



Our Town, Our Views Matter!

Presented by:

Children of Parkfields Middle School - Toddington

The Children are School Councillors at Parkfields and are also represented on Central Beds Youth Parliament.

They would like to share some of the highlights and information from the survey. They have presented overviews and general feedback for your information.

This was presented by the School children at a Toddington Parish Council meeting where they discussed the findings in more detail and shared their points of view from the survey.

They hope that their voices will help support any future planning for their town – Todddington.

Note - This report was edited purely for the purpose of removing names.

Section 1 Who Took Part? (Demographic Highlights)

1. Age Distribution

We think the survey reached a good mix between "Lower/Middle" and "Middle/Upper" school students. **551** students responded:

We think this is crucial because it shows you that both young children and teenagers shared their views.

- 30% from Toddington St Georges (Years 3-4)
- 45% from Parkfields Middle School (Years 5-8)
- 25% from Harlington Upper School (Mainly Years 9-10)

2. Residency Profile - Where do the children live?

We asked the children where they lived, to see if they were 'local voices'.

Of the 551 children who answered the questionnaire:

Residency Status	Number of Children	Percentage
Live in Toddington	515	93.50%
Do NOT live in Toddington	36	6.50%
Total	551	100%

It shows that the survey isn't just "general" feedback — it is a direct reflection of the children who live, play, and go to school within the parish boundaries. Even the 36 who don't live here in Toddington attend school in the village (like Parkfields or St. George's), meaning they still use **our** local facilities every day.

For information - the 36 'Day residents' to Toddington came from:

Chalgrave & Tebworth: These are the most frequent "non-Toddington" day time residents, as Toddington is their official catchment area for school and services.

Westoning & Tingrith: Smaller numbers of children from these areas say they use Toddington as their primary "hub" for shops and the park.

Harlington: Older children often travel between the two villages for social groups or sports.

Chalton: Many children from Chalton attend Parkfields Middle School. However less use the village for their social activities after school.

So what did the survey tell us?

Section 2 was about the clubs and activities for young people in Toddington

The highlights from this section:

Strong Support for School-Based Clubs: Many of the young children from Years 3–6 feel well-served by the after-school clubs at St. George's and Parkfields, particularly sports and dance.

There was though a sharp decline in satisfaction for children **Year 7 and above**. Many feel that once they leave primary-age activities, there is "**nothing left for them**" in the village.

A positive in this section of the questionnaire was a high Interest in **Informal Activities**: Not every child wants a "structured" club with a teacher. A large percentage of respondents want "drop-in" style activities where they can just be with friends.

Transport as a Barrier was mentioned a few times: For many older children, the "club" they want to go to is in Dunstable or Luton (like Grove Corner or Skate Parks), but they can't get there easily or cheaply.

The question about costs based on the survey was unclear. The general view on the affordability of activities in Toddington was mixed but with a clear trend toward **growing concern as children get older** into Year 7 onwards. (11+)

There was a question about safety:

The majority of children feel safe in Toddington. This is clear from the data for the lower and Middle school children.

The Lower School Bubble: Younger children feel extremely safe (**82%**), largely because they are almost always supervised by an adult or older sibling when using these spaces.

From the data but there is a trend where safety confidence drops as the children get older. The comments section also implies that this decline isn't necessarily because Toddington is "dangerous," but because older children use these spaces **independently** and often **later in the evening**.

The Year 9/10 View: The 15% of older students who "Rarely/Never" feel safe said **poor lighting** and **feeling intimidated by larger groups** as their main

reasons for feeling unsafe. They also stated that the M1 bridge area or poorly lit paths as deterrents for walking to friends' houses in the winter.

Poor pavement quality was also recorded several times in the comments sections.

Section 3 - What else would make Toddington an even better place for you?

This section was the 'Wish list' of the questionnaire:

The data highlights included:

The "Want"	% of Respondents	Why it matters
New Play Equipment	42%	Current parks are losing engagement with children over age 10.
Better Lighting	24%	This is the primary barrier to children feeling safe in the village.
Indoor Hub/Café	38%	Young people want to spend time (and small amounts of money) locally.
Pump/Skate Track	29%	There is currently zero provision for "wheeled sports" in the village.

We summarised this into **5 Top Wishes** from this section and the comments section...

Top 5 Improvements (The "Wishlist")

- 1. Advanced Play & Social Equipment (42%):** The most frequent request was for "older" equipment. This includes a **Zip Wire** (the #1 specific item mentioned), trampolines, and more challenging climbing frames. Many felt the current parks are "too babyish."
- 2. A Dedicated Youth "Hangout" (38%):** There is a significant demand for a safe, indoor social space that is **not** a school. Key requirements included:
 - Access to **Free Wi-Fi**.
 - Affordable snacks/drinks (a "Youth Café").
 - Gaming consoles or pool tables.
- 3. Wheels & Tracks (29%):** A large group of respondents (particularly Years

6–9) want a **Pump Track** or a small **Skate Park**. Currently, they feel they have to travel to Dunstable or Luton for this, and many want a local space for scooters and BMX bikes.

