

Greenspace & Us Part 2

A community insights co-production project with teenage girls to understand their needs for more inclusive and accessible greenspace

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Foreword

Natural England commissions a range of reports from external contractors to provide evidence and advice to assist us in delivering our duties. The views in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of Natural England.

This report was commissioned by Natural England to further knowledge and understanding through co-production and participatory approaches around improving equitable access to greenspace and recreation opportunities for girls and young women. Oxfordshire County Council was commissioned by Natural England to understand the factors influencing recreation and access to greenspace for young women in East Oxford and to discover what facilities and design changes would make greenspaces more attractive for them.

The work was undertaken in collaboration with Oxford City Council to provide input into future inclusive design of green and recreational space, building on their Thriving Communities strategy framework of doing things with people, not to them and ensuring inclusivity, and working towards the aims of fostering a sense of belonging and providing a range of different opportunities to be active.

The format of the workshops drew on existing youth work and arts networks in the city for delivery, as well as learnings from previous engagement work done by Make Space for Girls.

This final report presents an assessment of the impact of the initial Greenspace & Us project (Cole at al., 2023- hereby referred to as Greenspace & Us Part 1) and the shelter designed by the young women, for young women. The report also explores further engagement with the same cohort of young women to discover more information through co-design participatory and creative methodologies. These specifically explore teenage girls use and need for greenspace, including the barriers to accessing nature, what facilities and infrastructure would encourage teenage girls to feel comfortable engaging, accessing, and recreating in greenspace more often. The report also outlines recommendations for how more inclusive access to greenspaces could be achieved, as well as a model for developing a methodology to engage with young women and girls for future initiatives.

Executive summary

Access to greenspace and nature is important for the physical and mental health and wellbeing of young people. There is an increasing recognition that teenage girls and young women face a number of barriers which prevent them accessing greenspace. They are less physically active than their male counterparts and are at particularly high risk of poor mental wellbeing, and face significantly higher safety fears accessing the outdoors compared to men.

Greenspace & Us Part 2 builds on previous engagement with teenage girls in East Oxford to understand teenage girls' needs for more inclusive opportunities and facilities creating more accessible greenspace.

The project consisted of a series of five workshops, whose structure and format were also partly co-designed with the participants. The sessions had a number of outputs, including this report, a zine produced by the participants and designs for a space in Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground which were presented on a presentation day (Figure 1).

The sessions revealed how the participants currently felt marginalised within the greenspaces which existed in their local area, specifically around age, gender, ethnicity, and the influences of gentrification. However, they demonstrated that engagement and co-design can produce different options for greenspaces which are more likely to appeal to teenage girls, and how the act of engagement itself resulted in the girls having a greater sense of ownership over the space.

Key findings were:

- The young women felt that the urban greenspace provided in their local area was not designed with them in mind.
- The facilities provided were not what they wanted from parks and other greenspace.
- A sense of disapproval from other greenspace users was an important additional barrier to access.
- Infrastructure such as lighting, toilets and water fountains was important to them.
- The shelter built by the Greenspace & Us Part 1 project was very successful both in providing a facility that they wanted to use and in giving them a sense of ownership over the space.
- Access to nature (plants and animals) within green and blue spaces was very important to the participants but it was not something provided by their local greenspace.
- The young women were able to identify and design a wide range of facilities which would encourage them to use greenspace.
- They created a collaborative design for the Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground which included many of these ideas.

- The extended co-production workshop process was an effective way of engaging girls with the issue and giving them space to develop their own ideas and solutions.

The following aspects of the co-production and design were particularly important to the success of the project and would be beneficial to incorporate in future initiatives.

- **Familiarity:** Having an introductory 'getting to know each other' workshop and working with a group who had been together some time and had existing relationships with each other made open discussion and collaboration easier.
- **Community knowledge:** Facilitators with knowledge of the young women and the area (in this case from Name It Youth Project) who could provide additional insight also created a safe and open space for the work.
- **Representation:** Ensuring that the project provided facilitators who were relatable role models for the participants was important.
- **Freedom of time:** The structure of having five four-hour workshops over seven weeks allowed the group freedom to follow areas of particular interest and additional time to continue working on their outputs and discussions, if desired. This gave time for ideas and insight to develop, creating better and more inclusive designs but also more insight into how the young women saw greenspace and what they wanted from it. The girls appreciated this and felt that they had the space to develop their thoughts.
- **Creativity:** The incorporation of a range of different creative methods gave the young women the chance to find different ways of expressing their desires and thoughts about greenspace and allowed for different participants to express their ideas in the way which best suited them.
- **Specialist skills:** The inclusion of facilitators with art training who could help the young women realise their ideas as they wished helped them to develop their ideas.
- **Co-design:** Using this for the workshop process itself as well as the outputs meant that the participants felt like equal members of the project.



Figure 1 Greenspace & Us logo created for presentation in Cowley Marsh Park by Nor Public Art and photographed by Reuben Worlledge. © Greenspace & Us 2 and Reuben Worlledge

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Introduction

Parks connect us to nature in our towns, cities, and local neighbourhoods and over 70% of the UK population live within 1km (15-minute walk) of a public park (Natural England, 2019; Office for National Statistics, 2020). The Greenspace & Us Part 2 research has taken place as a result of the increasing recognition that, at present, teenage girls are not well served by facilities in parks and other public greenspaces. Where provision is made for teenagers, these are usually skateparks, multi-use games areas (MUGAs), basketball courts and BMX tracks. All these spaces tend to be dominated by teenage boys (Make Space for Girls, 2023) and girls do not feel comfortable or safe using them (Barker, 2022). In addition, teenage boys will often form the majority of users on formal pitches for football or cricket where these are provided (see Appendix 3). Girls do not have equivalent public spaces which they feel comfortable using, and so tend to feel 'designed out' of greenspaces (Girlguiding 2020; Plan International UK, 2020; Yorkshire Sport, 2022).

Public greenspaces should serve the whole community; however, currently, the needs of girls and young women are rarely considered (Theocharides-Feldman, 2022) or provided for (Make Space for Girls, 2023). Girls and young women have a right to be in public space and so to feel part of the wider community and the current imbalance in provision is potentially a breach of the Equality Act 2010 (Government Equalities Office, 2013; Make Space for Girls, 2023). All children under 18 have a right to play under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Department of Education, 2010), but there is currently almost no formal provision for play for teenage girls.

The absence of facilities also has a health impact. By age 13, only 8% of girls are meeting activity guidelines (Women in Sport, 2017), but this issue is rarely connected with a lack of facilities in greenspaces designed with their needs in mind. There is also a considerable potential impact on the mental health of girls and young women. A recent literature review has underlined that access to greenspace for even a small amount of time per week has a beneficial impact on mood and mental wellbeing for young people (Bray, 2022). Given that teenage girls have a much higher incidence of psychological distress, anxiety, and poor mental wellbeing than boys (Office for Health Improvement & Disparities, 2022), improved access to greenspace has the potential to be a positive intervention.

The process of understanding and altering this disadvantage is still at a relatively early stage. Surveys and workshops (Yorkshire Sport, 2022; King et al., 2022) have begun to identify both the barriers and issues with existing greenspace, and some small-scale co-production projects have taken place, including Greenspace & Us Part 1. For this, Natural England had previously worked with the Name It Youth Project, Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford City Council, RESOLVE Collective and Fig Studio. The project combined a survey and participatory workshops which resulted in the building of a wooden shelter (Figure 2) in Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground to the design of the participants, along with the creation of a 'Greenspace & Us' manifesto.



Figure 2: Shelter built in Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground, co-designed by participants in Greenspace & Us Part 1 with Resolve Collective and built by Toffee Hammer Carpentry. © Greenspace & Us 2 and Reuben Worlledge

However, there are still gaps in the knowledge around creating more inclusive and accessible greenspaces for teenage girls. Therefore, Natural England and its partners felt there was considerable benefit in building on this project and working with the same cohort. The objectives were to assess the impact of the first workshops and the shelter, to discover more specific information about the girls' use and need for greenspace, to identify the barriers to accessing nature, to expand on what facilities would encourage young women to be comfortable using outdoor spaces more often and how they would imagine a more inclusive greenspace, and to develop a model for this kind of co-production.

Project Outline

Aims

Greenspace & Us Part 2 was set up to build on the findings of the first project, Greenspace & Us Part 1, which took place in 2022. The aim was to work further with a group of young women who had, predominantly, participated in the first series of workshops and so were already engaged in the ideas of access to greenspace.

The aims were to create further learnings from Greenspace & Us Part 1, in particular to assess the impact of the shelter on the young women's experience of greenspace locally. Further work would enlarge understanding of how they experienced nature and greenspaces in their area, and the practical goal would be to co-design a space for girls and young women in a second area of Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground.

Specific intentions included:

- To gather more detailed information about how the young women, who were predominantly from minoritised ethnic backgrounds, used parks and other greenspaces in the area and how they felt about them.
- To understand whether the shelter and/or the experience of building it had changed how the participants felt about Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground.
- To work with the young women to co-design facilities for a space in Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground with a wider brief than the first project, and to ascertain what would make the park more attractive, inclusive, and accessible for them.
- To gather more general information about what they would like to find in parks and public greenspaces which could be used in further developments elsewhere.
- To learn from the co-production and engagement techniques used in the first project and improve on them so that these could be disseminated and used more widely for projects elsewhere.
- To showcase the young women's vision for the redesigned space via an on-site presentation, visual mock-ups, and illustrations.
- To use the report, visual materials, and presentation to amplify the voices of the young women and influence decision-makers to support the implementation of their ideas in Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground and beyond.

Participants

The participants were 13 young women aged between 11 and 16, who attend the Name It Youth Project at the Barracks Lane Community Garden.

Most of the girls were from families who received free school meals, and the majority of the group were from minoritised ethnic groups, predominantly British Pakistani (Table 1).

Table 1: Ethnic background of participants

Ethnic background	Number
British Pakistani	6
British white	3
Mixed white/ Pakistani	1
British Albanian	1
British African	1
British Mixed race	1

The girls were remunerated for their time and inconvenience taking part in Greenspace & Us Part 2 in line with Oxfordshire County Council's policy on expenses reimbursement and payment for project involvement.

Project Development

Structure

As for Greenspace & Us Part 1, Greenspace & Us Part 2 was funded by Natural England, with support from Oxfordshire County Council and Oxford City Council and was organised and delivered by the Name It Youth Project (Oxford Youth Enterprise). Make Space for Girls and public realm creative artist Nor Greenhalgh were introduced as additional partners for these workshops.

The project consisted of five three-hour afternoon workshops, the content of which was developed in conjunction with the participants as part of the information gathering and co-design process.

The sessions, like Greenspace & Us Part 1, were conducted exclusively for young women and were facilitated by female staff members from Name It and the partner organisations.

Project design

The design of the co-production process incorporated feedback and learning from two separate sources.

Most of the girls had been participants in Greenspace & Us Part 1, and their feedback was important in shaping the sessions. They wanted:

- To be part of the session design.
- An introductory workshop with no formal content to allow them to get to know the new facilitators.
- A more organic format which would allow them to focus on particular aspects of the project if they wanted (e.g., some participants continued with their park designs even after the session had formally finished).
- Fewer activities in each session, also facilitating the above.
- To go to the park often and be outside where possible.
- Not much writing, and for the sessions to be “less like school”.
- Present the results to decision makers.

Make Space for Girls’ previous experience in engagement work with teenage girls and other precedents (King et al., 2022, Seims et al., 2022) also led to the following aspects being incorporated into the workshop design:

- The importance of a series of sessions, allowing space for the girls to develop both their designs but also their ideas about the place of greenspace in their lives.
- Collaging as a creative way of imagining spaces which is accessible to all participants.

- The introduction of a facilitator with experience in both architecture and theory, but who was a young woman from a minoritised ethnic background, and so was a relatable role model for the participants. This also built on the experience of Greenspace & Us Part 1.

The model-making and site visits were part of Greenspace & Us Part 1, but also strongly supported by both the artist and Make Space for Girls.

The partnership with the Name It Youth Project was also essential because their existing relationships with the participants, and the strong bond which they had created within the group, created a space in which the participants could relax but also engage fully with the workshop programme. In addition, their knowledge of both the girls and the area provided valuable insight and background, bringing an added depth to the findings.

Also crucial to the success of the workshops was that the project provided a female only space which permitted the girls to be open and honest about the barriers they found in space and to express their feelings fully. Through active listening and open dialogue, and with the support of the youth workers, the cohort developed a non-judgmental space where all ideas are welcome and could be further explored.

Ethics

Project development and methodology was assessed and approved against Natural England's internal ethics review checklist. All workshop participants and their parents/guardians were provided with a participant information sheet clearly outlining background and aims of the project, activities they would be contributing to, and any identified risks associated with participation. Once they were happy with this information, all workshop participants aged 16 and a parent/guardian of those aged under 16 years signed an informed consent form, and all workshop participants under 16 years signed an assent form (Appendix 4). Participation was voluntary and all participants were free to withdraw from the project at any time without needing to provide reason or justification. Data collected as part of the project is held in strict accordance with UK GDPR regulations and Oxfordshire County Council data processing policy. Quotations included in this report are all anonymised and any use of names and photos is with written consent of participants and guardians.

Project methods

The methods chosen consisted of:

- Co-design of workshops
- Participatory workshops
- Creative outputs
- Review of local greenspace

Co-design of workshops

The initial project design consisted of four four-hour workshops held over four consecutive Saturday afternoons (see Appendix 2 for further information).

After feedback from the girls and some experimentation in the first two sessions, the workshop structure that was settled on consisted of shared food, a two-to-three-hour session of creative exercises and discussions, followed by a discussion and reflection on what had taken place.

This structure was chosen for several reasons. Feedback from Greenspace & Us Part 1 was that the sessions had been very full of content, and the young women wanted more time on each part of the project to prevent the sessions feeling “regimented” and “like school”. In addition, they also wanted to be more involved in shaping the content of the project, so key decisions – such as whether additional experts would be invited as facilitators for further sessions and who they might be – were discussed in each workshop.

A positive piece of learning from Greenspace & Us Part 1 with primarily the same cohort was that both the participants and the youth workers felt that sharing food was an important aspect of bringing the group together. Initially, the food was scheduled for the middle of the session, but this proved to disrupt the flow of the work and it was found best to open with the food, allowing time for natural conversation about the previous week and what was coming up, and then to move to the scheduled part of the workshop.

Participatory workshops

The workshops were facilitated by project workers from Name It Youth Project, Oxford City Council and Make Space for Girls, and Nor Greenhalgh, a community artist whose brief was to facilitate the production of both a design for the space and a manifesto of the girls’ designs and broader ideas.

Data collection was mostly through observation and discussion during a range of participatory exercises, including mapping, area walks, collaging, model making and design. The goal was to allow conversations and research to unfold alongside and as part of the creative process. This decision came partly from the working practices which Make

Space for Girls have developed to engage with teenage girls, but also as a result of feedback from the participants in Greenspace & Us Part 1.

Survey of greenspace

In addition to the workshops, a survey was undertaken of the greenspaces in the local area to look at the kinds of provision available to the girls and so better understand the choices they were making around greenspaces and access to nature (see Table 2 for a summary and Appendix 1 for additional information).

The starting point for this was the mapping exercise done in Workshop 1, which had showed that the young women predominantly used outdoor spaces in an area bounded by the river, the ring road and the London Road.

