



Panfield Pocket Park

(Development of a new pocket park)

Danny Canning
Chair of Panfield Community Association
(Registered Charity 270564)
23rd October 2021

Index

Section	Description	Page No
1	Executive Summary	3
2	Background to Panfield Pocket Park	5
3	Targeted Outcomes	7
4	Partnerships	8
5	Expenditure and Resources	10
6	Impact and Satisfaction	11
7	Physical Changes	18
8	Use of the Park and Volunteers	21
9	Lesson Learned	24
10	Contacts	26

1. Executive Summary

The development of Panfield Pocket Park has been welcomed by the villagers of Panfield and has really engaged the community in a way that has brought everyone closer together especially in this difficult time with the Covid Pandemic. The aim in our bid was: -

“This proposal is for the development of a “focal point” in the middle of the village that develops a green space into a garden park. There will be three garden areas that will be developed with the central garden also being a dedicated memorial garden. This will be interspersed with benches for residents of the village to enjoy the floral displays.”

PCA Application for Pocket Parks Grant Funding, 31st Dec 2019

As you will see later in this report, we believe that we have achieved this brief and have fully been supported by the residents of Panfield. To enable this project to be taken forward there are a number of key headlines that had an impact on this project; these are: -

Engagement with the Residents and Stakeholders

It was always key to this project to bring the residents with us on this journey. At every step we engaged and consulted with the residents. This included:

- Sharing our thoughts early on at the village fete
- Writing to residents who lived near / around the park and giving them an opportunity to express any concerns
- Putting plans in the local resident magazine and village notice boards
- Keeping residents updated through social media
- Asking for them to volunteer to build and maintain to park

In addition it was important to keep our partners engaged during the process and we worked very closely with the Parish Council who is responsible for the land and committed matched funding. We also had some great support from Braintree District Council especially their head of finance lead who really worked in partnership to release funds in-line with our needs while also being assured of appropriate spend.

Without this positive engagement we would not have been able to deliver this project especially though such difficult times.

Expertise / Knowledge

Our initial design was pulled together by a local resident and while we were happy to proceed with this, we did in the end decide to get advice from a professional landscape designer. In hindsight this was one of the most important decisions we made as the vision they elevated the design of the garden to a level that we would have never realised.

It was also important to engage with the local tradesman on what we needed which included garden maintenance, flower growers, bricklayers and garden landscapers.

By engaging with the residents not only did many supply their time free of charge but their input on materials and finishing touches was invaluable. Without their free time we would have probably had to scale back some of our ambitions for our Pocket Park

Low Maintenance

We always knew that an important aspect of the garden was to be low maintenance and we built this into our design with the materials we used. The flower beds are lined with plastic sheet and the surface area is covered with a weed barrier and wood chippings. This is to trap the rain water in the garden to reduce the need for watering and reduce evaporation. However, while we came out of the first lock down and approached finishing the garden areas it became clear due to the very prolonged hot weather that we would need a water source at the pocket garden to keep the plants watered during prolonged wet spells. Therefore, while it was not in the original plans, we have installed a water point with a 40m extendable hose so that all the plants / trees can be watered when needed.

Covid 19

The pandemic has had a significant impact on the original plans of involving volunteers during the construction of the pocket garden. When we first started construction of the flower beds we had up to 12 volunteers all support the build. We only had two weekends working on the construction before lockdown so after lockdown we had to change our approach to limit the number of people working at any time and that they also had to be in bubbles. The other big factor caused by Covid was the supply of materials, we placed many orders with various suppliers and these all closed and some did not immediately open or had a long back log of orders so whilst we were ready to restart we did not have the raw materials to do so.

Events in the Pocket Garden

While abiding to Covid restrictions we were able to hold some short events on the pocket garden which included the VE Day Celebrations and Remembrance Day, which were very well attended by the villagers. We had planned to hold a choir service but was advised to not hold this by the local council which we considered and agreed was prudent at the time. We have held our annual garage sale this year and held refreshments and stalls on the green which worked well. So, while there has been an impact we have also seen the potential that this pocket garden can bring to the village.

The rest of this report goes into details of shaping of the Pocket Garden, the impact and satisfaction from the residents and the physical changes we have achieved. We feel that we have met our original aims and exceeded these.

