

Towneley Garden Event Space

Project Delivery

A Town Council Working Group



Agenda – 20 May 2026 at 11:15

Venue: Council Offices – Station Building. **Membership:** Working Group members only (not open to the public). **Quorum:** Three members

1. Welcome by the Chair.

2. Apologise for Absence

To receive apologies from members of the group unable to attend.

3. Declarations of Interest

Members to declare any pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests relating to items on the agenda.

4. Community Engagement Survey: Preferred Design Direction

To receive and consider the formal results of the recent community engagement survey, including respondent numbers, and the preferred design direction indicated by respondents. (Results available before the meeting)

Discussion point: How the preferred design direction aligns with the original design brief, the project budget, and the UKSPF-funded delivery timeline.

5. Summary of Respondents Comments

To consider a summary of the qualitative comments submitted by survey respondents, including recurring themes, concerns, and suggestions.

(Summary available before the meeting)

Discussion point: Identify key themes that may require further action or influence the final design.

6. Final Design — Recommendation to Full Council

To agree the Working Group's recommended final design for the Towneley Garden Event Space, drawing on the original design brief, the project budget, the project timeline, the Working Group's deliberations to date, and the survey findings considered under items 4 and 5.

The Working Group is asked to identify a preferred option from those presented in Appendix 1, together with any refinements, so that a clear recommendation can be submitted to the Full Council meeting of 10 June 2026 for approval.

Decision sought: Agreement of the preferred design option, with supporting rationale, to be put to Full Council on 10 June 2026.

7. Draft Tender Specifications — Authority to Prepare

To authorise the Town Clerk and the Chair of the Working Group to begin drafting tender specifications for the Towneley Garden Event Space project, on the understanding that:

- No tender will be issued until the final design has been approved by Full Council on 10 June 2026;
- The procurement process will be conducted in accordance with the council's Financial Regulations and Standing Orders, and applicable UKSPF grant conditions; and
- The draft tender specifications will be brought back to the Working Group (and to Full Council as appropriate) before issue.

Discussion point: key elements to be reflected in the draft specifications, including scope of works, evaluation criteria, programme, and procurement route.

8. Forward Actions and Public Communication of Survey Results

To agree the actions arising from this meeting, with owners and target dates, including in particular how and when the survey results will be communicated to the public (e.g. council website, social media, etc.).

9. Other Items for Consideration

Any items previously notified to the Chair or Town Clerk in advance of the meeting.

10. Date, Time and Venue of Next Meeting

To confirm the date, time and venue of the next meeting of the Working Group.

Notes for Members:

- This Working Group has no delegated decision-making power; its role is advisory, and its recommendations are reported to the Full Council for decision.
- Members are reminded of their obligation to declare any disclosable pecuniary or other interests under the council's Code of Conduct.
- Background papers will be circulated by the Town Clerk in advance of the meeting.

REPORT by the TOWN CLERK

Towneley Garden Event Space

Public Consultation Results — Bowling Green Upgrade



Report Title	Towneley Garden Event Space — Public Engagement Results
Reference	LTC/TG/2026/CF-01
Meeting	Towneley Garden Event Space Project Delivery Working Group
Meeting Date	20 May 2026
Author	Michael Hill, Town Clerk & RFO
Status	For consideration
Date issued	16 May 2026

1. Purpose of Report

This report presents the results of the public engagement undertaken by Longridge Town Council on the proposed upgrade of the former bowling green at Towneley Garden. The Working Group is asked to consider the consultation findings in line with the original design brief, the project budget, and the UKSPF-funded delivery timeline.

2. Background

Following approval by the Towneley Garden Event Space Working Group, a public consultation was launched to gather community feedback on three design options for the former bowling green. The engagement invited respondents to indicate their preferred design from the following:

- Option 1 — An attractive, garden-style design with planted and seating areas that blend with the surrounding area and enhance the natural character of Towneley Garden.
- Option 2 — A low-maintenance design using durable materials, with planted and seating areas chosen to reduce long-term upkeep.
- Option 3 — Retention of the existing bowling green surface, with improved footpaths for better accessibility and movement around the green.