All the park spaces in this area were listed and the Oxford City Council website was used to identify what facilities they contained which might be aimed at or used by teenagers – generally MUGAs, pitches and skateparks – and what other facilities were present.

Table 2: Summary of local greenspace

Park	Facilities
Barns Road	Pitch BMX track Play equipment for younger children
Barns Road	Pitch BMX track Play equipment for younger children
Bartholemew Road	Pitch Play equipment for younger children
Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground	Pitches (bookable online) Basketball court Tennis courts Outdoor gym equipment Shelter Play equipment for younger children
Donnington Recreation Ground	Pitches (bookable online)
Florence Park	Play equipment for younger children Tennis courts Miniature golf
Hollow Way/Horspath Road	Pitch Play equipment for younger children

Park	Facilities
Hundred Acre Park	MUGA Basketball court Table tennis table Play equipment for younger children
Meadow Lane	Pitch Skate park Play equipment for younger children
Rose Hill Recreation Ground	Pitches Play equipment for younger children
South Park and Headington Hill Park	Walking paths Outdoor gym equipment Play equipment for younger children
Valentia Park	Pitch Zip wire Play equipment for younger children

This information was used both to add further understanding to our discussions with the participants and youth workers, and to ascertain what facilities were available for the young women in what they saw as their local area.

Creative outputs

The sessions led to two creative outputs. Firstly, a collaborative design in the form of a built model prototype for a currently empty fenced area in Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground. Secondly, an illustrated printed summary of the girls' thoughts and designs in the form of a zine (a small magazine written by people who are interested rather than by professional journalists) explaining the young women's thoughts and ideas for the space. Both the design and zine were presented to councillors, local authority representatives, community groups and other interested parties by the workshop participants at an event in the park in June 2023.

Findings

Participatory workshops

Workshop 0

This was held two weeks before the formal start of the project and was added to the programme at the request of the girls and the youth workers, and as part of the learnings from Greenspace & Us Part 1. This allowed the participants to get to know the project workers and also gave the young women an opportunity to co-design the project and express their ideas about what they wanted to do.

As a first step, name games and trust exercises were used to allow the participants and the new facilitators to get to know each other. This was followed by a review exercise where the participants and facilitators wrote down their thoughts on Greenspace & Us Part 1 and their hopes for the Greenspace & Us Part 2 workshops on post it notes (see Figure 3 and Table 3). These were collected in a box and the girls and facilitators picked notes at random to read out to ensure that participants did not feel self-conscious about expressing their honest thoughts.

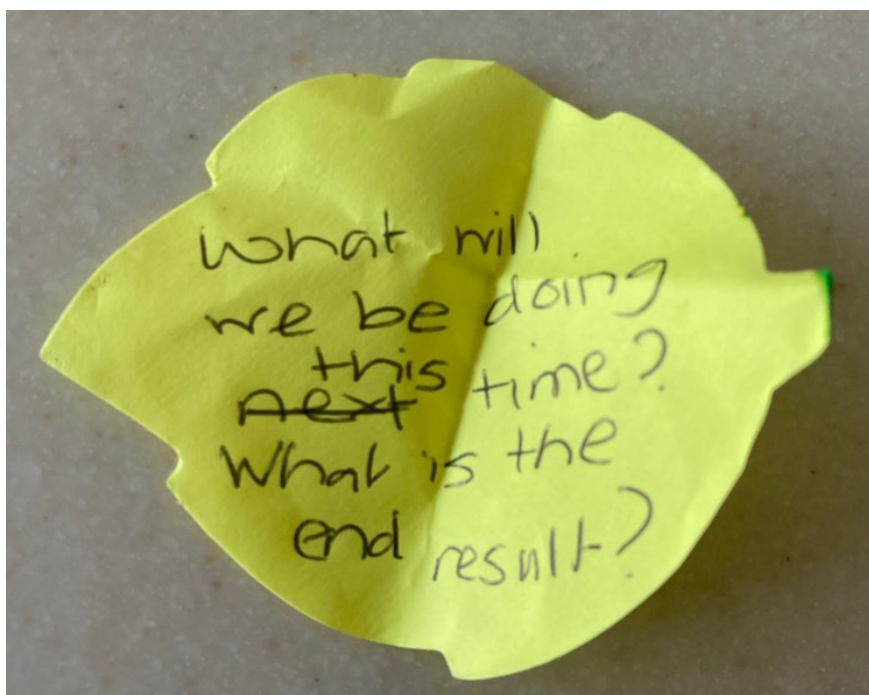


Figure 3: Post it note written as part of feedback session in initial workshop.
© Greenspace & Us 2

Table 3: Responses to the previous project and hopes for the new workshops

Tone	Comments
Positive	“Part one made me feel happy to get out my house” “It also seems very fun and I like it so far” “Phase 2 seems like it will be very fun and it looks promising” “Phase one the outcome was great” “I feel good, the first project was fun, good and creative. I wanna feel the same way” “I hope we make something really exciting” “The 2 nd part will be FUN (hopefully)” “I feel very excited. I hope the second project will be fun” “Project 1 made me feel happy and involved”
Neutral	“A park” “What will we be doing this time? What is the end result?” “I would like to work on the park hopefully for older kids” “The first project was OK. Awkward at the start but it got better” “I want a park for older girls to be created”
Feedback	“Perhaps less writing, more exploring” “I think people should be assigned to do things” “First project was good but I would say too much writing and not actually doing” “Want young women to plan their sessions” “Children to speak and have more time to do things”
Negative	“It takes up half my day though” “I didn’t like being rushed in Part 1” “I hope no schedule and people bossing me around like p1”

Workshop 1

A number of the girls were away for this workshop because it coincided with the end of half term. However, this did enable us to have in-depth conversations with the smaller number of young women who did attend.

The workshop consisted of two main parts. The first was a mapping exercise to understand how the young women used parks and their mobility around the area. They placed dots on a large-scale map to indicate spaces they liked as well as those which were less appealing or where they did not feel safe – this was often linked to a lack of lighting on winter evenings. These were augmented by comments on the map (Figure 4a).

The girls placed blue dots on their homes. The others represented their opinion as shown in Table 4. The positive green zones and comments focused on themes of nature,

belonging, and safety, in contrast to the neutral and red zones where the comments were around darkness and inaccessible space.



Figure 4a: Close up of stickers on large scale map of area around Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground annotated by participants as part of Workshop 1. © Greenspace & Us 2



Figure 4b: Map of Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground and immediate surrounding area © OpenStreetMap contributors

Table 4: Mapping Exercise

Marker	Comments
Green: positive	<p>The Greenspace & Us shelter: Cowley Marsh recreation ground All the participants agreed on this and it was the first space they chose due to their feelings of ownership and belonging.</p>
	<p>Boundary Brook This natural area was marked out as ‘peaceful’</p>
	<p>South Park In conversation, this was seen as good because it had lots of trees and natural grass rather than only pitches and a walking path.</p>
	<p>Valentia Park One participant singled this out because it was small, had zipwires and was close to her home.</p>
	<p>Meadow Lane Skate Park The oldest participant noted this as a place where she could hang out with her friends even though she did not skateboard herself. However, she also noted the potential for anti-social behaviour.</p>
	<p>Barracks Lane Community Garden Home of Name It Youth Project and singled out as a good place with heart-shaped stickers.</p>
	<p>Iffley Lock “Lights, ducks, nature” Further conversation revealed this was only used in the summer.</p>
	<p>Rose Hill Recreation Ground “Lighting” The park here is situated very close to a well-used community centre with lighting that makes them feel safe.</p>
	<p>Oxford Golf Club This was marked positive due to the greenspace but also marked neutrally with the comment “angry golfers”</p>
	<p>Vue Cinema / Football Club This is outside the main area that most of the girls used, but was marked by the oldest participant (who travelled further to see her friends) as “crazy humans, football” and was a place where she met people.</p>
Yellow: neutral	<p>St Gregory’s School</p>
	<p>Cowley Shopping Centre – outside the kebab shop</p>
	<p>Oxford Golf Club “angry golfers”</p>
Red: negative	<p>Area around University Centre for Sport and Cheney School. “Lots of space for sport, not hanging out”</p>
	<p>Churchyard of St Mary and St John (used as cut-through) “rats”</p>

Marker	Comments
	The Kidneys (natural area behind Meadow Lane Park) "it's dark"
	Elder Stubbs allotments (another cut-through) "Dark"

Following this, the young women and facilitators visited a range of local greenspaces in the area, including Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground (Figure 4b), Lye Valley Nature reserve and the Boundary Brook path.

The girls had been given Polaroid cameras, along with flags and chalkboards which they used as props for their photographs, enabling them to express their views about the spaces (see Figure 5a, Figure 5b, Figure 5c, Figure 5d).

The group then returned to the community garden and discussed some of the issues which had come up as they explored the different green spaces.



Figure 5a: Young women participants on a swing set in Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground from walk in Workshop 1. © Nor Public Art and Greenspace & Us 2



Figure 5b: Flag props from walk in Workshop 1. © Nor Public Art and Greenspace & Us 2

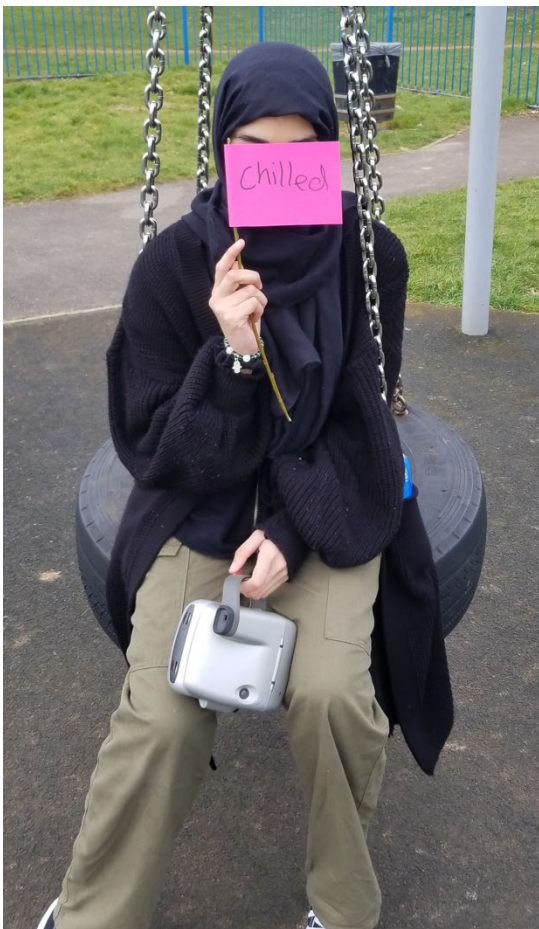


Figure 5c: Young woman in Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground from walk in Workshop 1 with flag prop “chilled”. © Nor Public Art and Greenspace & Us 2



Figure 5d: Young women using flag props and polaroid cameras from walk in Workshop 1. © Nor Public Art and Greenspace & Us 2



Figure 5e: Examples of outputs and observations from walk in Workshop 1. © Nor Public Art and Greenspace & Us 2

Workshop 2

Following the reflections from the first workshop, participants were asked to design their ideal park in this workshop using their imagination and a range of collaging materials.

The girls worked with printouts of natural features, textures, and words along with a range of inspiring park facilities, as well as pens and other drawing materials for developing their own creative ideas. There were no restrictions to the task – the young women were free to choose how and where they wanted to design their space.

- The intention was to develop an understanding of the vision young women have of their ideal space and encourage participants to start a conversation about what they considered important within a greenspace.
- As girls and young women have little experience of facilities and spaces designed for them, it was important both to provide them with a wide range of stimulus images and design precedents, and to make this initial exercise as wide-ranging and open as possible to allow them space to develop their ideas.
- The exercise was also used to reflect and provide feedback on their current use and impressions of Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground (Figure 4b).

The participants used a wide range of images from the printouts and augmented them with both drawings of facilities and descriptions of how they would like a space to appear or feel (Figure 6a, Figure 6b, Figure 6c).



Figure 6a: Example of collages with images of relaxing and fun facilities produced in Workshop 2 © Greenspace & Us 2



Figure 8b: Example of collages featuring lots of greenery and plants produced in Workshop 2 © Greenspace & Us 2



Figure 9c: Example of collages featuring positive words such as “safe”, “calm”, “welcoming” produced in Workshop 2 © Greenspace & Us 2

The collages featured a wide range of potential facilities, spaces and designs; some were quite general while others were very specific, e.g. “A bench with LED lights and a bush in the middle”.

However, some key ideas recurred in the collages:

- The importance of providing a range of different spaces, some more active than others.
- Safety was key for many participants and lighting was seen as an important part of this.
- A desire for mature trees and a diverse natural space of flowers and planting.
- Swings and hammocks and comfortable seating.
- Water features as spaces to interact with nature.

Workshop 3

The aim of this workshop was to challenge participants in thinking spatially about the designs they produced through making three-dimensional models. Participants could also suggest a different layout or reconsider some of the components from the previous iterations. The workshop was held outside to provide an opportunity to be influenced by the natural surroundings.

A range of model-making materials were supplied, including papier mache, cardboard, foam and cork boards, and many of the participants supplemented these with natural materials that they found in the garden (Figure 7a). Participants were encouraged to consider the scale of a person in their design and to think of creative ways people could interact with the design, as well as the potential that the three-dimensional form allowed for the creation of hidden and public spaces (Figure 7b and Figure 7c).



Figure 7a: Outdoor model-making in Workshop 3, using collages as inspiration. © Greenspace & Us



Figure 10b: A finished model in Workshop 3, using collages as inspiration. © Greenspace & Us 2

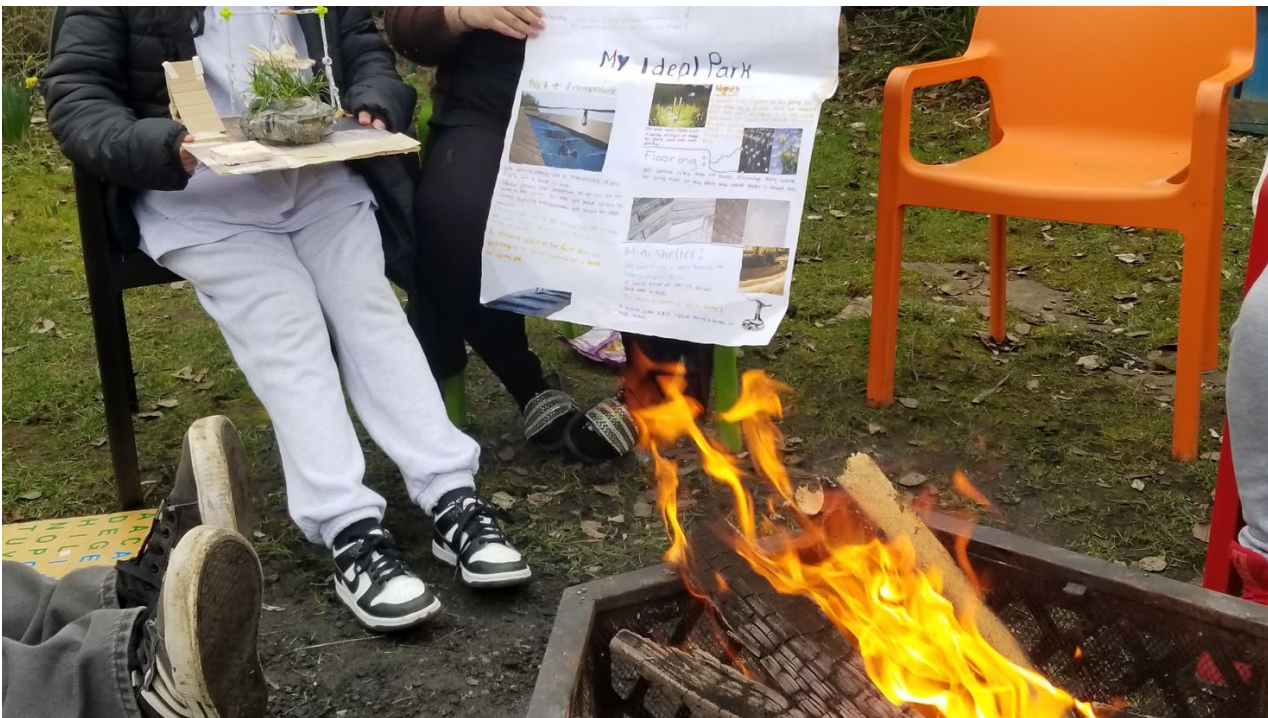


Figure 11c: Participants showcasing model and collages by outdoor fire in Workshop 3. © Greenspace & Us 2

The participants mostly opted to work in groups and to elaborate on ideas that they had begun to develop in the collage sessions. Insights from this session included:

- Using scale to create facilities which suited teenagers and were also distinct from what was provided for younger children.
- The creation of a visually distinctive and interesting space emerged.
- Safety and lighting remained key.
- Providing a range of different spaces was a central idea.
- Shared spaces for picnics and relaxation were also important.
- Nature was designed into many of the spaces, in the form of ponds and planting as habitats for wildlife.