2. The background to our new pocket park

Panfield is a small village in rural Essex with a population of under 1000. The village has an active community with many different groups like the Twinning Association, Friends of Panfield Church, Panfield Community Association and many different clubs and groups. The village has a community centre and village pub but what it really lacks is an outside space that brings the community together.

The original concept of having a Pocket Garden was proposed by a resident in the village after someone from the village erected a silhouette in the village of a soldier for Remembrance Sunday.

At our annual village fete (July 2019) we put forward the proposal of looking at developing this area into a Memorial Garden for the village. The fete had approximately 400+ visitors on the day and they were asked for their opinion if they thought this would be beneficial to the village and the type of design they would prefer. On this feedback we proposed to have one of the gardens as a memorial garden and use this to celebrate VE day and to remember all those that may have lost their lives in world conflicts from the Village.

The propose site for our Pocket Park was an isolated piece of green space that was created after the development of some new houses more than a decade ago. This area is about 0.08 hectares and is an ideal location to create a focal point for the village and residents and could be incorporated into future village events like VE day, Garage Sale, Christmas tree lights, carol singing, etc.

Before developing this site it was not used for any purpose and was just a barren piece of grassland. The site is surrounded by various housing including bungalows, semi-detached and a combination of private, housing association and shared housing.

The health benefits for the residents of Panfield are potentially huge. At present there is no focal point of attraction for residents to come out of their homes and just have a short walk or stroll around the village and meet other people. The recent Joint Assessment Needs Analysis for the Braintree district area identified several key health inequalities that this Garden Park would hope to support:-

- It is predicted that the Braintree District will have a higher percentage of older people compared to the Essex average (22.6%) by 2034.
- Life expectancy at age 65 (the number of additional years a person could expect to live) was 20.6 years for females and 18.7 years for males; this is the (joint) lowest female life expectancy at 65 in the county.
- Hip fractures among persons aged over 65 years was higher than the rate across Essex as a whole.

- Older people are especially vulnerable to loneliness and social isolation and it can have a serious effect on long term health conditions.

Now the impact of the pandemic has only exacerbated these inequalities.

The funding received from MHCLG has enabled us to be more ambitious than our original consultations with the residents of Panfield. Our final proposal saw the creation of three different gardens areas with each having distinct features. There will be sitting areas near all the gardens and strategically placed new trees that will supply future shade for those enjoying the area. The trees planted were all fruit cherry, apple and plum that residents can pick or that support local wildlife.

3. Targeted Outcomes

Below lists the main outcomes that Panfield Community Association was trying to achieve from the development of this new Pocket Garden

Targeted Outcomes for our new Pocket Garden	
Improve the physical appearance of the existing green space into a garden park	Yes
Increase the use of the existing green space where it can be utilised by residents of Panfield	Yes
Increasing local people's satisfaction with the park/green space / local area than before project	Yes
Increase the number of people who volunteer to work to support the park/green space than before the project	Yes
Increase the use of the park to bring people from different backgrounds together (social mixing) than before the project	Yes
Improve biodiversity and environmental impacts than before the project	Yes
Improvements in wellbeing as outlined by the health in equalities locally	Yes
To create a focal point for the village of Panfield	Yes
To create a memorial garden to those from the village who have lost their lives to protect the freedoms we enjoy today.	Yes

4. Partnerships

The main partners for this project are: -

Panfield Community Association

Panfield Community Association is a registered charity (No. 270564) that has three main objectives but the most important is to:

“(a) promote the benefit of the inhabitants of Panfield and the neighbourhood together defined by the Parish of Panfield (hereinafter called "the area of benefit") without distinction of sex, sexual orientation, race or of political, religious or other opinions, by associating together the said inhabitants and the local authorities, voluntary and other organisations in a common effort to advance education and to provide facilities in the interests of social welfare for recreation and leisure-time occupation with the object of improving the conditions of life for the said inhabitants;”

Panfield Community Association
Constitution 2017

The development of this Garden Park meets the criteria for our constitutional purpose. Panfield Community Association was the project lead for this project and would be responsible for the long-term maintenance of the Pocket Garden. In addition, Panfield Community Association agreed to support the project with a commitment of £1,500 from its own charity funds in-line with its constitution.

Panfield Parish Council

Panfield Parish Council are the responsible owner of the land where the Pocket Garden is sited. During the conception of the project and during its implementation they have always being very supportive. They endorsed what we were trying to achieve and backed this up with a commitment of £2,000 from the parish funds. Their main ask from the project was to have something that enhanced the village.