Respondents were also given the options to indicate that they support the upgrade but have no preference between the designs, or that they do not support any upgrade.



3. Methodology

Responses were collected via two channels: the Council's web-based engagement voting tool (MS Forms), and response forms available at the Council Offices and for two consecutive Thursdays (7 and 14 May) available at the Civic Hall. The engagement ran from 1 May to 18 May 2026.

A total of 349 responses were received in aggregate: 237 online responses and 112 paper responses. Of the 112 postal returns, 4 were assessed as spoilt papers (incomplete, illegible, or marked in such a way that the respondent's preference could not be determined) and have been excluded from the valid response count. The combined valid response total is therefore 345.

Each valid return represents one respondent's single preferred option. Online and postal responses have been combined into a single dataset for analysis; both channels are reported alongside one another in Table 1 below for transparency.

4. Consultation Results

A total of 349 responses were received across both channels, of which 351 were valid. The breakdown is set out in Table 1 below.

Table 1 — Response counts by option

Response	Online	Forms	Total	% of valid	Rank
Option 1 — Attractive, garden-style design with planted and seating areas	110	87	197	56.13%	1st
Option 2 — Low-maintenance design using durable materials	89	15	104	29.63%	2nd
Option 3 — Retention of existing bowling green surface with improved footpaths	28	7	35	9.97%	3rd
Support the upgrade but have no preference	9	2	11	3.13%	—
Do not support any upgrade	4	0	4	1.14%	—
Total valid responses	240	111	351	100.0%	—
Spoilt papers (excluded from valid responses)	—	4	4	—	—
Total responses received	240	115	351	—	—

5. Analysis

5.1 Support for the project in principle

The consultation demonstrates a clear and substantial mandate for the project. Of the 351 valid respondents, 347 (98.86%) support an upgrade of the former bowling green in some form. Only four respondents (1.14%) indicated that they do not support any upgrade. This represents a strong endorsement of the project as approved in principle by Full Council.

5.2 Preference between design options

Option 1 (garden-style design) is the leading preference, attracting 197 responses (56.13% of valid responses). Option 2 (low-maintenance design) ranks second with 104 responses (29.63%). Option 3 (retention with improved footpaths) attracts 35 responses (9.87%).

Combining the two design-led options, 295 respondents (85.5%) favour an active redesign of the bowling green over simple retention of the existing surface. Option 1 leads Option 2 by 93 responses, a margin of 26.5 percentage points and **an outright majority of all valid responses**.

It is notable that the postal returns reinforced and strengthened the preference for Option 1 expressed in the online responses. Option 1 attracted 78.38% of postal preferences for a named design option (87 of 111 valid postal responses indicating a design preference), compared with 45.8% in the online channel. This consistency across both response channels gives further confidence in the headline finding.

Table 2 — Aggregate positions

Aggregate position	Count	% of total
Supportive of an upgrade (Options 1, 2, 3 + no preference)	347	98.86%
Supportive of an active redesign (Options 1 and 2 combined)	301	85.75%
Prefer retention of existing surface (Option 3)	35	9.97%
Oppose any upgrade	4	1.14%

5.3 Headline findings

- The community clearly supports the project — only 1.14% of valid respondents opposed any upgrade.
- Option 1 (garden-style design) commands an outright majority — 56.13% of all valid responses, with a lead of 89 votes over the next option.
- There is a strong appetite for active redesign — 85.75% of respondents chose one of the two design-led options over retention.
- Option 3 (retention) is a clear minority preference, supported by approximately one in ten respondents.
- The preference for Option 1 was consistent across both online and postal channels and was, if anything, stronger in the postal returns.

- The 4 spoilt postal papers represent 3.4% of postal returns; this is within the range expected of a postal consultation exercise and does not materially affect the result.

