC/internet access			
Other, please state:			

What are your top 2 choices of activities?
- 6 Do you use the youth shelter on the Mill Rd Rec?
- 7 Would you use it or use it more if it was:

more comfortable	lit up at night	better sheltered from weather
away from young children's play area	it offered more privacy	
had a graffiti board	there was a litter bin	had CCTV
Other, please state:		
- 8 How else could Mill Rd Rec be improved?
- 9 How many evenings do you hang out on Mill Rd Rec?

- 10 What youth facilities would you like to see at the planned Community Stadium? (eg wide range of sport, dance/ music studio)
- 11 Do you generally feel safe and comfortable in Mile End?
- 12 If not, why, and where are the problems?
- 13 Please tick all the places you hang out in Mile End
- Mill Rd Rec
 - Bergholt Rd Rec
 - Hakewill Way
 - Mile End Rec, Fords Lane
 - Chip Shop
 - Squirrels Field
 - Other, please state:
- 14 Why do you go there?
- Hang out with friends
 - Play sports
 - Meet new friends
 - Near to home
 - Provides facilities (eg benches, lighting)
 - Nowhere else to hang out
- 15 If you might be able to get involved in helping to make things happen please give your contact details below:

NAME:

ADDRESS:

- 16 If yes to Q 15, do you have any particular abilities you could offer, e.g. designing posters, talking to people and getting ideas across, planning and organising things, writing letters, helping raising funds, IT skills – excel, PowerPoint ?
- 17 Age
- 18 Living Area (Street name or name area known as)

THANK YOU - ENJOY YOUR FREE MEAL !