Braintree District Council

As part of the grant conditions, it was required for the Braintree District Council to hold the grant funds and to ensure that the project was monitored and evidenced that expenditure was appropriate for its original purpose. Cllr Peter Tattersley was very supported of the project and enable access to the Head of Finance Trevor Wilson. As we had to have agreement for Braintree District Council before we submitted our application this was a very tight turn around to facilitate.

Local Tradesman

We made a decision early in the project to try where possible to use local traders, this enabled us to either facilitate favourable terms or in many cases they supplied their time free of charge and we only had to cover raw materials costs. The trade businesses that we engaged and supplied their time free of charge were: -

- Katie B's Garden Maintenance
- W Kelly Brickwork
- MB Pipeworks

And the following business we used that offered favourable terms were: -

- Silverton Aggregates
- Rob's Landscapes

All except for one tradesperson they all lived in the village and their support was invaluable. We promised for those that gave their free time to include them in any publicity. We did have to use a wide range of suppliers for specialist equipment which could not be sourced locally and had to use plant suppliers across the region due to Covid 19 affecting plant stocks.

Residents of Panfield

Obviously, the most important aspect of this project was the support from the residents and the encouragement the volunteers received during the construction of the pocket garden, without this we would never have got the project off the ground and delivered.

5. Expenditure and Resources

Below is a list of the resource and expenditure for this project

Resource	Number of people	Cost £
Staff who ran / managed the project	1	0
Volunteers who delivered the project (you may not need to include costs, if people were not offered any incentives)	16	0
Totals	17	0

Incurred Expenditure		
Supplier	Descriptions	Costs
Silvertons	Flower bed construction	£4,631
Screwfix		
Argos		
Wickes		
Silvertons		
Wickes		
Katie Garden Maintenance	Flower bed Planting	£1,460
Gardeners Dream		
Hayloft		
Jackson Nurseries		
Oliver Nurseries		
Thompson & Morgan		
Wickes	Long Term Maintenance	£957
CEF		
Edwards		
BP Plastics		
Ebay		
Anglia water	Water Connection + Meter	£1,747
Anglia Sign	Memorial Plaques	£890
Garden4less	Garden Benches	£1,117
Robs Landscapes	Pathway construction	£3,300
J Gower	Landscape Garden Designer	£500
UK Power Networks	Electrical Power Supply	£1,406
British Gas	Meter Fitting	£119
W S Electric	Electrical connections	£318
Volunteers	Electrical Cable Laying	£855
Signs	Pocket Park Sign	£150
	Total	£17,450

6. Impact and Satisfaction

This is a new Pocket Garden and therefore it is not possible to measure the impact before and after as there is no data available from its previous use, which was a green barren space. What we will be able to demonstrate from a Panfield resident survey is the impact they feel the new Pocket Garden has had since its completion. In addition to this we have asked residents to share their thoughts, and these are included below as well.

The feedback gives an overwhelming endorsement that the Panfield Pocket Garden has achieved its aims by:-

- Creating a focal point for the village (100% of residents agree)
- Developing a place to meet and chat with friends, neighbours and family (86% of residents agree)
- Brought the village closer together (resident comments)
- Creating a place to enhance biodiversity (resident comments)

We believe that we have supported the residents wellbeing through the Pocket Garden during these difficult time by:-

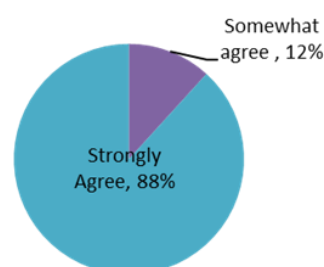
- 98% Have enjoyed the Pocket Garden
- 100% Believe the silhouettes and themes enhanced the village spirit
- 99% Believe the lit Christmas Tree enhanced the village

Use if the Pocket Garden has been proven by:-

- 88% Believe the Garage Sale refreshment on the Pocket Garden enhanced the event
- 55% Attended the VE Day Celebrations
- 51% Attended Remembrance Sunday

