

Analysis of Spring Equinox Mapping exercise: discussion paper for core group on 25th April

Background:

The gathering was asked to map their aspirations for the wood. Four base maps of the woodland were worked on by groups comprising about half a dozen people. Symbols were stuck on and notated to identify where approximately in the woods people would choose to site various activities/types of use. These choices were based on earlier surveys of people's aspirations for the wood and made in the context of the previously agreed principles.



Findings:

1. Choices of activity made by the groups

Figure 1 shows the activities considered suitable by each group.

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
reserves	Wild flower clearing	Wild areas, some clearing	Wild flowers
Tyre swing, zip wire, kids play in a hollow	Rope swing, zip wire	Rope swing, log play	Den, children's shelter and play
Hammock, tables, benches, chairs		Seats, discreet seating, Fixing points for hammock	seats
Compost toilet	loo	Loo and temporary screen	
Fire site	Fuel store	Wood store	Wood store
Shelter in hollows		Story telling amphitheatre Fixing point for shelter	
Badgers		Badger watching	
New access		Informal steps	Easy access
Quiet area	Hermit hollow, quiet gatherings	Meditation area,	Meditation area
Camping area	Summer camp site	camping in neighbours field	

	View points	Views, some clearing	
		Welcome sign	
		Pegs for tree climbing	
		store	
	Hollow structure, Sweat lodge		
		Fruit bushes in hedge	Bird feeding and nest boxes, wild fruit

Figure 1

Some observations:

- whilst some habitat improvement was mentioned, woodland in terms of restoration management was generally not mentioned – probably as a result of the questions asked.
- Viewing points mentioned were to the west and north west
- there was a general agreement on the type and balance of activity:
 - all four groups sited: adventurous children's play, natural areas, quiet areas, shelters
 - three of the four groups sited: seating areas, loo, wood store, camping areas (one off site),

2. Siting of activities

As with the types of activity, the siting showed a high degree of similarity, although not to the same extent . However, this was the first time that the group had used maps in the woods and the maps themselves were only indicative of the features and trees in the wood.

Figure two shows the maps produced.