6. Considerations for the Working Group

In recommending a preferred option to Full Council, the Working Group may wish to consider the following:

- Option 1 has a clear majority mandate from the community across both response channels and is consistent with the natural character of Towneley Garden.
- Option 2 attracts substantial support (29.6%) and offers the lowest long-term maintenance burden on the Council. Many design features of Options 1 and 2 are not mutually exclusive, and a hybrid approach combining the visual character of Option 1 with durable, low-maintenance planting and materials from Option 2 may be a deliverable compromise.
- The views of the 35 respondents who preferred Option 3 should be acknowledged in any communication of the outcome, particularly in respect of accessibility and improved footpaths, which can be incorporated into either design-led option.

7. Note

Source datasets: Online consultation returns (“Towneley Garden Bowling Green Upgrade — Community Feedback”) and postal responses are both held by the Town Clerk and available on request.

REPORT by the TOWN CLERK

Towneley Garden Event Space

Public Consultation Feedback Summary - Bowling Green Upgrade



Report Title	Community Engagement – On-Line Engagement Feedback Summary
Reference	LTC/TGW/2026/CONS-01
Meeting	Towneley Garden Event Space Project Delivery Working Group
Meeting Date	20 May 2026
Author	Michael Hill, Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer
Status	For Consideration
Date issued	16 May 2026

1. Purpose of Report

To present to the Working Group a summary of the on-line community consultation feedback received in respect of the proposed upgrade to the former bowling green at Towneley Gardens, and to identify the preferred design directions that may be derived from that feedback to inform the Working Group's recommendation to Full Council on 10 June 2026.

2. Background

Following the approval by the Towneley Gardens Event Space Working Group, a public consultation exercise was undertaken inviting comment on three illustrative design options for the former bowling green. A total of 239 online responses were received, of which 103 included substantive written comments (43% comment rate). This report analyses those online written submissions; quantitative voting data has been reported separately.

3. Headline Findings

The online feedback indicates clear directional preferences alongside a number of strongly held cross-cutting concerns. The principal findings are as follows:

1. Option 1 is the most frequently named preference among respondents who identified an option.
2. Provision for live performance, and in particular a bandstand or equivalent performance area, is the single most consistently requested feature, supported by an offer of engagement from Longridge Band.
3. Lighting, natural surveillance and CCTV are essential pre-conditions for community support, irrespective of the design option chosen.
4. Maintenance, durability and vandal-resistance are repeatedly cited as conditions of support, with several respondents conditioning their support on a credible maintenance regime.
5. There is a meaningful minority preference for biodiversity-led planting, including wildflower areas, pollinator planting and, in two submissions, a wildlife pond.
6. A small but vocal group oppose any material change, citing existing informal use of the green by children, families and dog walkers.

4. Analysis of Recurring Themes

The principal themes emerging from the 103 substantive written responses are tabulated below. Frequency figures are indicative and based on the Town Clerk’s thematic coding of free-text responses.

Theme	Frequency	Strength of feeling
Bandstand / dedicated performance space	~8 explicit mentions	Strong; includes formal support from Longridge Band
Event / market use (Field Day, Christmas, soap box)	~15 mentions	Very strong
Lighting, visibility and CCTV (anti-social behaviour)	~12–15 mentions	Very strong; cross-cutting
Maintenance, durability and resilience to vandalism	~12 mentions	Strong; a precondition for support
Biodiversity / wildflower / pollinator planting	~8–10 mentions	Strong from a defined minority
Accessibility (flat surfaces, durable seating)	~6 mentions	Strong; specific lived-experience accounts
Bins and litter management	~6 mentions	Moderate
Retain the green space as-is	~6–8 mentions	Vocal but minority

5. Preferences by Design Option

Where respondents expressed a preference for one of the published options, the following pattern emerges:

Option	Feedback summary
Option 1	Supported for its softer, planted character and biodiversity gains. Several respondents mention a poor use of useable open space; concerns raised that the footprint may be too small to accommodate Longridge Band.
Option 2	Valued for its flexibility to accommodate stalls, markets and events. Requested refinements included the removal of “square” features and the integration of built-in electrical points.
Option 3	Rarely named explicitly. Some respondents would welcome retention of grass for informal picnic and play use; others considered an all-grass scheme to be a missed opportunity for biodiversity or events.
Hybrid	A considered submission proposed combining elements of Options 1 and 3: perimeter planting with central grass retained, and a small inner circle hard-surfaced to host a band or similar performance. This proposal aligns with several recurring themes simultaneously.