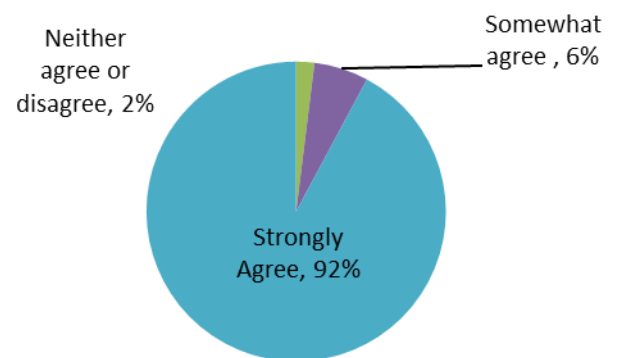
Has the Pocket Garden created a focal point for the village?				
0	0	0	6	45
Strongly Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly Agree
0	0	0%	12%	88%
Strongly Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly Agree

Has the Pocket Garden created a focal point for the village?



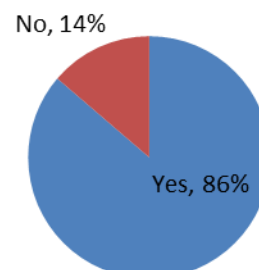
Has the Pocket Garden enhanced the village?				
0	0	1	3	47
Strongly Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly Agree
0	0	2%	6%	92%
Strongly Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly Agree

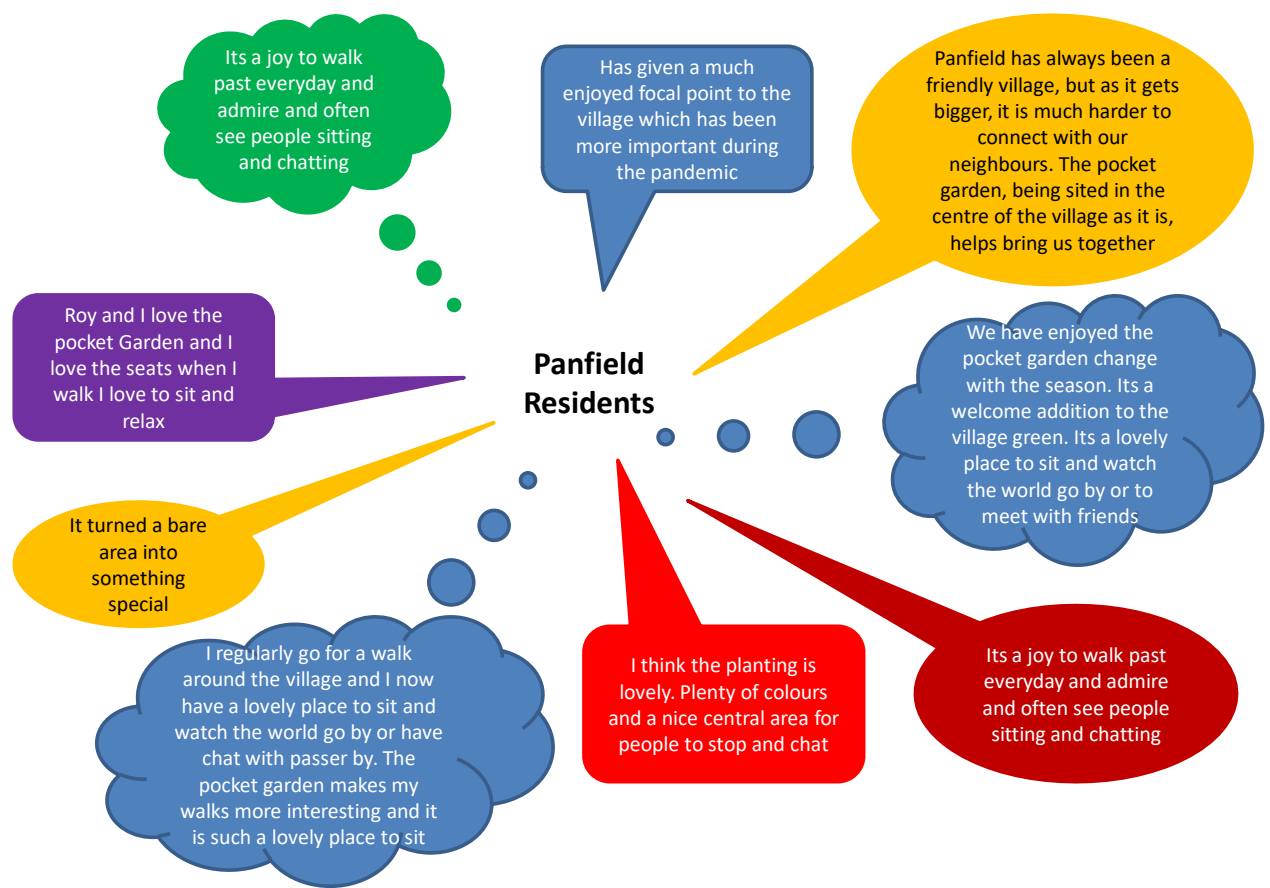
Has the Pocket Garden Enhanced the Village