Workshop 4

The aim of the last workshop was to combine ideas from young women in the design of the park and the techniques were designed to capture the group's collective thoughts equitably and create a collective design from them.

Facilitators set up three stations at which participants could rotate in order to provide input to the design, this was useful in gathering common suggestions and ensuring everyone got a chance to input in each area.

Station 1 – Prompted participants to consider colour palettes (Figure 8), and textures for surfaces/ play areas in the park. Working group members discussed with young women how the use of colour can also convey various emotions within a space, such as calm or energy. Colours chosen included pastel greens, blues, pinks, and purples, similar to the colours chosen for the shelter design in Greenspace & Us Part 1.



Figure 12: Example of colour palette for park © Greenspace & Us 2

Station 2 – In this station, participants were asked to arrange the various design elements which they had proposed in the earlier session (i.e., ponds, swings, play areas, lights) onto a scaled site plan of the area within Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground (Figure 9). The images used had been designed from the 3D models created in the previous session. The cohort was also encouraged to think spatially about the treatment of boundaries and edges. In this case, many of the participants formed groups to design the site plan



Figure 13: Final design for park area © Nor Public Art and Greenspace & Us 2

Station 3 – Participants in this station were invited to reflect on how they wanted to communicate the project and their proposals to a wider audience, by drafting text for a zine to be distributed to local decision-makers, alongside illustrations.

Text included areas of interest and the exploratory process and methods they went through during the workshops as well as an outline of their overall design and desires for an inclusive greenspace:

“colourful/ calming nature over taking making the place look nice and relaxing for everyone”.

“we visited the park and explored places we liked and didn’t like.”

“we want any gender to access and any age to feel welcome.”

The findings from the creative outputs are outlined below.

Creative outputs

The design for Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground

There was a collective desire to create a space with a clearly defined entrance to mark a distinct area within Marsh Park which would be theirs and to ensure that nature was reflected throughout the different zones. Many participants mentioned how they wanted their designated area to “feel different” from the rest of the greenspace. The young women marked this by designing a clear entrance with trees and contrasting surfaces on the ground (Figure 10). They also wanted fairy lights, not just for safety but also as an attractive feature which would make the space feel enjoyable and welcoming.



Figure 14: Design for entrance to park area. © Nor Public Art and Greenspace & Us 2

The cohort also designed a winding path that defined multifunctional green and blue spaces and to help separate the different zones within the park while encouraging exploration (Figure 11). It was clear that a range of environments and facilities to cater for different activities and needs was important to the young women. The design included planters used instead of fencing to boarder the area and prevent the feeling of being caged in. In addition, all the participants felt that the

provision of clean toilets in the space was essential, and many suggested that supplying free period products was part of this.

The young women designed five zones in total:

1. Information/ refuge zone: To protect visitors from the elements and encourage social engagement, participants designed a small social shelter located by the entrance of the space for easy access. The shelter could also have charging stations and a board with a map with information on the greenspace to be placed near the entrance to help orientate the visitors and encourage them to explore.

2. Chill Zone: The girls also designed a secluded chill zone among foliage for visitors who wish to unwind. They wanted the area to be covered with hedges and plants, with a tree house that resembles a 3D model one of the participants made in the previous session and picnic benches for social opportunities.

3. Fast-paced playing zone: The cohort created play spaces where faster-paced games could be enjoyed. Inside this area, there is a zip line, slides, and a trampoline intended for people in their age range. Participants also proposed to replace the fenced-off wall with a graffiti-permeable boundary that has a ladder, climbing wall and various spaces to encourage young people to express themselves on the designated area.

4. Shared play zones: The cohort added a shared basket swing and slide modelled in the previous session that allows multiple people to slide and swing at the same time.

5. Water feature area: There was a consensus that young women wanted an element of water within the space. The girls wanted this area to appear natural with diverse flora and fauna, mounds, and green surfaces around. One of the attendees made the point that the water feature needed to be safe and well-maintained to avoid anti-social behaviour.

Overall, through the design, they had seven desires they wanted the space to feel:

1. Safe: We want the park to be safe and hopefully avoid violence, and for people to respect each other. To make people feel comfortable.

2. Fun: We want people to enjoy it and have fun.

3. Different: We want the park to be outstanding and to be different from any other park.

4. Welcoming: We want any gender to access and any age to feel welcome.

5. Free: We want it to be free for everyone to use.

6. Relaxing: We want people to enjoy it and have fun and feel relaxed and to be at peace.

7. Friendly: We want it to be a friendly environment and for everyone to enjoy it and respect one another.

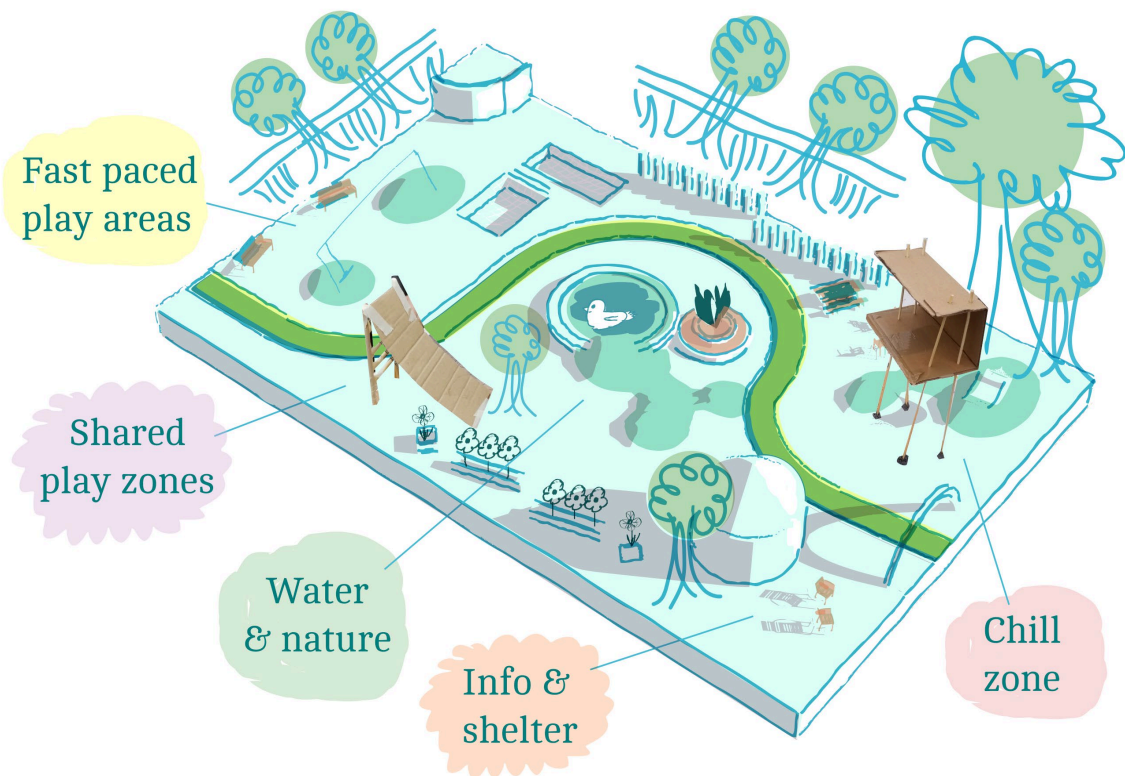


Figure 15: Rendering of park design. © Nor Public Art and Greenspace & Us 2

From the design and brief, a design was produced of the area, which was the used to create a model for the presentation (see below)

Zine

The zine (Figure 12) was co-produced by the participants along with Nor Public Art and Commonbooks (see Appendix 5 for full zine). It used words, images and designs produced by the participants throughout the process.



Figure 12a: Printed zine co-produced by the participants along with Nor Greenhalgh and Commonbooks © Nor Public Art, Commonbooks, Greenspace & Us 2



Figure 12b: Zine co-produced by the participants along with Nor Greenhalgh and Commonbooks available to take away on presentation day © Nor Public Art, Commonbooks, Greenspace & Us 2, Reuben Worlledge

Presentation

The model and zine were presented to an audience at Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground on 10th June 2023, to an audience which included the recently installed Mayor of Oxford, Lubna Arshad as well as other councillors, youth workers, parents and other interesting parties.

As well as displaying the model, a number of the young women gave speeches about why they felt the design was necessary and important (Figure 13a, Figure 13b, Figure 13c).



Figure 17a: Presentation at Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground of model. © Greenspace & Us 2 and Reuben Worlledge



Figure 18b: Visitors and stakeholders listening to presentation with model in front. © Greenspace & Us 2 and Reuben Worlledge



Figure 19c: Mayor of Oxford gives speech in front of model. © Greenspace & Us 2 and Reuben Worledge

Themes

Several key findings came out of the workshops, which cluster around some common themes:

- Suitable provision and facilities
- Disapproval and belonging
- Importance of nature
- Facilities for teenage girls
- Inclusivity and intersectionality

Suitable provision and facilities

A lack of suitable provision was one of the clearest barriers which prevented the girls from accessing local greenspaces. This came through in both the mapping and walking exercises during the workshops as well as through the survey of the area (Figure 14).

One issue is that a significant proportion of the greenspace in the area consists of pitches. One girl, who played football herself nonetheless disliked that “boys were dominating the park when playing football” and she felt “invisible within the space” despite being a footballer. Both the girls and the support staff expressed how difficult it was to use these areas because if someone came along with a booking, or even for a casual game of football, they would feel intimidated and not feel able to remain in the space.

The survey of the area also revealed that the teenage facilities in the local greenspaces consisted of MUGAs, skate parks and a BMX track (see Table 2), all of which are predominantly used by teenage boys (Make Space for Girls, 2022). None of these were mentioned by the girls in the mapping exercise, with the exception of one girl who used the skate park as a place to hang out with her friends but not for activity. The sense of girls not being provided for was further accentuated by the college sports grounds in the area, which are private pitches, so also inaccessible to local residents. One girl noted an area of college pitches and university buildings as “lots of space for sport, not hanging out”.



Figure 20: The basketball court was not seen as a positive facility. © Nor Public Art and Greenspace & Us 2

The preponderance of spaces for activity and sport, which were often dominated by boys or men, over spaces where the girls might socialise, play, relax, read, or engage with nature was a recurrent theme of the design workshops. A general lack of age-appropriate facilities for girls and young women was also highlighted, with the participants wanting more adventurous equipment such as adult slides (more detail is given below). There was also a call for clean toilets or places that offered sanitary products, as well as water fountains.

A further issue which came up repeatedly in the mapping exercise was a lack of lighting, both in Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground and other local spaces. Several places were labelled with red ‘dislike’ dots in the mapping exercise for being dark at night. Safety

concerns were raised around greenspaces which were used as through routes, for example a path near some allotments, as well as Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground. More generally, safety was a consideration which affected their use of greenspace. Often, they highlighted spaces near their home as feeling safe, partly because they were close to family members who could be called on for help, if needed. Lighting for safety was also highlighted by one group in their collage, but with the comment that it should also, “make the park look nice and pretty” and the final design included fairy lights for this reason.

In the mapping exercise, the only park which several of the participants singled out with positive comments was South Park, which notably had no conventional teen provision, but was a large greenspace with “lots of room for everyone” and greater biodiversity including a variety of mature trees and more natural grass. It also had a walking path around its perimeter. Research elsewhere suggests that this is something which can encourage both women and girls to use a space, by providing a route which feels safe and can be easily followed (Derose, 2019, Barker 2022). Another girl also singled out Valentia Park as being good for having a zip wire and being close to her home, demonstrating the importance of both a sense of safety and the provision of facilities suitable for this age group. However, it is notable that many of the local park spaces were not mentioned at all, suggesting that they were not used, nor seen as places which might be either available or welcoming for young women of their age.

As the workshops progressed, the young women became more articulate about how they saw the current space as being gendered and were making comments that “space needs to be equal” and “things are mostly for men, so we decided to make something for us”. As the designs progressed in tandem with this, there was a repeated emphasis that their designs should be something new and “look different from other parks”.

Disapproval and belonging

A further dimension to the young women’s sense of not being included in public space is the feelings of disapproval which they reported in many places. In Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground, it was clear that the young women enjoyed the play space, particularly the swings and climbing frame, when they got the opportunity to play on the site visit there. However, this is demarcated by a fence, and set aside for younger children, so they did not see this as something they could access freely when other people were using it. One participant reported being “frowned at” by adults when they tried to use the space, while another said that she often “bumps into younger children” and is then scolded by their parents. In the collages, one group included a trampoline because it “would be so fun for us teenagers to go on without being told off”.

Disapproval was most clearly manifested during Workshop 1 when the group was walking from Cowley Marsh to Boundary Brook. Access is via a footpath across the golf course. The young women had already reported this as being an uncomfortable space in the mapping exercise because of “angry golfers”. When the group crossed the path, the body language of the golfers, even with adult youth workers and facilitators present, clearly signalled that they did not see this as an appropriate place for the young women to be. In

feedback after the event, the youth workers highlighted the fact that the ethnic factors of the golfers being white and some of the young women wearing hijabs exacerbated their sense of being unwelcome. It is not known whether the golfers had a more negative reaction to women wearing hijabs than to walkers of other ethnicities. However, this sense of being out of place can also take more subtle forms, as is the case with Florence Park where predominance of families with younger children and the lack of facilities for their age combined to create a feeling of the park not being for them. Similarly, they did not feel that they had 'permission' to access the more natural areas around the Lye Valley without the presence of adults.

As the workshops went on, the young women also began to analyse how the design of spaces excluded them – for example the way that the metal shelter next to the basketball court assumes that they will want to sit and watch the people (mostly boys) play basketball. But they also noted that its metal frame construction made it very uncomfortable to sit on if you were a girl, particularly if you were on your period.