4. Safety & Lighting (24%): Better lighting was the top "infrastructure" improvement. Children specifically pointed out:

- The **M1 Bridge area** and the paths leading to the recreation ground.
- A desire for **solar lighting** so they can stay in the parks slightly longer in the winter months without feeling unsafe.

5. Village Cleanliness & Environment (18%): Children are very aware of their surroundings. The main environmental "wants" were:

- More **bins** (specifically for recycling and dog waste).
- Better quality grass/turf that doesn't become a "mud bath" in the winter

Section 4 - Your community and getting involved

Again, using data from the questionnaire and also from the comments suggestions, we summarised the following for you:

1. High "Village Pride" (78%)

The most striking data point is that **78% of respondents** said they were "**Proud**" or "**Very Proud**" to say they live in Toddington.

- **The Insight:** Children aren't looking to change the village because they dislike it; they want to improve it because they feel a strong connection to it.
- **The message we want to give to the Parish Council is:** "We like our village, and we want to help you make it better."

2. The "Information Gap" (62%)

A significant **62% of children** reported that they "**Rarely**" or "**Never**" know what is happening in the village regarding events or council decisions.

- **The Data:** While the current medias and website work for adults, the data shows they aren't reaching the under-16s.
- **The Want:** **55%** suggested they would look at a dedicated **Instagram page** or regular 'Parish Posts'. In the future could we consider a Toddington Social media page run by the Youth/School Council for village updates?

3. Desire for "Action, not just Talk" (41%)

When asked if they wanted to get involved in community projects (like litter picks, tree planting, or event planning), **41% said "Yes" or "Maybe."**

- **The Insight:** Over 200 children - almost a small "Volunteer Army" of said they would be ready to help if the Parish Council organises the events. (How this translates into real numbers is unknown though.)

The Most Popular Activities recorded to help Toddington included:

Community Gardening/Nature projects: 45% said they were interested in volunteering.

Helping at Village Fetes: 38% interest.

Litter Picks (with rewards/pizza): 30% interest.

4. A Permanent Voice (68%)

68% of respondents felt that the Parish Council should have a permanent way to listen to young people.

- **The Suggestion:** A "Youth Question Time" at the start of Parish Meetings or a dedicated budget for a "Youth-Led Project" once a year.

Section 5 - Comments - what else would you like to tell us?

Summary from the comments made: We have taken a few highlights already mentioned to finalise our presentation to the Parish Council

1. When children say there is The "Nothing to Do" Myth vs. Reality

- The Point: It isn't that there is *nothing* to do, but that there is nothing **appropriate for anyone over the age of 11 according to the questionnaire.**
- The Data: A large number of comments mentioned feeling **"too old for the swings but too young for the pub."**
- The Message: "We don't need a theme park; we just need a space where we are allowed to exist without being told to 'move on'."

2. Safety is About "Visibility"

- **The Point:** Safety wasn't about crime; it was about the dark. Many final comments mentioned specific "black spots" like the path between the High Street and the Glebe.
- **The Message:** "Lighting up our walk home is the single fastest way to make 100% of us feel safer in our own village."

3. A Desire for Independence

- **The Point:** Many older children (Years 8–10) used the final comments to talk about transport. They feel "trapped" in the village because bus prices are high and cycle paths are non-existent.
- **The Message:** "Better connectivity—whether it's a safer bike path to Harlington or a cheaper bus fare—is our top priority for independence."

4. "We Care More Than You Think"

- **The Point:** There were dozens of comments about litter, dog mess, and climate change. The children are frustrated that the village they love isn't being looked after perfectly.
- **The Message:** "We are ready to help. If you provide the bins and the projects, we will provide the volunteers."

Our Closing Message to the Parish Council

We have spent time looking through this data, and the message is clear: we have heard from 551 of your youngest residents who care deeply about where they live. We have told you today that we are proud of Toddington and its community spirit, but we are also ready and excited to work with you to make our village even better. We want to see parks that challenge us, social spaces that welcome us, and a village that feels safe and connected for everyone, regardless of their age.

We are often told that we are 'the future' of this village, but we want to remind you that we live here—and contribute to Toddington—right now. We hope this data serves as a roadmap for your future planning and helps you make decisions that include our voices. We are ready to help, we are ready to get involved, and we are ready to build the future of Toddington together. Thank you for listening to us."