Have you had a discussion with friends and relatives about the Pocket Garden or had a conversation while being at the Pocket Garden?	
44	7
Yes	No
86%	14%
Yes	No

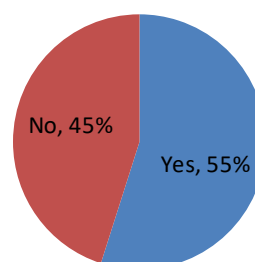
Have you had a discussion with friends and relatives about the Pocket Garden or had a conversation while being at the Pocket Garden?





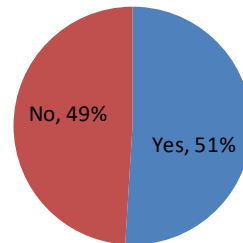
Did you attend the VE celebrations day Event?	
28	23
Yes	No
55%	45%
Yes	No

Did you attend the VE celebrations day Event?



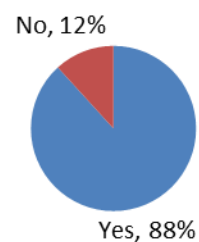
Did you attend the Remembrance Day Event?	
26	25
Yes	No
51%	49%
Yes	No

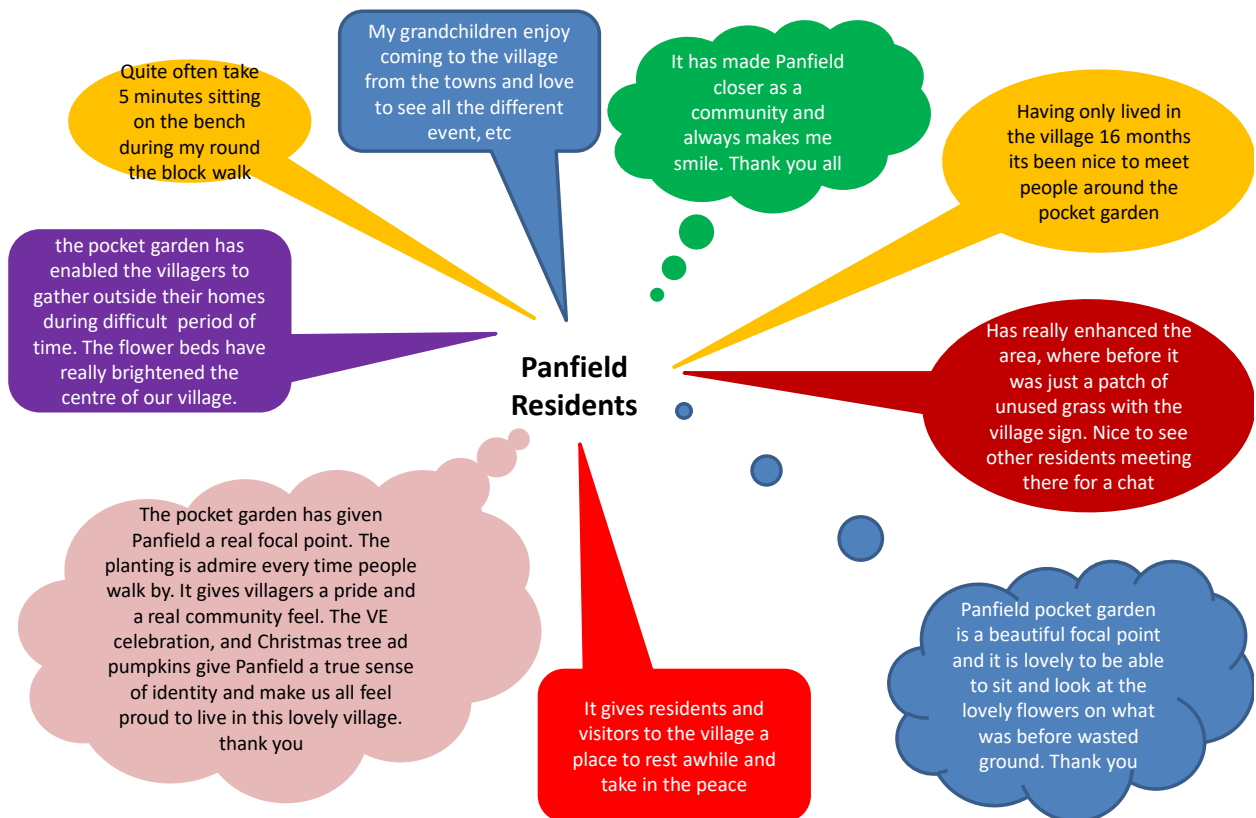
Did you attend the Remembrance Day Event?



