

# West Hampstead



## Crowdsourcing insights for neighbourhood forum plans

In July 2015, the Fortune Green and West Hampstead neighbourhood plan was passed at local referendum. Commonplace was part of the successful preparation of the plan.

West Hampstead residents used Commonplace to create a public heat-map of needs and opinions about their neighbourhood. The Neighbourhood Development Forum used these comments to update the plan and as supporting evidence for the plan submission. They may also be used as supporting evidence in future discussion with property developers.

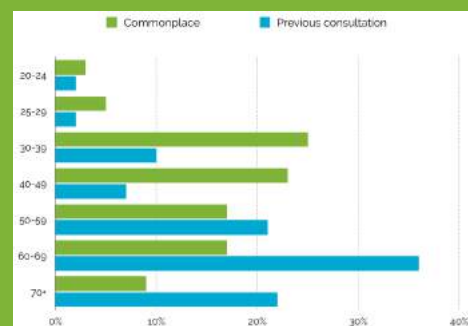
Commonplace has been an invaluable tool for the Fortune Green & West Hampstead Neighbourhood Development Forum. The project has really helped our engagement work - connecting with those not reached by previous consultations - and providing a highly visible and eye-catching record of the results.

James Earl, Chair, West Hampstead Neighbourhood Development

### Commonplace helps neighbourhood plans

The Commonplace map and infographics were embedded in the local blog 'West Hampstead Life' to spread awareness. The designated 'growth area' in the neighbourhood emerged as a particular focus of interest to residents. Data collected through Commonplace was used as evidence to support the Statement of Community Involvement, which was part of the successful plan submission.

Commonplace helped reach the 20s/30s/early 40s demographic.



Comparison between previous consultations and the demographic Commonplace helped to reach.

### Young people joined the discussion

Commonplace not only elicited more comments, but reached a younger demographic than other forms of engagement, meaning that the neighbourhood planning process was more representative.

# Behind the Scenes

## **What stage are you at with Fortune Green and West Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan?**

The plan has just been formally approved via a local referendum that took place on 9th July 2015. 93% of people said yes to the plan, and it will now be brought into force by Camden Council.

## **What are the needs around consultation on the plan?**

There were two stages. To start with, the Neighbourhood Development Forum was a completely new group, and had to gain designation from Camden Council, who were keen to see that we engaged with a diverse group of people from different backgrounds. The second stage was to draw up the plan, when we needed to show evidence of what local people wanted, and collaborate with as many different people as possible in producing the drafts. And finally, we had to articulate all of this work into our Statement of Community Involvement.

## **Why did you decide to use Commonplace?**

The core local population is made up of working people, who have busy lives. We were aware that it would be difficult to persuade them to come to meetings or drop-in sessions at the library, or even to talk to us on street stalls. But we thought they might be willing to engage online and via social media – and Commonplace offered the best way of doing that. In particular, we thought that Commonplace could help us reach the 20s/30s/early 40s demographic.

## **What were the benefits of using Commonplace?**

Commonplace did help us reach many more people in this younger demographic than we would have otherwise been able to reach. I think the colour-coded map was very engaging to them. It's such a visual representation of people's needs - and very accessible. The map also helped us identify areas people felt very positive about, and other places where there were lots of issues, such as in the growth areas. People liked the opportunity to be positive - as well as negative - about where they live. We discovered issues from Commonplace that we hadn't heard elsewhere – such as certain streets where people felt unsafe, or areas that weren't well maintained. Even when this information did not directly inform the plan, it was valuable in the broader work of the community.

Interview with James Earl, Chair of Fortune Green and West Hampstead Neighbourhood Development Forum

I happily recommend Commonplace to other neighbourhood groups – it was a great experience working with Commonplace, and people still praise visual nature of the information it communicates.