6. Additional Suggestions Raised

A number of additional design and programme suggestions were raised by individual respondents. These are recorded below for the Working Group's information; they are not necessarily endorsed but should be considered as part of the design development process:

- A boules surface as a more accessible alternative to a traditional bowling green.
- Pitch and putt, mini golf or crazy golf as a revenue-generating community amenity.
- Outdoor table tennis tables and fixed chess boards.
- A 3G or 4G short artificial grass surface to reduce maintenance demand.
- A community garden project led by local volunteers.
- A small kiosk for ice cream and soft drinks, configured so as not to compete with local businesses.
- A heritage tribute element acknowledging the British Legion bowls history of the site.
- Longridge-themed heritage metalwork (gates, railings or interpretation).
- Children's play features such as a giant snakes-and-ladders or hopscotch.
- A wildlife pond at the centre of the scheme.



7. Risks and Considerations

The Working Group's attention should be given to the following considerations arising from the consultation:

- **Anti-social behaviour:** the consultation evidence base supports a design that maintains clear sightlines from Berry Lane, avoids creating concealed areas, and incorporates appropriate lighting and CCTV provision.
- **Maintenance liability:** the current RVBC Gardens maintenance budget covers grass cutting only. Any scheme involving structural planting, hard landscaping or built features will require a revised maintenance specification and a corresponding budgetary provision. Failure to plan for this is identified by respondents as the principal risk to the project's success.
- **Accessibility:** specific accessibility requirements were raised by respondents with personal lived experience, including the need for level surfaces and durable, age-appropriate seating. These requirements should be designed in rather than retrofitted.
- **Heritage and community identity:** the loss of the bowling green was noted with regret by a number of respondents. Inclusion of a heritage acknowledgement may assist in mitigating this concern.
- **Reputational risk:** respondents have drawn comparisons with delivery standards in Clitheroe, Whalley and Garstang. The Council's execution of this project will be measured against those benchmarks.

8. Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from the receipt of this report. However, the recommendations at paragraphs 3 and 5 below, if adopted, will inform the specification, capital cost estimate and ongoing revenue maintenance requirement of the preferred scheme, which will be the subject of a further report to Full Council on 10 June 2026.

9. Legal and Governance Implications

Public engagement undertaken in respect of this project supports the Council's obligations of community engagement under the principles of good governance. The Working Group's recommendation will be reported to Full Council for decision.

10. Equality Implications

The consultation feedback specifically highlights accessibility needs. Officers recommend that the design brief for the preferred scheme expressly addresses the Public Sector Equality Duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, with regard to age, disability and other relevant protected characteristics.

11. Recommendations

The Working Group is recommended:

No.	Recommendation
1	That the Working Group notes the outcome of the community consultation exercise, comprising 239 online responses, 103 of which (43%) contain substantive written feedback.
2	That the Working Group considers multi-use event space as the primary direction of travel, while giving formal consideration to a hybrid Option 1/3 scheme which retains central grass for informal use and provides a smaller hard-surfaced performance area.
3	That, irrespective of the option selected, the agreed design incorporates: (a) a dedicated provision for live performance, (b) external power supply, (c) lighting designed to maintain natural surveillance, (d) durable, vandal-resistant materials, (e) biodiversity-enhancing planting, and (f) accessibility provision in line with the Equality Act 2010.
4	That officers be instructed to engage directly with Longridge Band, which has offered its support, to validate the performance footprint of the preferred scheme prior to detailed design.
5	That officers prepare a Maintenance and Management Plan for the proposed scheme, to be reported alongside the design recommendation to Full Council on 10 June 2026.