Do you believe the Garage Sale refreshment and sales tables on the Pocket Garden added to the event?	
45	6
Yes	No
88%	12%
Yes	No

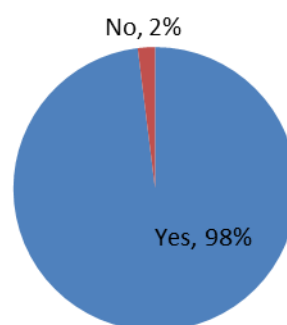
Do you believe the Garage Sale refreshment and sales tables on the Pocket Garden added to the event?





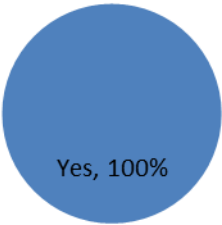
Do you believe the lit Christmas Tree on the Pocket Garden enhanced the village?	
50	1
Yes	No
98%	2%
Yes	No

Do you believe the lit Christmas Tree on the Pocket Garden enhanced the village?



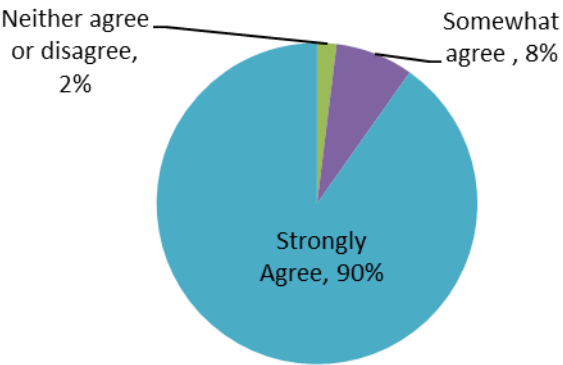
Do you believe have the soldiers, Xmas silhouettes and pumpkins enhanced the village spirit?	
51	0
Yes	No
100%	0%
Yes	No

Do you believe have the soldiers, xmas silhouettes and pumpkins enhanced the village spirit?



Have you enjoyed the Pocket Garden?				
0	0	1	4	46
Strongly Disagree	Somewh at disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewha t agree	Strongly Agree
0	0	2%	8%	90%
Strongly Disagree	Somewh at disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewha t agree	Strongly Agree

Have you enjoyed the Pocket Garden?





Bio-diversity

The original plan was not particularly targeted at biodiversity, but we did want the potential to attract insects and birds. We planted fruit trees that will attract birds for feeding and nesting (cherry, plum and apples tree) and insects to pollinate and collect pollen, even though it will need a few years for these trees to mature sufficiently, the apple trees did have fruit this year.

A wide range of flowering plants have been used in the garden to attract pollinating insects and by using wood chip to cover the surface ensure it stays moist and is very attractive to insects. It is impossible to measure at this point the impact until the garden has matured further.

Needs that have been supported.

As identified in the Joint Assessment Needs Analysis for the Braintree district and the comments previously stated from the residents during our survey, we can be reasonably confident that the pocket garden has assisted with:

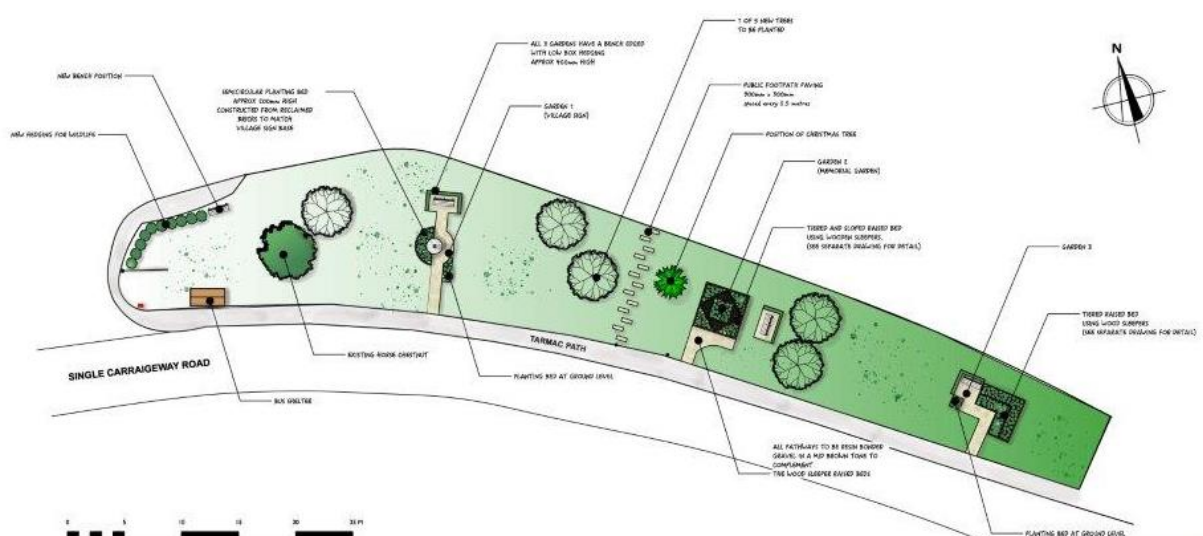
- Social isolation by creating a place that neighbour, friends and family can meet outside during the Pandemic
- Mental health by creating a place where people can relax when walking around the village
- Mental health by creating an environment that is enjoyable and raises the spirit.
- Physical health by creating a place that residents can walk to and know the can rest before continuing.
- Mental Health by creating an environment that the residents can be proud of.

7. Physical Changes

The site for our Garden Park is on an isolated piece of green space that was created after the development of some new houses more than a decade ago. This area is about 0.08 hectares and is apart from a village sign, one tree and a seat situated in the wrong location there is nothing else on the green (see below).



As stated previously we employed the use of a Landscape designer and he designed the proposed Pocket Garden (see below).





This design resulted in the following new physical changes for our Pocket Garden :-

- 2 raised railway sleeper constructed flower beds
- 1 raised brick wall flower bed
- 3 new park large benches
- 3 new footpaths to raised gardens and flower beds
- 5 new semi mature fruit trees (2 x apple, 2 x cherry and 1 x plum)
- 3 box hedges around the park benches
- Electric supply and point
- Water supply and Point, combined with 40m extendable hose
- Mixture of different plants
- Memorial Plaques

The following pictures show the end result of Panfield Pocket Garden.





8. Use of the park and Volunteers

The pandemic has had a significant effect on the use of the Panfield Pocket Garden events. However even with this we have been able to hold 3 significant events where hundreds of residents came to the Pocket Garden to celebrate VE Day and Remembrance Sunday. In addition, this year we had our first normal event without any pandemic restrictions which was our Garage Sale and served refreshments on the pocket Garden as well as having sale stalls which had approximately 200 visitors.

You can see from the resident comments that many people have used the benches to sit and watch the world go by. I have seen many people sitting on the benches and what I have enjoyed the most is the wide range of ages from grandparents with their grandchildren, teenagers chatting and residents just resting and chatting. We have had ramblers rest to have their lunch as well

We have also used the Panfield Pocket garden to recognise specific times of the year like Halloween and Christmas (where children were encouraged to make decorations and hang them on the tree). All of these received comments that they raise the spirit and made people smile. While this seems a small thing it is important it today's world to enjoy the simple things around us and to make people smile.



VE Day Celebrations



Remembrance Day (Memorial Plaques)



**Garage Sale
(refreshment stand and
sales tables)**





Halloween



Christmas

Voluntary support for the park

As described previously this green space was not previously used and therefore there were no volunteers used. Once we had received the grant we reached out for volunteers from the village and received overwhelming support and offers to support. Unfortunately, because of the Covid-19 it was not felt we could utilise all this support. We worked in smaller groups on the project, generally bubbles of 1 – 3 people and working in different areas of the park. In total we had 16 volunteers work on constructing the Pocket Garden, but we could easily have had 30 volunteers.