They also began to make connections between the disapproval of the golfers with their experiences of the cricket and football pitches and felt that that these sports take up greenspace but are currently predominantly for the benefit of men. This sense of disapproval and being designed out, was a strong disincentive to the use of greenspace.

Importance of nature

The importance of nature to the participants came through clearly in several parts of the project. In the mapping, it was notable that the park which got the most positive comments was South Park, which provided a more natural area of grass with trees in comparison to several of the other parks. Iffley Lock was also singled out as a good place to go in summer for “ducks and nature”.

In the walk around the area, as well as in discussions with the youth workers about previous visits, the girls' enjoyment of natural spaces like Lye Valley Nature Reserve and Boundary Brook was clear, generating the majority of their positive reactions (Figure 15). They labelled these spaces as “beautiful” and “peaceful”, noting very specific features such as “little waterfalls” and “tree roots around the water”, as well as oak trees that they enjoyed climbing. However, they did not feel that these areas were easy to access without adults accompanying them. This was the result of a number of factors: the areas are not signed as being open to the public and have no delineated entrances or signage and so young women did not feel that they had 'permission' to use the spaces. In addition, access to Lye Valley involved clambering over a ditch. However, the biggest barrier to accessing Boundary Brook was the need to use the footpath over the golf course, and the sense of encroaching on an area that was not for them and the sense of disapproval that this entailed.

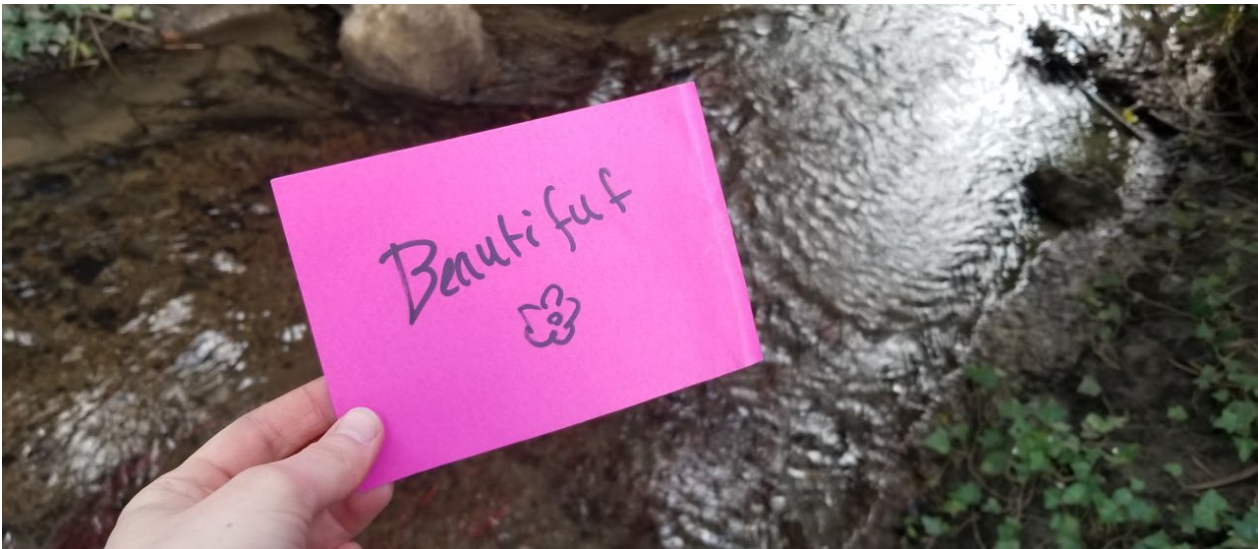


Figure 21: The girls wanted greater access to nature with the majority of positive views centring around natural areas. © Nor Public Art and Greenspace & Us 2

Apart from the area around the river (which only one girl reported visiting) there were few other opportunities for them to access nature, as most of the greenspace in the area is mainly given over to pitches and grass with few other natural features. The one potential exception to this, Florence Park, was not seen as a space ‘for them’ because of the lack of facilities for teenage girls and the fact that the majority of users were white and bringing much younger children.

In the collaging exercise in Workshop 2, the participants had free access to a wide range of materials, including flowers and natural imagery as well as swings and other design features, built environment objects and textures. It was notable that almost all the collages contained some of the natural imagery, and where participants were drawing a layout, trees featured heavily. Comments on the collages included:

“nature overtaking making the whole place look nice” over images of flowering climbers and trees

“pond with fish and frogs etc (protected)”

“have some big trees as shade”

As these designs were being focused into ideas for the space in Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground, there was still a strong emphasis on bringing nature into the park. A number of the models included water features or ponds as a form of habitats for wildlife such as frogs and fish, and so this was incorporated into the final design, along with a natural area for relaxing in. Participants also suggested tree houses and mounds that could be formed out of natural materials, as well as some detailed suggestions for flower gardens and planting. One participant included squirrel and birds’ nests in her design. All of these would provide spaces where the young women could connect with nature while in a space which was familiar to them.

A clear finding from the project is that the participants valued nature and wanted more opportunities to access it in ways which were safe and easy to reach. Where this was made available to them – as with the shelter or the supported visits to Lye Valley – they welcomed the chance and where they were given opportunities to design their ideal space, habitats for wildlife and the opportunity to engage with nature featured strongly. This is probably the single most important need or desire which came through from the work and suggests that this group of teenage girls are not so much disengaged from nature and greenspaces but lacking the opportunity to access it in their daily lives.

Facilities for teenage girls

The design work with the young women highlighted a number of facilities and features which they felt would make parks more attractive and welcoming for them and would encourage them to use greenspace.

One theme, stemming from their own sense of being excluded, was for multi-functional spaces which provided a range of environments and facilities which could cater for a wide range of users and where “everyone would feel welcome”. At the same time, some of the designs also included private or semi-private spaces where they felt they would be able to retreat away from boys or adults, screened by trees and hedges.

A space to relax was also a recurrent theme and almost all the collages contained images of hammocks and words such as “relax” and “chill”, as well as social seating for people to chat and places to lie down in the grass and enjoy the sun. Green and blue features such as streams, ponds, and mature trees were also associated with calmness and relaxation.

Shelters were often included, as spaces not just to “chill out” but also as spaces for activities such as homework, picnics, listening to music and socialising, and many participants designed such spaces with charging stations and built-in speakers.

Other participants designed spaces for different kinds of activity than those currently provided for in parks.

“I want a zip line and climbing wall open field to just run around in, where I don’t have to bump into small kids and I can roller skate”

“I want a loud and playful area with trampolines and monkey bars to do gymnastics.”

The following were key elements in the of collages and the models:

- Hammocks
- Swings (often shared or accommodating more than one person)
- Trampolines
- Blue spaces, such as ponds, streams and water features

- Nature features, including foliage, habitats, and wildlife, such as flowering plants, trees for climbing, squirrel dreys and bird nests, aquatic and terrestrial animals (e.g., fish, frogs, birds, butterflies).
- Social seating and picnic benches
- Play equipment for their age (e.g., a large slide that would not be used by younger children or a zip wire)

However, the young women also recognised the need for infrastructure to make the park accessible and safe. This was not just toilets, but also places to charge phones and water fountains. “I have [designed] a water fountain because if you play and get thirsty, you don’t have to go home.”

Inclusivity and intersectionality

In the workshops and through discussions with the participants and youth group leaders, the ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds of the participants had a bearing on their experience of greenspace. Examples included that they felt the disapproval of the golfers was exacerbated by the fact that the group was not white and some of them were wearing hijabs. The project leaders described the group felt Florence Park was not “for them” because its users were mainly white and middle class. This reflects an emerging environmental justice issue, referred to as green gentrification, which is the exclusion or marginalisation of residents in areas surrounding green urban areas as they attract wealthier residents (Gould and Lewis, 2017).

However, this sense of being excluded did not result in them wanting separate spaces. Instead, there was a repeated emphasis on creating welcoming spaces which could be used by a wide range of people. This was often stated directly: “we want any gender to access and any age to feel welcome” and “for everyone to enjoy it and respect one another”. In some designs this was achieved by dividing the space into different zones for different uses, an idea which was carried through into the final design. In addition, one participant created a rainbow path at the entrance to her park design as a sign that “everyone is welcome”.

In their collages and models, the girls and young women also frequently designed for other groups, such as the disabled or those who may not want to play sports, while collages and models included relaxation areas for reading and engaging with wildlife.

In addition, some designs provided spaces for other specific groups, for example suggesting “maybe have a private seating area for parents who need to feed their babies”. During the modelling session, some participants also suggested that a shelter could be designed with a comfortable floor that provided spaces to pray, for both Muslims and other denominations.

Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground

Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground (Figure 4b) was the most local and best-known greenspace for the workshop participants and so represented a good case study for how the young women felt that local greenspaces were not generally designed with them in mind. However, it did also contain the shelter which had been co-designed by the group in Greenspace & Us Part 1, also allowing them to express their feelings around how facilities might enable them to access spaces and feel welcome.

They had the opportunity to express their opinions in the mapping work, but most specifically in the structured walk around the space.

- They found it difficult to find appropriate words to describe the space beyond “meh”, “boring” and “random”.
- Specific attention was drawn to the dog waste bin which did not smell good, and one participant took pictures of it with a flag labelled “Smelly”.
- The presence of a supermarket trolley in the centre of the space was seen as “the most interesting thing to happen in the park”.
- The fact that a large part of the available area consisted of pitches was seen as a problem and they were labelled as “taking up too much space”.
- Overall, the young women did not seem to see the grassed area as a place which they could engage with or was for them.
- The area which had been earmarked for the group to design- a large area of tarmac with wire mesh fencing- was seen as not just “uncomfortable” and “negative” but “unsafe”, because of both the fencing and sense of “being caged in” and damage to the surface.
- Given the permissive presence of other adults with them, the girls did enjoy using the swings and climbing frame in the play area, which were “chilled” and “fun”.

In later workshops, the young women began to articulate the issues with the park such as it being flat, and therefore boring or “It is so ugly and the seats are cold”. One girl designed a high viewing platform because there were not “many exciting play areas in the current Marsh Park”.

The pitches were seen as a particular issue. The participants felt that they took up too much of the open space, and were predominantly used by boys and young men, which did not result in an equal use of the park – during the initial work on the zine one of the comments included “two football pitches doesn’t make a space for girls”. In addition, the pitches made the group feel insecure, because if they tried to use the grass areas and a group came along with a ball, they had priority because the pitch lines delineated the space as being ‘for sport’, and that this was true even if the group did not have a booking.

The shelter

For all the participants, the most attractive and important feature in Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground was the shelter, which was designed and constructed by the group as

part of Greenspace & Us Part 1. It was clear that this gave them a sense of ownership, and a stake in this small area of park, and that this was very important to them.

In the mapping, the first green sticker for a good place marked the shelter, showing that not only their pride in it, but also that it was an important mental landmark in their mental maps of the area. Whenever they visited the park, they checked it for graffiti and vandalism with a palpable sense of ownership and during the workshop sessions often referred to it, and one girl recounted how she had found graffiti on it and so she and her grandmother had returned with marker pens to cover it up. Overall, the shelter represented the only piece of public space which was clearly designed to include them and contrasted with their experience of the rest of the park.

The importance of Greenspace & Us Part 1 was not just the finished product, but that they valued the chance to have their thoughts and opinions heard and acted upon. Working in collaboration with the city and county councils and the university as well as other contributors added value in both creating the final product and making the young women feel that their opinions had been taken into account. The benefit of co-production is something which has been noted in other projects abroad (Seims et al., 2022). It would seem to be particularly relevant for the young women in this study, who come from less affluent families in the area and many of whom feel marginalised by not just their sex and ethnicity but also by the increasing gentrification in the area.

Co-production and design learnings

The co-production process worked well overall, in great part due to the opportunity to learn from previous sessions both in Oxford and elsewhere. The following aspects of the co-production and design were particularly important to the success of the project and would be beneficial to incorporate in future initiatives.

- **Familiarity:** Having an introductory ‘getting to know each other’ workshop and working with a group who had been together some time and had existing relationships with each other made open discussion and collaboration easier.
- **Community knowledge:** Facilitators with knowledge of the young women and the area (in this case from Name It Youth Project) who could provide additional insight also created a safe, comfortable, and open space for the work.
- **Representation:** Ensuring that the project provided facilitators who were relatable role models for the participants was important.
- **Freedom of time:** The structure of having five four-hour workshops over seven weeks meant that the group had freedom to follow areas of particular interest and have additional time to continue working on their outputs and discussions, if desired. This gave time for ideas and insight to develop, creating better and more inclusive designs but also more insight into how the young women saw greenspace and what they wanted from it. The girls appreciated this and felt that they had the space to develop their thoughts.

- **Creativity:** The incorporation of a range of different creative methods- including sign making, photography, collage, and model-making as well as drawing and making the zine- gave the young women the chance to find different ways of expressing their desires and thoughts about greenspace. This allowed for different participants to express their ideas in the way which best suited them and could have taken an alternative form of creativity.
- **Specialist skills:** The inclusion of two facilitators (Nor Greenhalgh and Tayo Isa-Daniel) with art training who could help the young women realise their ideas as they wished helped them to develop their ideas.
- **Co-design:** Using co-design of the workshop process itself, as well as the outputs, with the participants was key so the participants felt they were equal members of the project.

The main learning for any future project would be to have greater involvement from the owners of the greenspace (in this case Oxford City Council) at an earlier stage, in order to create a more iterative design process where they could also feed back to the group what might be possible and so co-create an agreed overall design which could then be funded and installed.

Conclusions

The project clearly reveals that teenage girls and young women are not intrinsically disengaged from greenspace and nature, but that this happens because parks and other greenspace provision are not designed with their needs in mind. From both the young women's mapping, discussion work, and a wider survey of the area, it was clear how the greenspace in their local area of East Oxford did not, for a variety of reasons, meet their needs. Some of it was private, and a considerable amount of land was devoted to predominantly male pursuits or aimed at younger children, resulting in spaces which did not feel designed for the young women. There was a lack of facilities designed for them and of the infrastructure they wanted that catered to their interests or available opportunities. In addition, other areas of greenspace were either inaccessible or exclusive in more subtle ways, as demonstrated by the footpath across the golf course, which also highlighted that many young women felt some greenspaces to be additionally inaccessible not only because of their age and gender but also because of their ethnicity or social background. The young women also wanted to find spaces which gave them an experience of nature. However, they found that many of their local parks provided greenspace in the form of manicured grass which did not provide the richer and more diverse natural environment of flora and fauna they were looking for.

The participants understood such differences and barriers. Where ownership or engagement was offered – as with both Greenspace & Us Part 1 and Part 2 – they valued the experience. They were articulate and engaged both in discussing the barriers which prevented them from using greenspace and in producing design solutions, with enough time, freedom, and only limited support from professionals. Their designs also considered the needs of other marginalised groups such as people with disabilities and recognised the need for shared spaces, resulting in greater inclusivity overall.

The facilitated co-production process was important in giving the young women the time and space to develop their ideas and create a sense of having a stake in their local greenspace. It was clear that the full co-design which had led to the shelter had changed their relationship with Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground and gave them a greater sense of ownership, belonging and empowerment to make a positive change for their community (Figure 16).