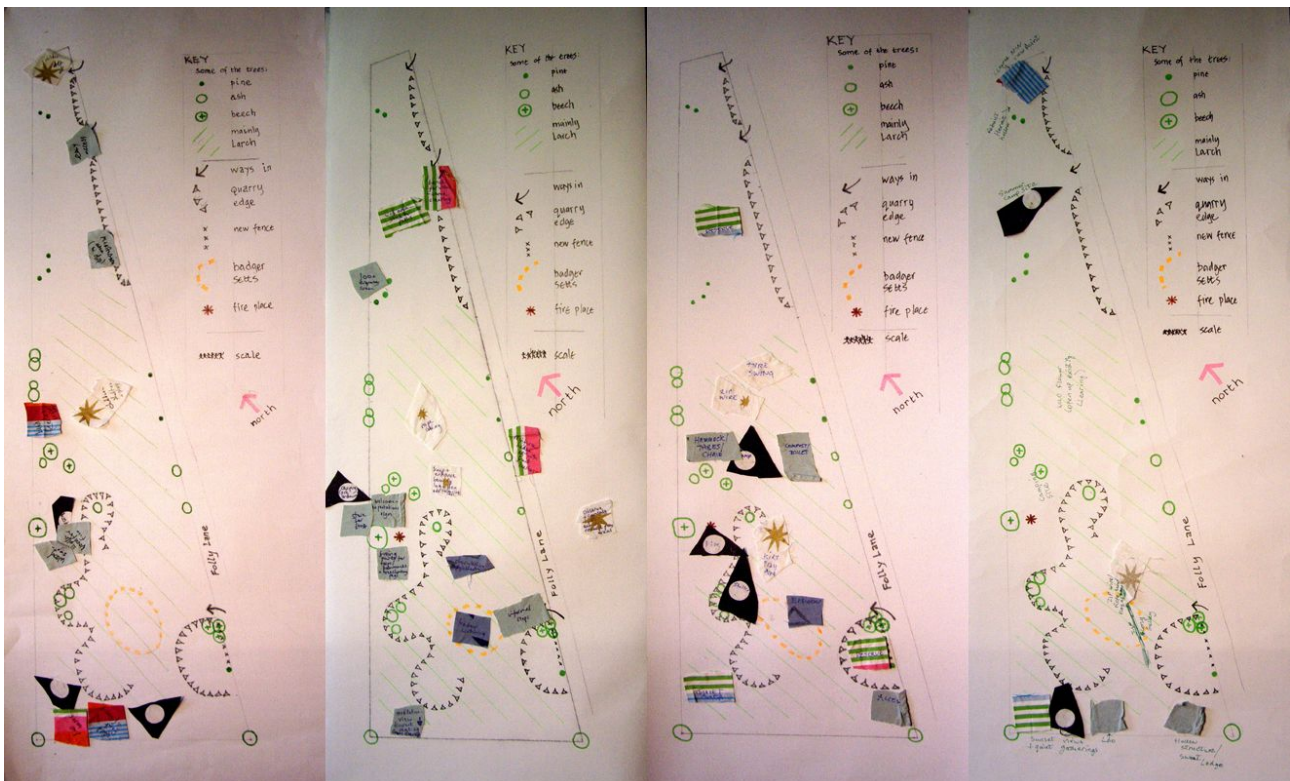


Figure 2

Figure three compares the locational choices made.

Each group's map has been looked at starting at the north and running south. The maps have been divided

into approximately similar bands running west to east and the activities and uses tabulated

Band	Map 1	Map 2	Map 3	Map 4
1 – most northerly		NW view point, hermit hollow		den
2	reserve	Summer camp site	Bench, wild area, some clearing, views to NW	Easy access
3			Loo and temporary	Meditation area
4	Tyre swing, zip wire	Wild flower clearing	Rope swing	Children's shelter and play
5	Hammock, tables, chairs, camping, compost toilet	campsite	Log play and den. Fruit bushes in hedge	Bird feeding and nest boxes
6	Fire, kids play in hollow		Camping (next door field) store, Welcome sign, fixing points for shelter, hammock and tree climbing	Wood store
7	Shelter, badgers	Zip wire, rope swing	Badger watching, informal steps. Story telling amphitheatre	
8	reserve			
9 – most southerly	New access, quiet area	Sunset views, quiet gatherings, loo, structure in hollow; sweat lodge	Meditation area, views – some clearing, discreet seating	Bird boxes, wild fruit and flowers

Figure 3

Figure four below highlights compatibility of choices:

	Seems generally compatible
	Needs considering, further research
	Possible conflict of uses

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Figure 4

Some Observations:

- generally the choices made were sympathetic to the ecology of the site as far as we are aware. The ideas need to be overlaid with the ongoing ecological survey of the woods
- generally the choices made were sympathetic to the nature of the woodland cover, However, further survey work is needed. In very broad terms, pine replaces larch to the northern end of the the woodland, mature beech specimens occur throughout along with ash and sycamore, holly, yew and other species. Beech is regenerating well. The most southerly quarry next to the road has a comparatively good woodland mix.
- generally the choices made would not impact adversely on the wider landscape value of the woodland
- the southern end is of course wider and a greater concentration of activities were therefore sited there.
- various uses were suggested for the quarries and the nature of activities in the large area of quarry containing the badger setts needs further consideration
- similar activities were sited in different places, namely:camping, adventurous play, shelter (albeit in some cases temporary), reserve/wild area. This needs rationalising.
- some activities such as bird feeding seems less site specific and could appear through out or be linked to another activity such as badger watching.

Proposed way forward

Agreeing a layout:

The core group to agree a “draft layout” based on the comments above. This to be negotiated with the wider membership on the 6th May (I think that's the date that we set aside for this).

Checking out the draft layout:

As well as negotiating with the wider membership, the working groups need to undertake further research to feed into the decision making, namely:

- a more detailed woodland survey – suggested objective to regenerate beech woodland but with a robust mix of species
- a more detailed ecological survey, taking into account the effects of woodland management options such as clearing and the impact of activities such as camping
- a more detailed aesthetic survey, again, taking into account the impact of suggested activities
- some more detailed ideas for combining the various ideas in terms of activities, such as the detail of shelters, children's play etc.
- some ideas about the resource implications of the draft layout both in terms of materials and people