We also had several tradesmen give their time free of charge which equates to another 5 volunteers.

It became clear due to the hot weather in 2020 that you would need a water supply for the garden, even with this you need volunteers to utilise that water supply. We asked for volunteers and had 10 people come forward and as a result we created a rota of volunteers to water the garden between May and October 2021, this has proven to be a big success.

We have had a local gardener who grows their own plants supply and plant seasonal flowers to enhance what we originally planned. In addition, we have another 4 volunteers that carryout occasional weeding of the pathways and flower beds.

Overall, the community has stepped forward so that all the work can be shared across a range of volunteers. The picture below shows some of the volunteers in action



9. Lessons Learned.

Expertise / Knowledge

When designing something that seems simple but is quite complex you need to access the relative experience / knowledge without us using the Landscape designer the garden would never have included the complexity of design for the flower beds combined with the location of the garden benches and footpaths. They also listed a full inventory of the type of plants and planting location. This was highly beneficial as most of us were not gardeners.

By listening to the bricklayers and landscape gardeners ensured that all the preparation for the works was carried out effectively and the amount of materials needed was accurately calculated, which saved time and expense. We would advise anyone who is embarking on a similar project to speak to professionals as early as possible as it could potential enhance the design and spare unnecessary construction expenditure.

Expect the unexpected

During the construction phase there was a few unexpected challenges, these were: -

- The electrical supply cable that we needed to tap into should have been buried at a depth of approximately 550 – 650mm. However, we eventually found the cable at a depth of 1200mm.
- Water connection was problematical as their plans were inaccurate as they could not find the water supply. It took them a further 4 days to find the actual water supply that was under the road and not the path
- Covid Lockdown and the impact on suppliers. I had planned to use one local supplier for the plants but in the end because of supply issues I had to use 6 different plant suppliers.
- The weather was extremely hot for the first part of the year the year which made digging the trench for the water supply virtually impossible and had to use pneumatic tools to cut through the mud
- Ironically digging the hole for the Electricity was the opposite and was surrounded by torrential rainfall.

The lesson learned here is that everything will take longer than you would have reasonably expected so always build gaps between one step to the next. Otherwise, you end up with supplies being delivered too early (when this is in a public space you need to secure all material or risk theft) or you have to rearrange tradesmen and inspectors for commencement of their works.

Utilities and time

When working with any of the utility companies you need to start to engage with them at the earliest possible opportunity. This is not because the actual works takes long for both the connection of the water and electricity it did not take more than a

physical day. However, the arrangement to complete bureaucracy and the steps you need to complete can take several months for example:

Electricity Connection

To get an electrical connection you have to have three different companies involved they are UK Power Networks for the supply, British Gas for the fitting of the meter and a local electrician to connect to the power board. However, everything has to be inspected prior to the next step, so it is difficult to line all of these providers up at the same time.

In addition, before anything happens with Power Networks they need to complete a site survey combined with a land search to ensure you are the relevant owner of the land and where other utilities may be situated. This can easily take between 3 to 4 months.

It was similar for the governance process around the water connection, but this was complicated even more as it was designated as a field installation rather than domestic. The specific for a field point is very different to domestic and requires two different inspectors at each stage of the process.

Therefore, you should contact all utilities companies that you may need at the concept phase to understand what installation specification you need to meet and potential timeframe for the governance and works.

Residents

Even if you don't think there is someone who can help always "ask". It is always surprising how many people you may know but you don't always know what they can do for you.

We had a wide range of offers by just asking from diesel generators for power for the site to a "mole" that could lay the electrical cable from the supply cabinet to the central flower bed (approx. 50m). So always ask and it could save you time and money.

The other is that more people are happy to support projects like this than you may think all you need to do is ask.

What made these changes possible?

Engagement with the residents and stakeholders made this project possible, without their support it would never have happened. So it is critical to consult with them what you are doing and then keep them informed every step of the way. Without this we would not have had the volunteers, the tradesmen who gave their time free, Parish council for funding and support and the District Council who needed to be confident we could deliver the project on budget and in time.

You can never engage or communicate to much!

10.Contact details

For further information please contact: -

Danny Canning

Chair of Panfield Community Association

Address

Panfield Community Association
Panfield Village Hall
Panfield
Braintree
Essex County Council CM7 5AQ

Email Address

Panfieldca@gmail.com