The participants' continuing delight in and sense of ownership of this space demonstrates how facilities in parks for teenage girls make a difference, and also that their impact is much greater when they result from a comprehensive co-design project.

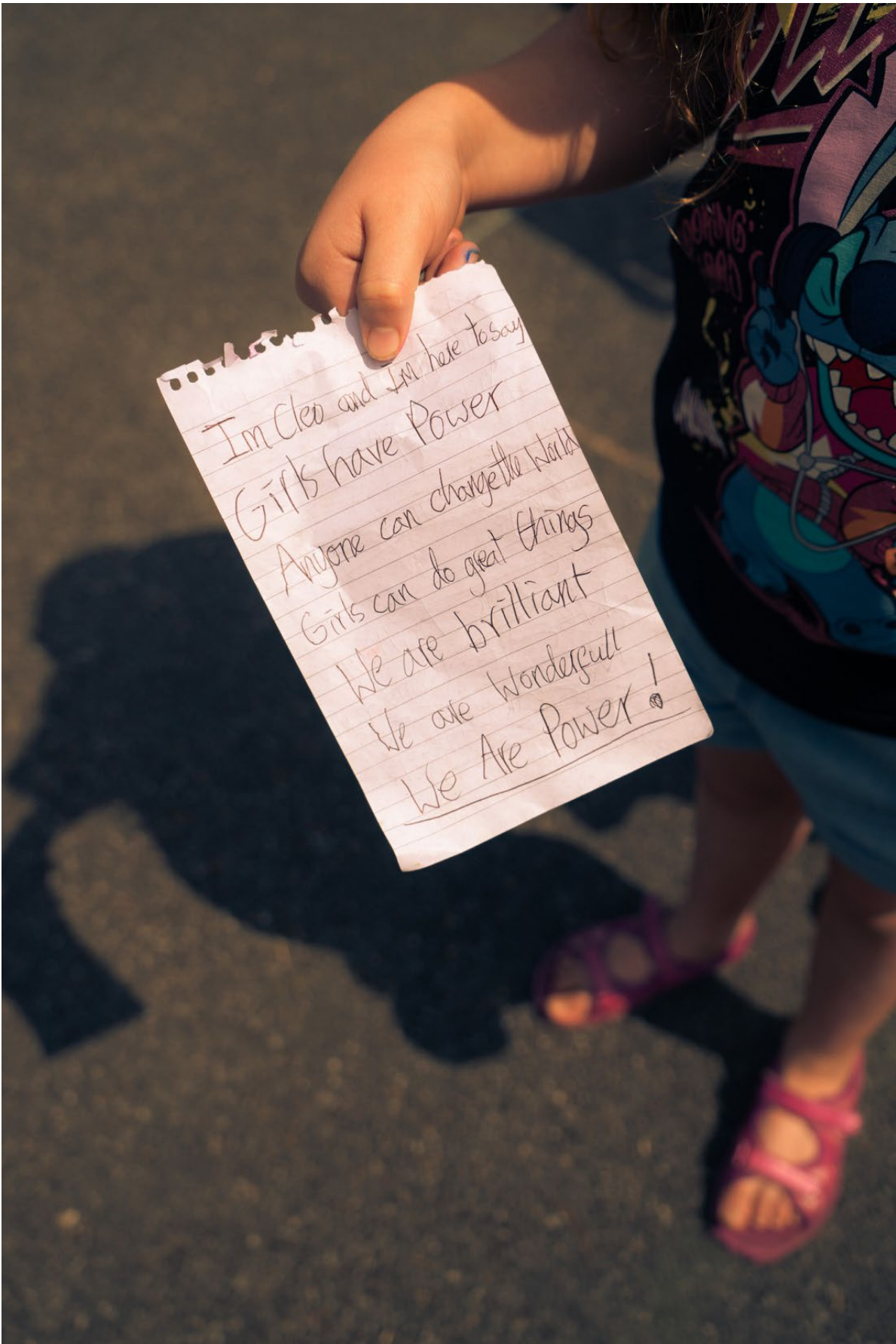


Figure 22: Speech from presentation day. © Greenspace & Us and Reuben Worlledge

Recommendations

Consider the needs of teenage girls for greenspace

At present teenage girls do not feel that greenspace is designed with them in mind. Their needs should be recognised in the provision, design and management of parks and other greenspaces and current inequalities in provision acknowledged.

Improve access to nature

Teenage girls want more nature and opportunities to experience nature in their local greenspaces and to engage with diverse flora and fauna in blue and greenspaces, through signposting, wayfinding and organised visits.

Improve safety, facilities and infrastructure

A lack of safety, facilities and infrastructure were identified by the young women as barriers which prevented them accessing greenspaces and as priorities for improvement.

Prioritise co-production

It is essential to involve girls and young women in every stage of the development process, from designing and developing to delivering and evaluating space. This will ensure that their voices are heard and that the service is tailored to their needs, while also giving them a sense of ownership and belonging in greenspaces.

Consider intersectionality

Recognising cultural variations and histories that shape a particular group is also crucial. These minor adjustments can make a significant difference when designing a welcoming space.

Next steps

- Providers and stakeholders should assess their greenspace provision through the lens of social constructs, including gender.
- Providers and stakeholders engage with all young people, not just current park users, to gather their thoughts and opinions on greenspace.
- Engagement and co-production with teenage girls to be undertaken at the start of any new developments to ensure their needs are met.
- Provision for teenagers to be considered in terms of nature and not just built facilities.
- A wider range of provision for teenagers should provide opportunities for relaxation and activity other than only sport.
- Park design should be considered in terms of gender equity and subject to a robust Equalities Impact Assessment.

- Safety and access for girls and young women need to be considered for all new and existing park facilities and at the start of the design and tendering process.
- Sex-disaggregated data to be gathered for all park facilities used by teenagers.
- Intersectionality and other barriers need to be considered at every stage.

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Appendix 1: Survey of local greenspace

The mapping exercise revealed that the young women (with some variation depending on their age and family circumstances) mostly spend their time in an area which was bounded by the river, the ring-road and the London Road (see Figure 4a).

As well as Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground, which is considered in more detail below, this area contains a number of parks and open spaces, some of which were used by the young women.

South Park and Headington Hill Park

South Park is a large area of 50 acres of predominantly open grass situated close to both the city centre and London Road. It adjoins Headington Hill Park, which is more wooded. Together the spaces include outdoor gym equipment, a playground and walking paths which follow the perimeter of the park.

Meadow Lane

Off Meadow Lane, near the river is a small area of parkland with a football pitch, a playground and a skatepark. Access is via a narrow road, with dense tree cover and the skatepark which is set away from the path, in an area of trees. The skatepark occasionally runs classes in skateboarding and BMX riding but the area is not permanently staffed.

Florence Park

Florence Park is a well-maintained park just off the Cowley Road, which has flowerbeds, a café, children's play equipment, tennis courts and miniature golf (both paid). There are no free to use facilities for older children in this park.

Donnington Recreation Ground

This open space to the south of the area contains three youth pitches, which are bookable online.

Valentia Park

This is a small park, close to South Park, which has a pitch and some play equipment including a zip wire.

Barns Road

This is a small area of open space with a pitch, a BMX track and play equipment for younger children.

Bartholomew Road

Another small open space area with a pitch and play equipment for younger children.

Hollow Way / Horspath Road

This has a pitch, a basketball hoop, a skateboarding unit and play equipment for younger children.

Hundred Acre Park

This park contains MUGA (multi-use games areas), a basketball pitch, table tennis tables next to the MUGA, and play equipment for younger children.

Rose Hill Recreation Ground

This has pitches and play equipment for younger children and is situated next to a community centre. In addition, there are several smaller spaces with play equipment for younger children.

Overall, the park and recreation provision are aimed predominantly towards younger children and those who want to play team sports, specifically football, which is a male-dominated sport (see Appendix 3 for statistics).

The only facilities for teenagers in the area used by the young women are a skatepark, a BMX track, a MUGA, and two table tennis tables. Work elsewhere suggests that all of these are likely to be used predominantly by teenage boys (Make Space for Girls, 2023) while the table tennis tables are positioned by the MUGA, which is likely to make them feel less accessible to girls and young women.

The area contains a number of pitches and other facilities which belong to schools and university colleges, resulting in private sport facilities the dominant feature of the neighbourhood.

Evaluation of Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground

The space contains six flat pitches, five for football and one for cricket. Of the football pitches two are for adults and three of varying sizes for youth teams. All are bookable.

In addition, there is some outdoor gym equipment which is arranged in groups around the edge of the pitches, a play area for younger children with swings and a climbing frame, surrounded by a low fence.

To one side are the courts, which consist of a basketball court with a low metal fence around and a shelter to one side, and then a large, fenced tarmac area with two metal tennis nets taking up half the space.

Between this and the play area is the shelter designed by the young women with the team from Greenspace & Us Part 1. This is the only facility for girls and young women within the entire area of this study.

Appendix 2: Workshop descriptions

Workshop 1: 18th February 2023

This workshop was conducted with a smaller group of participants, because the session took place at the end of the half term break while many families were away. However, this smaller group size enabled much more detailed conversations with the girls about specific aspects of their use of greenspace.

The workshop consisted of two distinct elements. In the first part, the girls worked with a large-scale map of the East Oxford area as a way of assessing how widely they travelled within the area for leisure, which spaces they used, which spaces were particularly appealing, and which ones they felt to be unsafe or otherwise problematic.

Their comments and ideas were recorded on the map in a range of ways. They began by putting stickers on places they either particularly liked (green stickers) or disliked (red) and the facilitators then discussed with them why they felt this way about individual spaces – for example what was particularly appealing about South Park or why the skatepark was a space to hang around even for non-skateboarders.

Almost the first sticker to go on the map was a green one marking the shelter which the girls had co-designed in Greenspace & Us Part 1. For them this represented a tangible contribution they had made to the space and an important landmark in their mental maps of the area.

The most place-specific comments were added to the map and as the session went on the girls also began to write on the map to add their comments.

Positive spaces with green stickers included:

- South Park – a large area of greenspace with “lots of room for everyone”.
- Zipwire at Valentia Park, which one girl liked because it was fun and close to home.
- The area around the River Thames at Cowley Lock was good in the summer for “ducks and nature”.
- The skatepark at Meadow Lane was a spot where one older girl met her friends, even though none of them skateboarded, and its secluded location meant that it could attract anti-social behaviour.
- The nature reserve at Boundary Brook was marked as ‘peaceful’.
- A space by Rose Hill Community Centre was labelled good for lighting.

The girls also all found their homes on the map and marked them as good places, often working out other spaces by navigating from their house.

Less popular spaces included some areas close to their schools or home which were either dark and so unsafe – as with a footpath between allotments just off the Cowley Road – or another wooded cut through where there were rats.

The open space at Meadow Lane was also marked as dark.

The golf course situated between the two nature reserves near Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground was seen as a barrier, and the issues it presented were experienced later on in the session.

One girl also noted a place between South Park and the golf course as being ‘lots of space for sport, not hanging out’. This area contains Warneford Hospital, some University buildings and three college sports grounds.

A couple of areas were labelled but seen as ‘neither good nor bad’, including the area outside the kebab shop for hanging around, and the wider shopping area in Cowley, as well as one of the girls' schools. It was notable that many of the local park spaces were not considered at all by the girls, suggesting that they were not seen as available for them to use.

The second part of the exercise was a walking evaluation of Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground and the nature reserve areas beyond it. For this portion of the workshop the girls were provided with a set of flags – some blank and some with words already written on them – and large chalkboard arrows on which they could write their own opinion, along with polaroid cameras so that they could take pictures of areas, using these props to express their thoughts about them.

The initial impression of Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground was that there were not enough features for the girls to have opinions about. One girl wanted to note the dog waste bin as “smelly” (Figure 17), but the pitch areas were seen as “dull” and “boring”.



Figure 237: Flag being used to express opinion of Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground. © Greenspace & Us 2



Figure 248: A shopping trolley on the pitches attracted both interest and comment. © Nor Public Art and Greenspace & Us 2

A shopping trolley which had been left in the middle of the pitch area was seen as “the most interesting thing to happen in the park” and the girls all took pictures of it, although

one used a “negative” flag for trolley (Figure 18). There was considerable discussion of how the park was flat and dull and not worthy of any interest. One girl wrote “Meh” on a flag to use in her pictures of the park.

The group then split into two. One group went and played for some time on the equipment, which is fenced in and so the girls do not usually feel entitled to use it. However, as the space was empty and they were with adults who could be seen as giving permission, they took the opportunity to enjoy it, particularly the swings and climbing frame (Figure 19 and Figure 20). The other group spent more time exploring the pitch space, while two of the girls experimented with the gym equipment which is dotted round the edge of the pitches.

The two groups came back together again at the shelter. The girls displayed a sense of pride and achievement in the fact that the shelter had been built to their design and with them being involved in the manufacture. Their sense of ownership of this space was displayed in a number of ways. They had all written their names on the table surface as part of the design, and many of them spoke of visiting it regularly. They were also very disapproving of the fact that there were muddy footprints on some of the surface, and one girl recounted how she had found graffiti on the benches and so she and her grandmother had returned with marker pens to cover it up. A discussion followed this about care and maintenance, but also how the shelter was a facility for everyone in the park and so this might include uses – like muddy shoes – which the girls might not like.



Figure 19: Participants enjoyed access to the swings and climbing frame in the play area. © Nor Public Art and Greenspace & Us 2



**Figure 250: The area in the park which was the subject of the design work
© Nor Public Art and Greenspace & Us 2**

From this the group went to look at the space which would be the focus for their design work. This was a fenced area of tarmac next to the basketball court and shelter. Half the space was taken up by two permanent (metal) tennis nets, and one of the courts was in use while the girls were looking at the space. The girls looked at the fencing and the floor surface and discussed how to make it more colourful and whether it would be possible to include swings or a slide. However, at this stage the girls were mostly focusing on experiencing the space and considering whether it could be made to feel more like something which belonged to them. There were also concerns around safety with the fencing, and working out which gates could open for access and whether it could be made to link more naturally to the nature reserve area behind, either by bringing the stream into the space or opening the fencing.



Figure 21: Participants in the Lye Valley Nature Reserve. © Nor Public Art and Greenspace & Us 2

The group then walked up into the Lye Valley Nature Reserve, an informally managed area of grassland and old pollard trees (pruned trees). Access to the site involves climbing over a ditch (which presented problems for one girl who had mobility issues) and the space was not seen as easily accessible by the girls – they also noted that a path which runs up the side of the space had only recently been cleared (Figure 21). Some of the girls were looking for a rope swing which they had used when the group had visited the area last summer, but this had been removed. There was a sense that they did not feel that this was a space which was easy or potentially safe to access without adults. After this a few of the girls climbed a large tree and wanted their photos taken with flags marking this as both “chilled” and “exciting”.

Guided by the youth workers, the group walked up through the reserve to follow a footpath which crosses a golf fairway. The girls had already expressed some reluctance to use this path, and there was the strong impression that they would not have done so had they been on their own, without adults. The uncomfortable feeling was exacerbated by four male golfers who were on the green, whose body language clearly demonstrated their disapproval of the interruption as the girls crossed the golf footpath to the other side of the

nature reserve. The girls felt their unease was almost exacerbated by the fact that the four golfers were white and the majority of the group were from minoritised ethnic groups, with several of the girls wearing hijabs and one of the youth workers wearing a niqab.

