



TEPEE Play in the Park workshops – Winter half term 2008

Heathfield – 20.2.08

Our third session at this community was held in the 'big' play park opposite the Community Centre. We used the larger, open grassy area which just has a basket ball post, rather than the smaller fenced area with play equipment. The grass was long and there was a lot of dog mess and broken glass to clear before we could set up, which is clearly an issue in encouraging it's use – some parents brought this up.

We had 16 children, ranging from ages 1 – 12yrs, only 4 parents stayed. The general Scrappy Daze (art and craft using recycled materials) workshop was led by the children, a lot of whom (mostly boys) wanted to make guns and then play with them in the park with their friends. Dream catchers were popular too (mostly girls), but others enjoyed making a range of things from bird feeders to football pitches, and many wanted to paint their own pictures.

It was a cold but dry afternoon, and the children went off to play on the equipment now and then to keep warm – some came without coats. Kerry from PC provided refreshments for the children.

There was a nice atmosphere and the children wanted to carry on playing and making beyond packing up time.

Evaluations:

Feedback comments from children included:

It made them feel -'happy', 'excited' and 'quite fun'

Some best bits – 'making a dream catcher', 'making a light sabre and playing with it', 'painting with my baby sister', 'the mess'.

Kenton – 21.2.08

After a few teething problems with access we at last managed to take Play in the Park to this village, and what a great success it was. We hoped for a good attendance as our Freewheeling events have always been well received here. We had 26 children from ages 1 to 12yrs and most parents stayed due to the number of under 8's.



The activity was Scrappy Daze - knights and castles. Our PC contact, Pik Rawlings, was a great help before, during and after the event – consulting, arranging and publicising, helping set up and supplying refreshments for children and adults (hot drinks were very welcome as weather again dry but cold and blustery wind, although children were very active on play equipment and playing with their newly made bows and arrows). She also assisted the children with their creations and helped clear up.

TDC video man came along – said he thought he had some good recording.

Evaluations:

All appeared to have a good time and have already requested their next session theme - den building – for April 14th.

Feedback comments from children included:

It made them feel - ‘happy’ ‘I liked it a lot’ ‘Really enjoyed it’

Some best bits – ‘paint!’ ‘my bow’ ‘sticking pieces on my hat’

Broadhempston – 22.2.08

Following consultation, the community requested a willow sculpture and craft workshop. Juliet from the PC, Theo and Cat Rance – Sharpham ranger - met and designated an area in the play park to build. It was decided to hold a double workshop in order to complete the dome in one go.

Other crafts included making dream catchers, crowns and wands – which many of the parents with younger children enjoyed under the gazebo (another dry but cold day!)

25 children aged between 1 and 11 plus about 10 parents came.

After last session when families brought their own food and drinks, Juliet had decided refreshments were not necessary, and although only one appeared to have brought any with them (they stayed in the park all day), the rest went home at lunch time.

After lunch break I had expected some to return but those few who trickled in during the afternoon were new. The morning dome building session was slow to prepare but the older children took it in turns to dig the trench, and did some other crafts or free played inbetween.

Eventually all the children and parents stood together in a circle, each planting a willow stem, which were then tied at the top to create the dome shape. Most of the afternoon dome workshop involved tying and weaving, and the majority was done by adults.

It was difficult to engage the younger children for any length of time in this part of the activity, nor were they so interested in sitting and making crafts. Rather they wanted to run around and play their own games (one dad went to play with them when supervision needed).



Evaluations:

The adults seemed very pleased with the achievement and those children that were there at the end were already starting to play in it!

Feedback comments from children included:

It made them feel - ‘very nice’ ‘fabulous’ ‘happy and cool’ ‘really excited’

Some best bits – ‘playing with new friend’ ‘digging and making holes’ ‘coming on my bike’ ‘going inside willow den’

Bishopsteignton – 7.3.08

This workshop finally took place once builders had finished completing the new play area, and because during term time it was held 3.30-5.30pm after school. It was part of the village's opening ceremony which a large number of families supported, and came straight from the adjacent school. It looked like the whole village had turned out!

We had a lot of children coming to make flags and banners, and this workshop had been chosen in keeping with the celebration.

Many parents were unaware or unclear about the nature of our workshop, and the main focus was naturally the grand opening. A lot had only anticipated staying 10 or 15 minutes, all of which made form filling difficult. 31 children were registered, aged between 1 and 10yrs, and most had parents in the park; however, just a few with younger children were involved in the workshop itself.



The ground was very soft and wet in places, which the recent heavy rain had contributed to. Consequently, with the volume of people coming and going, it became unavoidably muddy and quite slippery in the well trodden areas around the gazebo and spread onto the tarpaulin making area.

But the children were undeterred and enjoyed making their own individual flags and adding their comments or designs to the banners, which were left hanging decoratively on the play area fence for all to see.

Evaluations:

Those families that took part were appreciative of the activity and the children had fun being creative. Feedback comments from children included:

It made them feel – ‘great’, ‘very excited and happy’, ‘happy because it was very fun’, ‘good’

Some best bits – ‘making new friends and playing on the basket swing’, ‘playing’, ‘everything’.