

Bringing the community to life

A report prepared by the South London Fawcett Group

AMENITIES – ESPECIALLY FOR CHILDREN

“More places for children to play safely”

Results from a recent survey of south London women reveal that 41% would like to see better amenities in their local community. ¹ In particular, they feel that facilities for children and young people are completely inadequate. They stress that there is nowhere safe for their children to play. Older children, too, have nowhere to go and nothing to do outside school hours and this can lead to social difficulties.

“More clubs for children so they don’t just hang around the streets causing so many problems”

PERSONAL SAFETY

“SAFETY – People should feel safe to travel around at any time of the day”

Another 14% of women felt unsafe in their local neighbourhood. They want to be able to go anywhere – day or night – without feeling afraid. Several women also mentioned feeling afraid in their own homes. Some linked this to a fear of crime.

“Being able to walk home without worrying about your safety”

BITTER ABOUT LITTER

“Cleaner streets”

Many women (13%) were disgusted by the state of local streets and demanded more frequent street cleaning, with removal of graffiti. Dogs – and their owners – fell foul of respondents.

“Rubbish being left behind after bins are emptied”

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

“Would like much better public transport and less people in cars”

More than one in ten women (11%) complained that local transport is poor – unsafe, unreliable and inconvenient. As a consequence, too many people prefer to use their cars, leading to heavy traffic and unacceptably high levels of pollution.

“Bus service not reliable therefore people still use cars to get to work. Everyone on the road v. cross.”

CRIME & POLICING

“More visible police presence – not just responding, but walking around”

A further 9% of women expressed the need for street crime to be tackled – several want to see a return to “bobbies on the beat” as this bolsters personal confidence and makes people feel safer.

“I have lived in the area for 32 years. I could walk freely without looking over my shoulder. Now I constantly worry about crime.”

COMMUNITY SPIRIT

“Encourage neighbourhood communities to look out for each other”

An additional 7% of women specifically mentioned the lack of community spirit today and wanted to see communities making more of an effort to help each other out.

“Living in an area in which local people mix together, served by locally based workers who are familiar e.g. police, park staff, local authority staff etc. so that everyone can be seen to be working together”

SUMMARY

Finally, one woman summed up the feelings of many when she explained that amenities and services are what every community needs to keep it alive.

“I would prefer to have better services for children & old people and would willingly pay more council tax than I do now” (Wandsworth resident)

Wandsworth Borough Council, take note. It's not the amount of council tax we pay but what you do with it that counts!

HAVING THEIR SAY

Women have a unique perspective on their local community. They see it through different eyes from men. Here is a snapshot of the views of south London's women:

“A crèche that opens when I have to leave for work (6.30am)”

“Lack of local shops due to supermarkets – impacts on the community”

“Women and violence/abuse – what helpline isn't busy?”



1. These are the results of a postcard survey of 283 local women who were asked by the South London Fawcett Group *How could the life of people in your local community be improved?* The survey was conducted at community fairs across south London during the summer of 2002.

For more information, please contact us.

e-mail: southlondonfawcett@hotmail.com phone: 07958 753284

or write to SLFG at Bts, PO Box 817, London SE21 7BY

© South London Fawcett Group, 2005