Some of the girls clearly found this experience unpleasant and off-putting. This sparked a detailed conversation, not just about the rights of everyone to use a public footpath, but also about the way that golf takes up a lot of space and is currently predominantly a male dominated sport. The girls linked this with their experience of the pitches in the park and the way that male-dominated pursuits occupy a huge amount of greenspace. At this point and when they had returned to the community gardens, the girls specifically requested that this incident be included in the report, and clearly saw it as a good example of the kind of experience which stopped them from using natural spaces like the reserve.

From here, the group followed the Boundary Brook along its course. This is a landscape of grasses and scrub alongside the stream, with trees on either side, which has had minimal interventions to it for a long period of time and so feels very natural – and very different from any of the other environments available to the girls. They liked this as a peaceful and natural place, and it was noticeable that the girls themselves felt more relaxed while they were in this space.

The group then returned to the community gardens to consider the photographs that they had taken, printing out additional ones from their phones, and to discuss how they had felt in the various spaces.

Workshop 2: 25th February 2023

Upon arrival, participants shared lunch and use that time to catch up. Sharing a meal created an open atmosphere to discuss everyday life concerns as well as discoveries from the project. The meal also creates a seamless prelude to the workshop.

The workshop began with a reflection from last week. One of the participants mentioned how she had doubts about her entitlement to use certain park areas particularly after she saw young boys utilise the seating area she had constructed with her cohort. Similarly, two other participants and a working group member (WGM) mentioned how adult golfers made the girls feel like they were intruding when visiting the nearby park last week. This infringement on the right to use public space as a young person was a common and recurring theme of this session. The WGM therefore discussed how the right to play is a legal right for anyone under the age of 18, and this brought forth questions also about the right to public space for adolescents. In the safety of the female-only environment, we also had a candid conversation on the demonisation of adolescents in public areas. This was also brought up during the design exercise by one of the participants who mentioned that adults frown at her when she happens to use the same playground as other younger children.

Collages

Shortly after, the girls were then given instructions on the workshop activities to start the session. The participants were instructed to design their ideal parks using their imaginations. There were no limits nor was any scale or size given.

The facilitators pinned up images of creative designs illustrating benches, swings etc that could provide some motivation and inspiration for the design of the park. The girls were encouraged to observe and engage with the designs. The WGM's also provided context for the designs explaining how many of them derived from Scandinavian countries where progressive policy is pushing the boundaries of creative design. The invigilator also explained how experimental design had been crucial in materialising a playful atmosphere even amongst adults. This allowed space for reflection amongst the female WGM who thought about the last time they had been on a swing or played openly. All these examples brought forth questions on the absence of young women's experiences in public space design. We also questioned why so many park facilities happen to be mundane and less creative.

Shortly after we began with the exercise. Girls were encouraged to cut out images and designs they liked and use words or collages to design the park. In some cases, girls formed small groups and some girls were creating individually.



Figure 262: Collage 1 © Greenspace & Us 2

Collage 1 – This participant was intentional in creating an open and inclusive space that doesn't have physical barriers (Figure 22). She wanted the entrance to her park to be marked by a rainbow surface to make “everyone feel welcome”. The idea of relaxation and slow-paced corners was also prominent. The participant designed a part of the park just for ‘chill out’ activities as she felt like there is always an abundance of physical activities but minimal space for just reading or engaging with wildlife for instance. The chill-out area would have hammock swings, a charging point for phones as well as trees for shade. The

shared swinging benches that were presented to the girls earlier became an inspiration to include playful seating elements in this participant's park. She also developed a collage which had many seating elements and creative options for vibrant surfaces.

In this participant's work, the concept of flora and wildlife also played a significant role. In the participants' design, the central pond has frogs and fish, while squirrels and bird nests may be found in the park's surrounding trees. On the other side of the pond is the more loud and playful area with trampolines and monkey bars to do gymnastics. There is also a picnic area as the participant thought that parks don't have enough picnic spaces.



Figure 23: Collage 2 © Greenspace & Us 2

Collage 2 – This young woman focused more on the infrastructure and facilities that serve the park. Her designs (Figure 23) began with a collage originally incorporating the creative seating, gardens and facilities. However, once designing the plan for the park she quickly realised that other facilities would be necessary to enhance the space. She added an ice cream shop in case it was a hot day. A car park, tennis, ping pong and basketball court outside because she wanted to make a distinction between play and relaxation and because she thought these amenities encourage other groups in using the park.

She also designed a separate baby area for adults which created a distinction between young girls and adults. Her all-inclusive design considers all ages. At the centre, she designed a spinning seating area that all ages can enjoy. The participant was also beginning to think three-dimensionally mentioning that the landscape can fold to form levels which result in more 'secret' 'underground' spaces and 'open spaces at the top'. The distinction between public and semi-public is also shaped using trees that create shade and private space to sleep in the hammocks.



Figure 24: Collage 3 © Greenspace & Us 2

Collage 3 – This young woman wanted to create an open space that is visually striking and bright using recycled materials. She designed sheltered spaces that protect from the elements and outdoor seating for people to chat (Figure 24). Places to lie down in the grass and enjoy the sun were also important to her design.



Figure 25: Collage 4 © Greenspace & Us 2

Collage 4 – One of the participants created two designs which were reflective of her experience in Oxford's parks. She mentioned that when running freely in the park she often “bumps into younger children” which results in scolding by angry parents. In response to that she created a multi-functional area (Figure 25) with sections for running,

playing, sports and for younger children. Her park included many typologies of landscapes, she had an open field to just run around in, a tree-lined avenue for cyclists and roller skaters, and a pond area for tranquillity. She also designed an exciting playground that could have more extreme sports like a zip line and climbing wall.

Her park included public toilets and a fountain for clean water which she thought was missing in a lot of the parks. The participant also chose to include a flower garden where visitors could go read and relax and be among nature and different species of flowers.

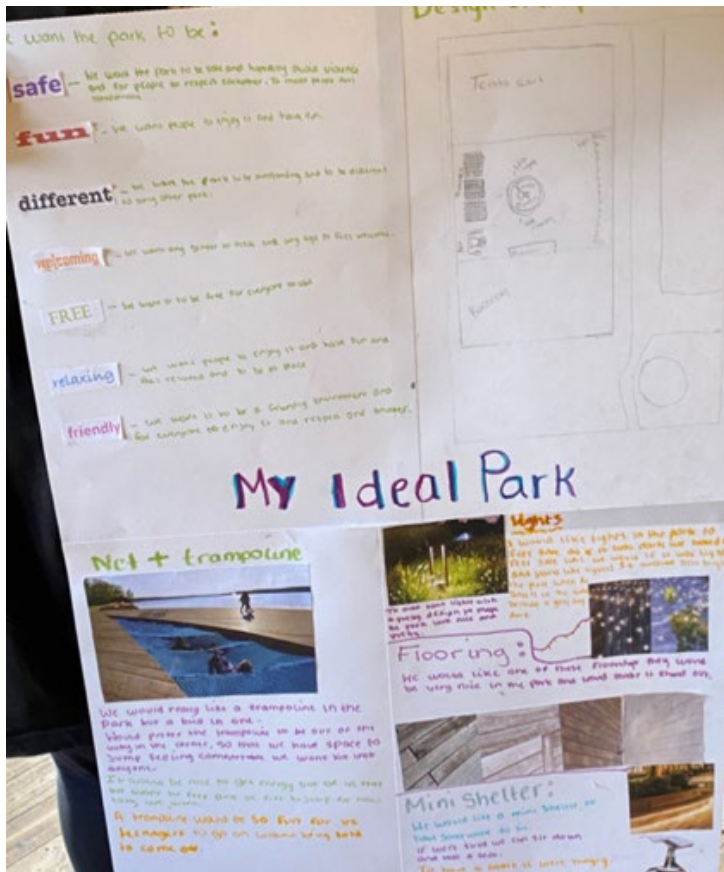


Figure 26: Collage 5 © Greenspace & Us 2

Collage 5 – This collage (Figure 26) was created by a group who incorporated lighting in their design because wanted the park to feel safe especially when it gets dark early. They designed a shelter to protect individuals from the elements, but also wanted it to feature a charging station for mobile phones. The trampolines and swings also reflect the playful and welcoming atmosphere they were aiming for.

Site visit to Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground

The visit to the current Marsh Park formed the second half of the workshop. During our visit, the girls reflected the following. There was a stark contrast in the facilities provided for physical activity versus relaxation. There weren't many young women on the pitch, but there were many young boys playing sports. There were almost no seating areas. The play areas for small children were fenced off. The materiality of the play areas was sterile. Besides the installation made by the girls, there was no designated space for younger girls. For a young girl, it could feel very hostile and hinting no sense of belonging.

The tennis/basketball court areas happened to be equally neglected. The tennis court's exterior was harsh and rusted, and the ground surface made from tarmac suggested that playing would be dangerous.

On the tennis court tarmac, the group hypothetically reimagined a new space with a water fountain, and a bright ground surface as well as planting and seating areas. The girls were also encouraged to reclaim the space by visiting the park more often and taking ownership of the space as the presence of some of the boys made them feel intimidated.

Once we returned the girls and WGM's regrouped to talk about the future of the research work. We moved on to talk about the importance of young girls' involvement and why it is important to have their voices heard.

Workshop 3 4th March 2023

This session was centred around an open fire. Both participants and working group members (WGM) formed a pleasant atmosphere around the fire, roasting marshmallows, and other treats, which shaped an intimate space for convening (Figure 27). Some participants found the experience nostalgic – one of the young women mentioned “it was her favourite session”.

The aim of this workshop was to challenge participants to think spatially about their designs through developing three-dimensional models. Participants could also suggest a different layout from the previous iterations or model some of the components they found interesting. The working group members also explained how thinking three dimensionally was beneficial – they could for instance create various levels, or places of privacy that were previously one dimensional.



Figure 27 Firepit at Workshop 3 © Greenspace & Us 2

In advance of the workshop, working group members set up working stations outside and pinned up artwork from the previous workshop that they hoped would serve as inspiration for the attendees. Working outside provided opportunities to be influenced by the natural surroundings, which was beneficial for the workshop's model-making activities.

To maintain consistency, the workshop began with a reflection on last week's session. Most participants agreed that designing a collage poster was a thought provoking and enjoyable exercise. Participants enjoyed working with paper, images and sketching. Participants also considered ideas that could enhance and improve the existing park, they also reflected on design features that would be needed within new spaces for their age group. Overall, the participants were proud of their work and pleased to be part of the creative process to improve Marsh Park.

The young women were also critical of their visit to Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground during the reflection. The first participant to share said that she "hated the fact that boys were dominating the park when playing football". As a football player herself, she felt "invisible within the space". Participants were vocal about feeling uncomfortable in Marsh Park – many found the park seating to be cold and uncomfortable.

Vandalism, was also discussed. One of the participants described how during a visit to the park she discovered that the seating area the cohort had constructed in Greenspace & Us Part 1 was vandalised; she added that, based on the misogynistic messages, it was presumably damaged by boys. WGM's took this opportunity to consider the nature of vandalism, how it fosters a feeling of ownership for certain spaces, and how this participant responded positively to the vandalism's effects- the participants and their grandmother drew flowers to cover up the messages. From our discussions it was evident

that the young girls lacked a sense of ownership over the park and that this was one factor which if not addressed could equate to less time spent in greenspace. Vandalism was closely associated with perceptions of safety and exposure to antisocial or misogynistic behaviour. Concerns about future vandalism were raised, ultimately questioning temporal ownership over the shelter the cohort had created, in fears that drug and alcohol-related activity, the presence of gangs and gender-based violence could take over the space that also 'belonged' to girls.

The exercise began shortly after the reflections. The WGM's explained the creative materials that were at hand ranging from papier mache, to foam, and cork boards which participants were inquisitive about. Most participants decided to form groups. There was genuine enthusiasm particularly from the participants in the slightly older age groups to create tangible elements of the parks.

Participants were encouraged to consider the scale of a person in their design and to think of creative ways people could interact with the design. One of the participants decided to mimic her blueprint and shaped a deep pond out of foam. Some of the material at hand was challenging for her to work with so she combined drawings with shapes instead. Another participant decided to focus on a particular corner of her park, and another group on focused on park equipment. Another group decided to create a slide thinking carefully about their proportions and the height of the slide, because they wanted the slide to appeal to teenagers. They also built in a climbing pole for instance and a covered slide. Another participant wanted to create private and open areas where park visitors could play hide and seek or just chill out. Another participant wanted to design a high viewing platform because they were not many exciting play areas in the current Marsh Park. She also wanted to create a contrasting element in the flat landscape of the park.

During the exercise participants paused to share a meal. Some participants continued creating. After the meal WGM's encouraged participants to talk briefly about their designs. Participants could discuss their designs in relation to their drawings from the week before or speak a few minutes about their 3D models. The presentation began with a group of four girls who combined their first names to form park 'FAMM'. It was important to them to feel a sense of ownership over the park as they wanted their designs to be associated with a sense of community, freedom, and safety.

Their presentation referred to some of the key words presented in the poster and completed the following week. They expressed that they wanted their park to be well lit to feel safe for girls and women. They also wanted the park to be an aesthetically appealing place and feel different from the parks in Oxfordshire. Their designs were also applicable to adults and the elderly, they thought about their peers and parents mentioning that "after a long day of work, an adult (particularly a woman) should be able to relax in the park".



Figure 278: Example of model. © Greenspace & Us 2

This group and other participants stressed the importance of creating a distinction between kids under the age of 6 and above 6 years old in the park. Overall, most participants wanted younger children to have their own designated areas as supposed to sharing one with young people in the park.

FAMM's design spatialised a number of elements expressed in the poster. The 3D model made by the young women incorporated benches and open areas to sit (Figure 28). Their circular bench was designed to have charging stations and lights, in case the park got dark, and the girls wanted to call their parents. It also had some aesthetic features such as greenery and planting within the bench.

The surfaces used were also bright and safe, particularly around the square shaped trampoline that would allow anyone to enjoy jumping freely without the fear of falling over. The young women also incorporated an adult slide and a shared hammock swing that could allow multiple people to swing simultaneously and share the space.

The ability to share spaces, equipment and amenities appeared to be another common theme in the cohort's designs. Many of the participants were spatialising shared common spaces, that allow for multiple people to use a space at the same time. The possibility to play or just sit with friends for free defines the park as a viable social infrastructure for these young women.



Figure 28: Example of modelmaking outdoors. © Greenspace & Us

After FAMM two other participants shared their designs with the group. One participant modelled a duck pond with a green area because she felt that water features were not present Marsh Park. She proposed the pond as an area where young women could interact with animals and designed some shared space to sit and share food in the form of picnic areas and benches. During her presentation she focused strongly on the existing Marsh Park, expressing how it is dominated by boys and how it often marginalises young women, “because girls aren’t ‘supposed to’ play football”. Instead, she envisioned a park that would encourage women empowerment by allowing them to play sports and climb trees.

The young woman also envisioned comfortable furniture for girls like cushioned chairs. This was in response to the cold seating in the current Marsh Park that doesn’t consider young women on their menstrual cycle for instance sitting on cold galvanized surfaces. Many of the participants also complained about the fact that there are no clean toilets for women or even places to purchase sanitary towels or tampons.

