

Methley Neighbourhood Action Street Improvement Questionnaire August 1995

As part of the “On the Streets” weekend, Methley Neighbourhood Action asked Methleys residents to complete a Street Improvement Questionnaire in order to canvas their views. Two questionnaires were produced - one a “Street Quiz” aimed at children. Eighty two forms were completed and returned. Apart from the tick boxes there were a wide variety of suggestions and comments as outlined below.

Adults responses

Residents from all ten streets in the Methleys responded.

Question	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
The Methleys is a special area with its own character which should be improved	95%	5%	0
Through-traffic should be kept out of the Methleys to make the streets safer	93%	7%	0
There should be a special feature such as a large sign and/or plants to mark the entrance	84%	9%	7%
There should be features to slow down traffic such as different road surfaces and prevention of parking too close to the junction	98%	2%	0

Comments¹

- Five suggestions of a lower speed limit of 10, 15 or 20 mph
- Eight suggestions that priority should be given to pedestrians on the streets in the Methleys
- A couple of questionnaires noted a worry that reducing through traffic would mean that the shops in the Methleys would lose custom
- Priority for parking should be for residents and their visitors
- The problem of a rat run through Blake Grove needed to be sorted out
- Regarding features at the entrances to the Methleys a gateway/archway was suggested and any plants would need regular attention
- Any road layout changes would have to take visibility into account as well as emergency access. Alternate parking bays were suggested, warning signs, dropped kerbs to improve access for people using wheelchairs and those with prams and what about

¹ These are additional comments made on the questionnaires

uncovering and maintaining the original sets as a way of slowing down traffic

Individual streets

People were asked about the particular street they lived in. 84% of residents thought the traffic was too fast in their street and suggestions for slowing it down included alternate parking bays, narrowing roads, blocking certain streets off, ramps and sleeping policemen². The condition of the road surface varied from street to street although many people identified bad pavement surfaces as a problem exacerbated by obstruction from wheelie bins and dog mess.

Other suggestions for improving streets:

- The two points reiterated most were clean streets (particularly eliminating dog mess) and requests for more trees and plants
- Tidy gardens and improving the state of fences and walls
- Two approaches to wheelie bins were suggested - ban them or decorate them!
- More foot police
- Car free space
- There were various site-specific issues - noise from the garage on Methley Place and from Foxes nightclub; traffic problems at the top of Methley Terrace when parents are dropping off children at school and various neighbours and fast drivers.

Other features and ideas

Suggested features	Yes	No	Don't know
Play areas	97%	3%	0
Seating	70%	8%	22%
Trees	94%	3%	3%
Shrubs/plants	92%	3%	5%
Improved street lighting	74%	13%	13%

Suggestions for where to site a Play area included the grass area outside the Environmental Health Offices; between Foxes and Kwik Save and at the former Scott Hall Middle School. The two most popular suggestions were on Zermatt Street and either using the school playgrounds or in the Methley Terrace/School Lane corner.

Other suggestions and comments:

- There were many calls to be able to use the school as "more of a community facility" including a play area in the playground and a youth club

² There was also significant opposition to sleeping policemen

- More community get-togethers - annual "on the streets"; more movies on gable ends
- Anti litter campaign - MNA to organise a monthly clean up
- Better sign-posting within the Methleys
- Calm other roads - Harrogate Road, Potternewton Road ... - encourage cycling
- Improve security, watch out for each other, distribute Neighbourhood Watch information
- Set up a bartering scheme; community garden tools; community radio
- Decorate the gable ends; best kept garden competition

Children's responses

The "Street Quiz" was completed by children resident in the Methleys aged between 4 and 14 years old.

Question	Yes	No	Don't know
Is the Methleys a good place to live?	77%	8%	15%
Are the streets safe to play in?	21%	69%	10%
Are there too many cars moving about?	67%	23%	10%
Do you ever get bored on the streets	79%	18%	3%

What games do you play on the streets?

- Four children said that they didn't or hardly ever played out
- Of the others the games mentioned were tig (hob), football, cricket, baseball, hide and seek, tennis, volleyball, volleywall, hopscotch, bike riding, trike riding, scooting, scarecrow tig, skateboarding, basketball, roller-skating, kerby, chalking the bricks, digging the soil and just hanging out with friends

Play Areas

To the question "Would you like the Methleys to have a special play area?" the answer was "Yes" - 100% of responses.

Where should it be?

- The most popular response was in or near the school with the lower playground mentioned as a possibility
- Zermatt Street, School Lane, Kwik Save, the grass near the flats and Potternewton Gardens (near the yellow bricks) were all suggested
- Many of the younger children suggested "Outside my house", "In my street" or "In all the streets" and SOMEWHERE SOFT!

What should be in it?

- 92% wanted swings and climbing frames, 90% a kickabout area
- Also suggested were slides, seesaw, basketball hoops, tennis court, roundabout, football goals, cricket stumps painted on wall, zip line, rope swing, a stream, an area to play your own games, an area for babies and toddlers, wooden things, hopscotch, sandpit, exciting structures, grassy area, something to bounce on, a tree-house, a track for bikes and benches to sit on

Opinions of the Methleys

What things do you like about the Methleys:

- "Lots of nice people" - people, neighbours and friends were the most popular things. "Community Spirit"
- "Friendly, peaceful"; "Pretty gardens"; "Nice homes"; "Hardly any cars so we can race"
- "The fish and chip shop"; "I'm near school"; "Shops nearby"
- "My house, the school, this street party and everything else"

What don't you like about the Methleys:

- Eleven responses identified fast cars and traffic as a problem plus the main road and the "six way junction"
- Bad condition of streets, rubbish and litter, dog mess and dogs barking, rubbish bins
- "Houses too old"; "A bit boring - too peaceful"; "When people get burgled"
- "Nowhere sensible to play safely"; "Getting told off for playing games near houses"; "Boring - no place for kids. One of my friends has been knocked over 4 times. Another boy died on the school railings"

Can you think of anything that could be changed to make the Methleys a better place:

- "A local cleaning man/lady"; "Clean up once a week"; "Litter bins"; "Tidy it up"; "People trying hard NOT TO THROW RUBBISH"
- "Play areas so we don't get told off"; "Youth Club"; "Place for teenagers to go"
- More greenery, plants, flowers and trees
- Stop garage working at night
- "Control cars/slower cars"; "Block some roads off"; "Narrower space for cars - more pavement"; "15mph speed limit"

Youth Club

13% go every week to a Youth Club, 11% occasionally and 76% not at all. 68% said they would go to a Club if there was one nearby, 29% weren't sure and 3% wouldn't.

Other ideas

- Play in the school playground when the school is closed, community club, dance classes, self defence ...
- More street parties but no parties after 11.30pm!
- Narrow roads with parking spaces in red brick
- More benches, trees and plants
- "Better shops - not ones with sweets but normal things like crackers and bread"

In summary

The questionnaires are one part of the consultation that Methley Neighbourhood Action is undertaking residents of all ages in the Methleys. Rather than a scientific analysis we were more interested in canvassing people's ideas at this stage in the process and to encourage people to consider the issues and come up with ideas and suggestions. What has emerged is a remarkable concurrence of opinion that the Methleys is a pretty good place to live, that the road layout should be changed to make the streets a safer place for people of all ages and that there must be more facilities for children's play.

At the same time there are lots of ideas for things that would build on the strong sense of community in the Methleys - from Youth Clubs to street parties, from bartering schemes to decorating the gable ends. After all, if we can create our own movie theatre on Zermatt Street, anything's possible!