Some young women shared thoughts on multi-cultural inclusivity, expressing the need for covered surfaces to hold festivals or prayers. She proposed that the park could have a dome which provides shelter but is also outside. The dome could provide a space to pray including women from other religious denominations, it could have lights that change

colour for safety and a speaker to play music. She also complained about the ground surfaces in the park – instead she was proposing to have comfortable floors on which people could sit or lie and pray.

Workshop 4: 4th March 2023

The aim of the last workshop was to combine collective thoughts from young women in the design of the park. Facilitators began the session by clarifying how all of the workshop's components come together to inform this final session and the presentation in June. The purpose of the first session was to collect concepts and ideas that were reflective of the visit to Marsh Park. Participants had the freedom to design and think of creative ideas to improve the park. The second session was aimed at spatializing those concepts using 3D models and considering the human scale. The purpose of this last workshop was to bring all these ideas together and combine collective thoughts to design the designated portion of the park for young women.

Capturing the group's collective thoughts equitably was a priority. It was important to document design elements which reflected individual thinking– participants were encouraged to pitch elements they liked as individuals to fit into the overall scheme. Working group members then established a vote to see which elements resonated with the cohort. The young women were also prompted to put forward ideas that represented not only their own but also their peer's thinking to develop equitable decisions.

The working group members set up three stations at which participants could rotate to supervise the overall design. Each participant could work closely with a facilitator at a particular station. WGM's were then tasked with observing and hearing out common suggestions which could help in gathering collective data from the cohort.

Station 1 – Colour scheme of the park

This station prompted participants to consider colour palettes, and textures for the ground surfaces/ play areas/park furniture, testing also how the use of colour can also convey various emotions.

Station 2 – Site plan mapping

In this station, participants were asked to arrange and stick down various park design elements (i.e., ponds, swings, play areas, lights) onto a scaled site plan of the park. Some of the stickers used mimicked the 3D models or park furniture modelled in the previous session. The cohort was also encouraged to think spatially about the treatment of boundaries and edges. In this case, many of the participants formed groups to critique and design the site plan.

Station 3 – Capturing thoughts from participants into the zine

The participants were given the opportunity to reflect at this point by creating sketches and written descriptions of their desired park.

Overall Design

There was a collective desire to create a park with a clearly defined entrance which marked a distinct area within Marsh Park. Many participants mentioned how they wanted their designated area to “feel different” from the rest of the park. The young women marked this clear entrance with trees and fairy lights, to provide a sense of safety and contrasting surfaces on the ground. The entrance was to be marked by trees which have fairy lights, to provide a sense of safety. The group also gave great consideration on how to define edges and boundaries entrances within the park space.

The cohort also designed a winding path that defined smaller zones within the park such as the chill-out zone or play area. It was clear that multifunctional greenspaces, with a range of environments and facilities to cater for different activities was important to the young women. To provide women in the park a sense of safety, the meandering walk is designed to be illuminated with colourful lights.



Figure 30: Final design for park area © Nor Public Art and Greenspace & Us 2

The group also designed a unique park boundary which was playful with multiple levels, and had solid and mesh permeable features where youth could spray paint graffiti. The boundary also had nooks and ladders. Participants also placed a toilet on the periphery of the site and benches wherever possible for parents to interact with their children as they play. They liked the idea of the of parents looking into the playground. The participants positioned toilets at the back of the court. They made this decision to avoid unpleasant odours at the front of the park. The necessity of a clean bathroom was raised by 11 participants. The girls previously expressed their need for a space where they could change feminine hygiene products.

As the session ended, we discussed collective ideas and the process of meaningful co-production. All the participants seemed enthusiastic about the design of their park. Discussion included about the colour schemes favoured by most young women, which involved pastel hues. Most participants liked these colours because they were bright and optimistic as well as gentle and reminded them of summer.

Another participant designed their own bright colour mixing in various hues of oranges to create 'Bryan' – WGM's suggested that this colour could suit the more active and energetic areas of the park, but participants agreed to use Bryan in the colours of the flowers and planters. Finally, several participants shared ideas for their zines and colours. One of the participants focused carefully on the selection of plants in the park, seeking to design a park which looks aesthetically pleasing with many purple and pink coloured wildflowers.

Many also expressed how much they would appreciate incorporating a butterfly pattern into the space. Throughout the session, we spoke about the butterfly's dual meaning of metamorphosis or transformation. Similar to how young women their age are transforming, this is happening simultaneously in the park design. Being a common experience for all the young women in the park, the butterfly also represents a connection with the natural world and being present to enjoy the animals and plants in the area.

Appendix 3: Pitch provision in Oxford

Oxford City Council has produced a Playing Pitch Strategy which runs from 2022-2036, and this contains statistics about teams in the area.

Oxford contains the following football teams (Table 5):

Table 5: Football teams in Oxford

Type of team	Number of teams
Men 11v11 (18-45yrs)	63
Women 11v11 (18-45yrs)	11
Boys 11v11 (12-17yrs)	50
Girls 11v11 (12-17yrs)	15
Boys 9v9 (10-11yrs)	43
Girls 9v9 (10-11yrs)	8

Adult football in Oxford is 85% male, while junior football is 80% male. This compares with figures of 93-95% elsewhere in the country (Make Space for Girls, 2023), so women's participation in Oxford is higher than average. Although overall women's and girls' football sessions have increased by 196% (The Football Association, 2022) the pitch strategy does not anticipate any change in demand for women's and girls' football in Oxford.

Adult cricket in Oxford is 75% male, while junior cricket is 93% male. For cricket, the teams are as follows (Table 6):

Table 6: Cricket teams in Oxford

Type of team	Number of teams
Men (18-55yrs)	11
Women (18-55yrs)	4
Boys (7-18yrs)	14
Girls (7-18yrs)	1

Appendix 4: Participant Assent form.



OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL



Participant Identification Number for this trial:

Young Person Assent Form

Engaging with teenage girls to understand their needs for more inclusive and accessible greenspace (Greenspace and Us Part 2)

Please
initial box

1. I have read the Greenspace and Us information sheet have had the chance to think about it and ask any questions I have about the project.

2. I understand it is my choice to take part in the project and that I am able to stop taking part without having to explain why.

3. I am happy to appear in photographs of workshop activities. [optional]

4. I am happy to be filmed as part of workshop activities. [optional]

5. I am happy to be audio-taped. [optional]

6. I am happy for my name to be included in a report and know I will be given

the chance view anything with my name on it before it is published. [optional]

7. I agree to take part in the Greenspace and Us project.

Name of Participant Date Signature

Name of Person Date Signature

taking assent

Greenspace and Us Part 2, Young Person Assent Form v1.0

Appendix 5: Greenspace & Us Part 2 Zine



Figure 31: Front cover of Zine © Nor Greenhalgh, Commonbooks, and Greenspace & Us

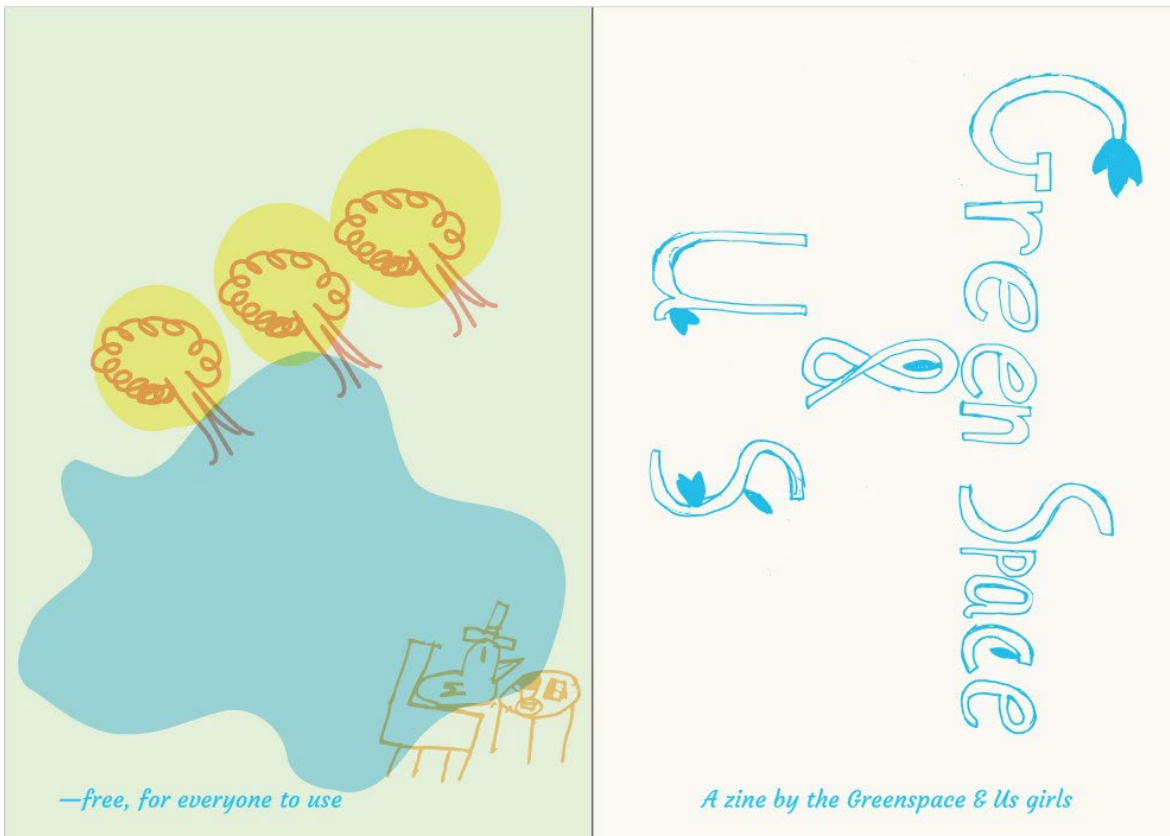


Figure 32: Opening pages of zine © Nor Greenhalgh, Commonbooks, and Greenspace & Us

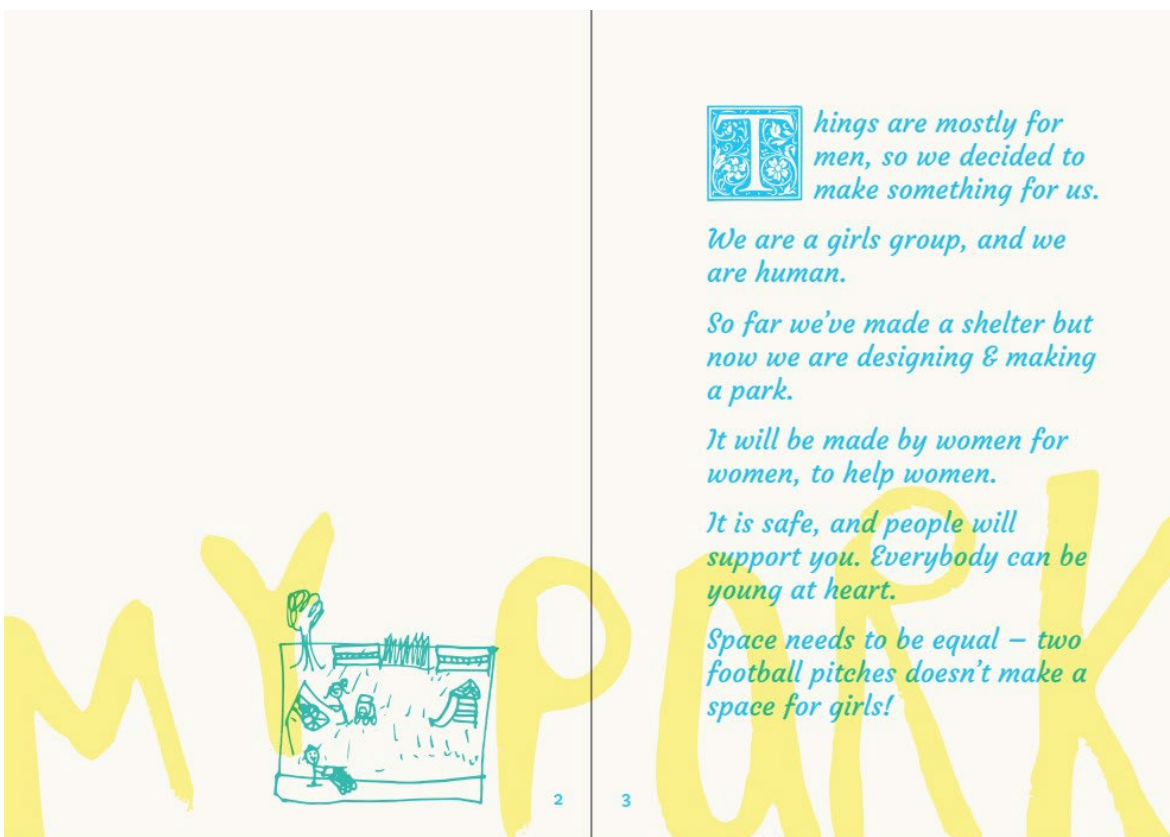


Figure 33: Introduction text of page 2 and 3 of zine © Nor Greenhalgh, Commonbooks, and Greenspace & Us

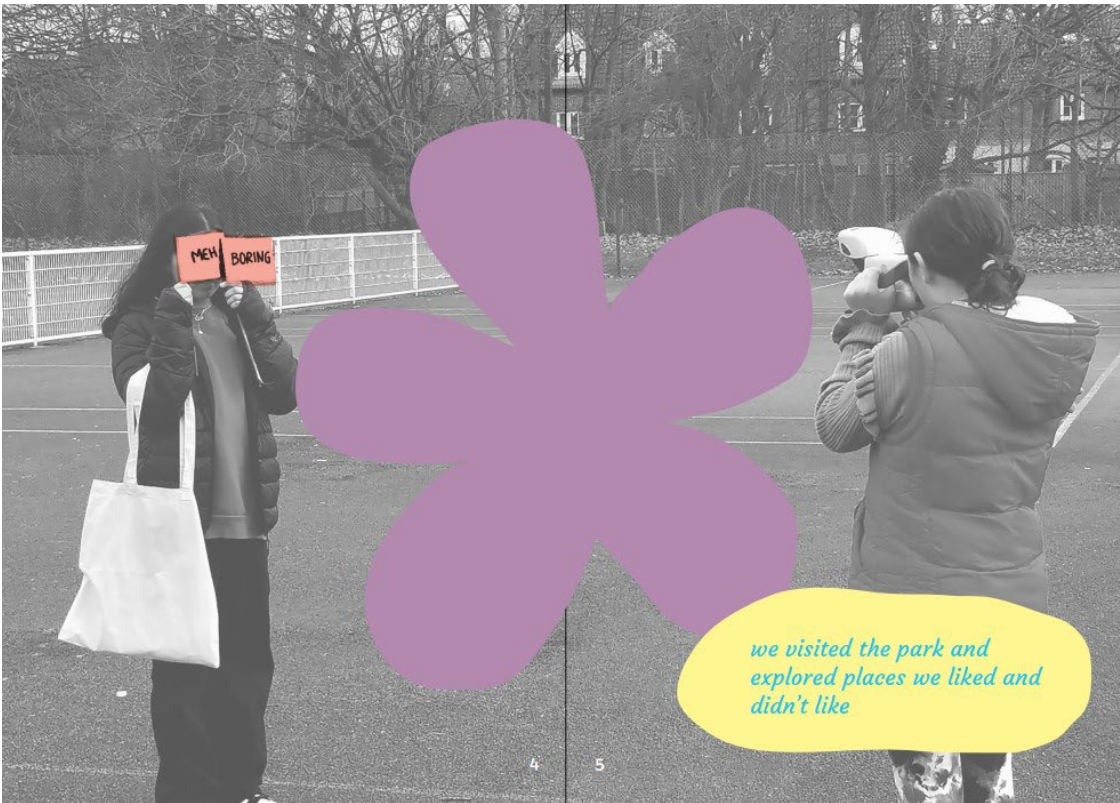


Figure 34: Activity description during project on page 4 and 5 of zine © Nor Greenhalgh, Commonbooks, and Greenspace & Us

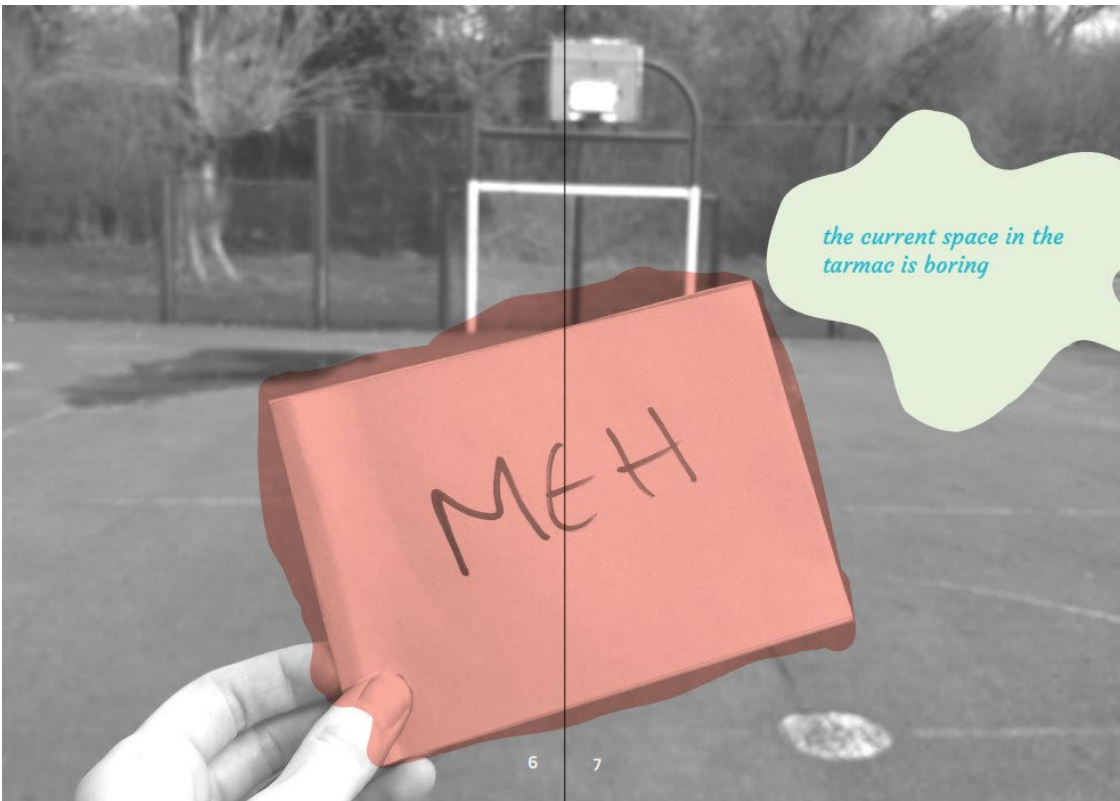


Figure 35: Description of current recreation area on page 6 and 7 of zine © Nor Greenhalgh, Commonbooks, and Greenspace & Us



Figure 36: Fenced area of current recreation area on page 8 and 9 of zine © Nor Greenhalgh, Commonbooks, and Greenspace & Us

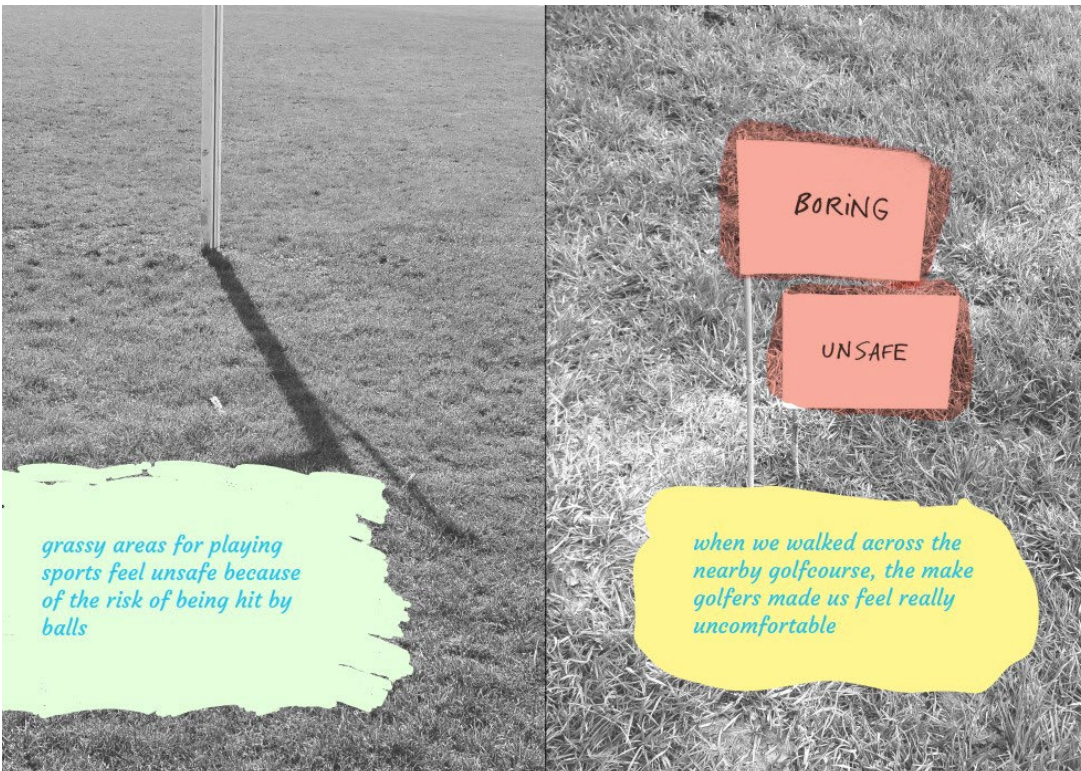


Figure 37: Open grass areas in page 10 and 11 of zine © Nor Greenhalgh, Commonbooks, and Greenspace & Us



Figure 38: Description of girls designed areas in page 12 and 13 of zine © Nor Greenhalgh, Commonbooks, and Greenspace & Us



Figure 39: Design of space in page 14 and 15 of zine © Nor Greenhalgh, Commonbooks, and Greenspace & Us



Figure 40: Enjoyable natural spaces in page 16 and 17 of zine © Nor Greenhalgh, Commonbooks, and Greenspace & Us

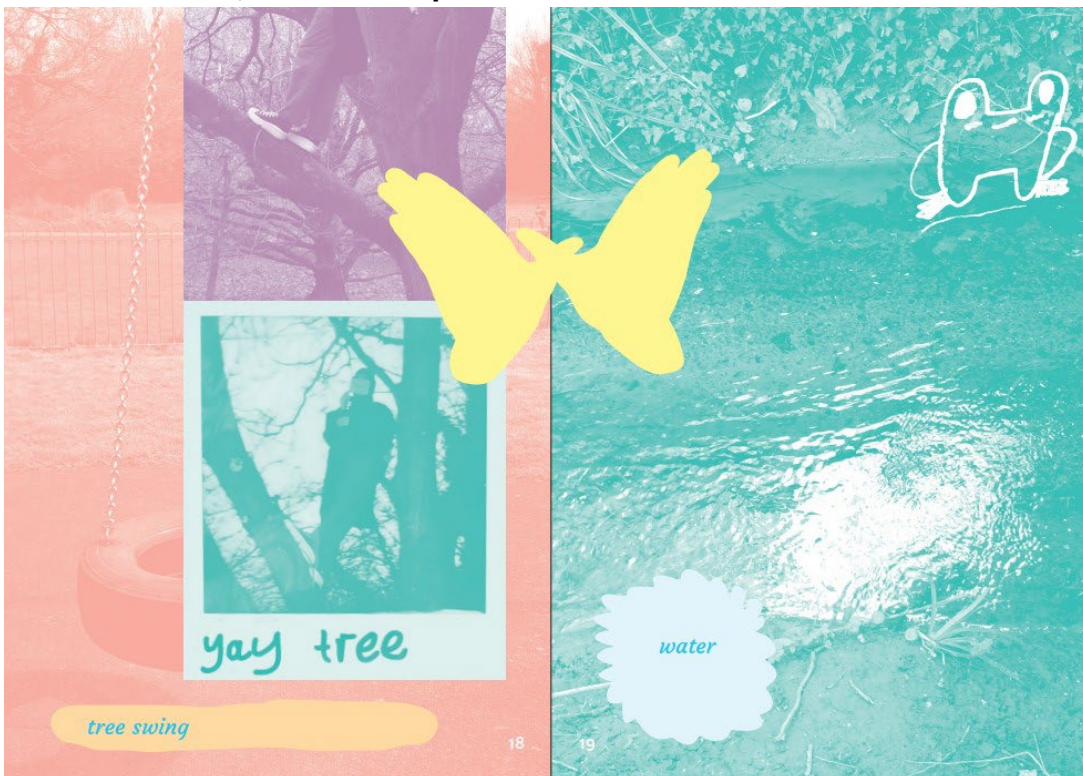


Figure 41: Enjoyable natural spaces and play areas in page 18 and 19 of zine © Nor Greenhalgh, Commonbooks, and Greenspace & Us



Figure 42: Woodland area in page 20 and 21 of zine © Nor Greenhalgh, Commonbooks, and Greenspace & Us

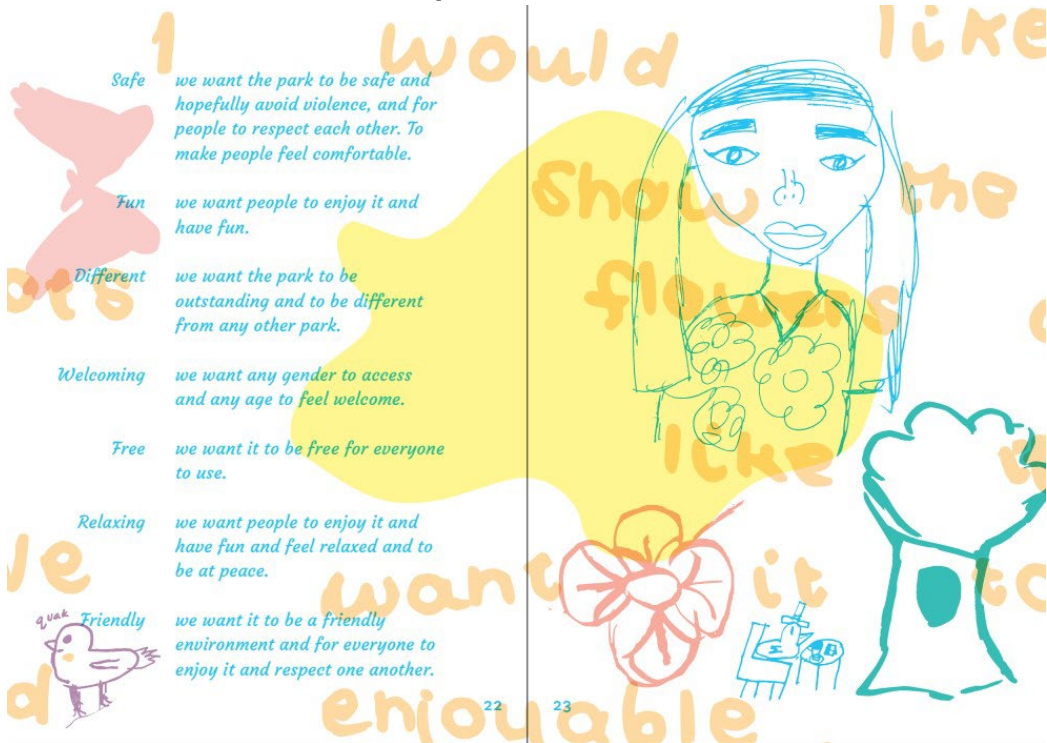


Figure 43: Aims of what the girls want for their space to feel in page 22 and 23 of zine © Nor Greenhalgh, Commonbooks, and Greenspace & Us

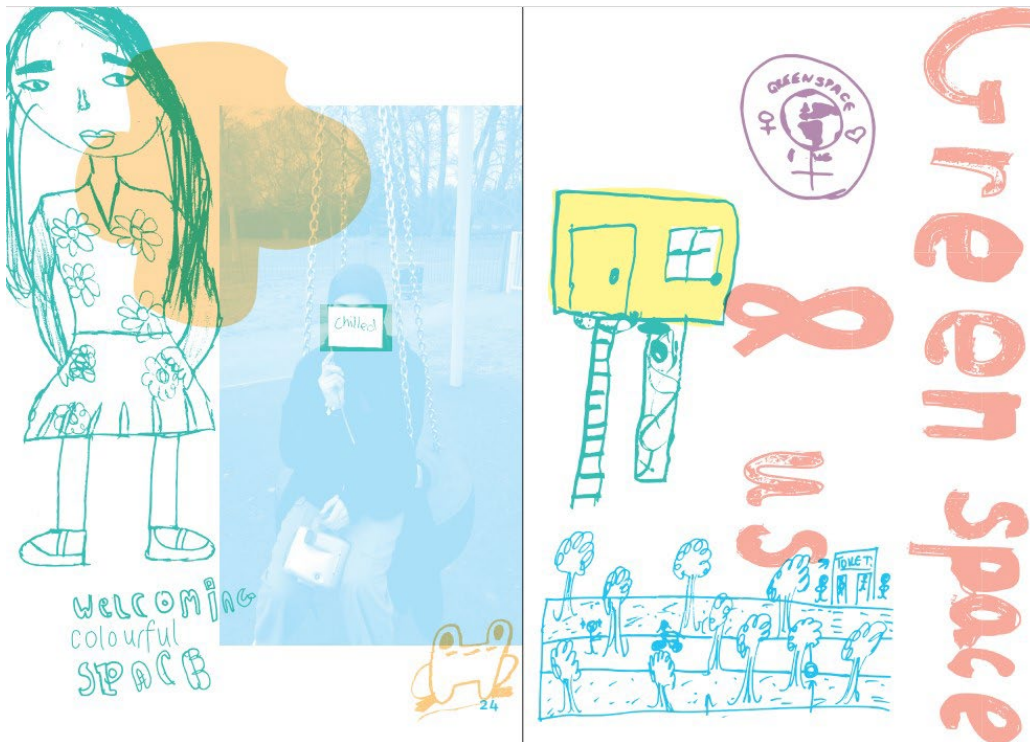


Figure 44: Closing pages of zine © Nor Greenhalgh, Commonbooks, Greenspace & Us



Figure 45: List of contributors to Greenspace & Us project and girls participating © Nor Greenhalgh, Commonbooks, Greenspace & Us



Figure 46: Back cover of zine © Nor Greenhalgh, Commonbooks, Greenspace & Us

www.gov.uk/natural-england

