From tarmac to tree and the play in between

Dr Ute Navidi, Chief Executive, London Play

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09 LONDON HEALTH

Londonplay

- Created 1998 by London Councils – the body representing all London boroughs and The City
- Second Tier support and promoting play across London
- Rated ‘excellent’ across all quality areas by London Councils
- Policy changes: Mayor’s Guide; Supplementary Planning Guidance
- Current play projects: Street Play, Natural Play
- Working with 8 boroughs every year
- Member of Inclusive Design Panel, Westminster’s Oxford, Regent and Bond Street (ORB) project

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1.73 million Londoners are under 18 years old

“Play should be at the heart of children’s everyday lives and experiences throughout childhood.

We want children to enjoy a healthy balance of both structured and unstructured activities in their leisure time”.

department for
children, schools and families

Play builds social, physical, mental and emotional health

This view is supported by the UK Government's White Paper Choosing Health, and research published by the British Heart Foundation, the British Medical Journal and the Mental Health Foundation

Through play, children encounter and manage risk and challenge

This view is supported by research commissioned by the UK Health and Safety Executive that indicates that lack of or poor quality play provision may lead to increased child accidents elsewhere

Play is one of the key ways in which children learn to socialise, make friends and develop a sense of community and fairness

‘Give your child opportunities to be active as part of their everyday routine e.g. playing outside rather than watching TV’

British Heart Foundation 2005

Open spaces

Open space accounts for 30% of the London area. The capital has 147 registered parks and gardens, eight royal parks and 39 urban public parks

Fact
Less than half of 7-14 year olds in London say they play mostly outdoors – but 86 per cent say they prefer to do so

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Open spaces

Play Priority Areas

Countering the 'No ball games' culture

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Benefits of natural play

“green space in an urban environment can improve life expectancy and decrease health complaints”

William Bird (2004) Natural Fit

“potential psychological and mental health benefits from exposure to nature are not limited to exposure in the countryside…; within urban and semi-urban settings, access to green, open spaces can have a beneficial effect.”

Nature and Psychological Well-being (2003) www.green-space.org.uk

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Natural mobile play project

Demonstration

Consultation tool

Funded by corporate sponsor ICAP and Natural England

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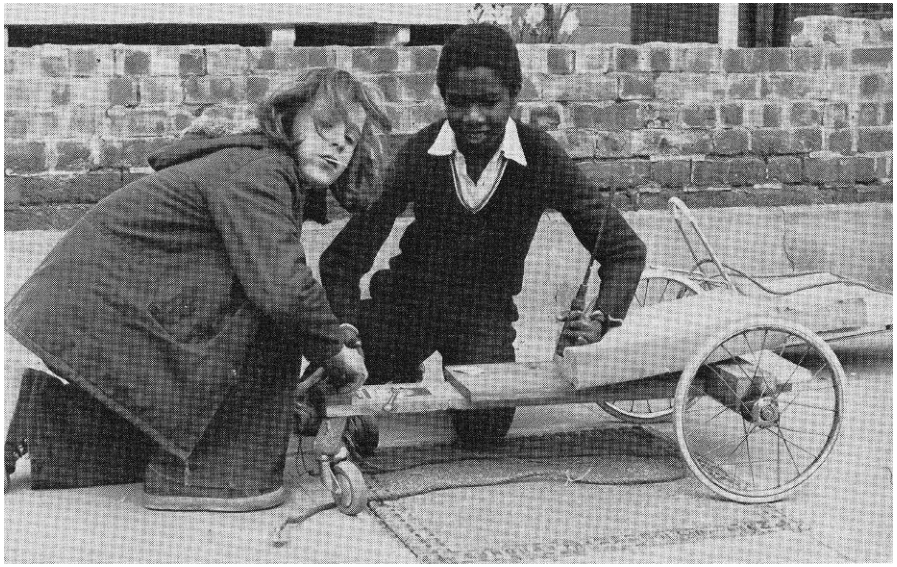
Supported by
The National Lottery®
through the Big Lottery Fund

BIG LOTTERY FUND

53 parties created at the project's midway point.

71% of adults report to have played in the street or area near their home everyday when they were a child. This compares to only 21% of children today. ICM poll



33% of 8 to 10 year olds have never played out with their friends without an adult being present

Play England survey 2003

Football and cricket were played on the street – a training ground for future sporting heroes

The *Local Wellbeing Project* found:

Wellbeing is higher amongst people who have regular contact with their neighbours

Source: Improvement and Development Agency, London School of Economics and the Young Foundation

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence and NHS guidelines on promoting physical activity for children and young people (2009) recommended local strategic partnerships should:

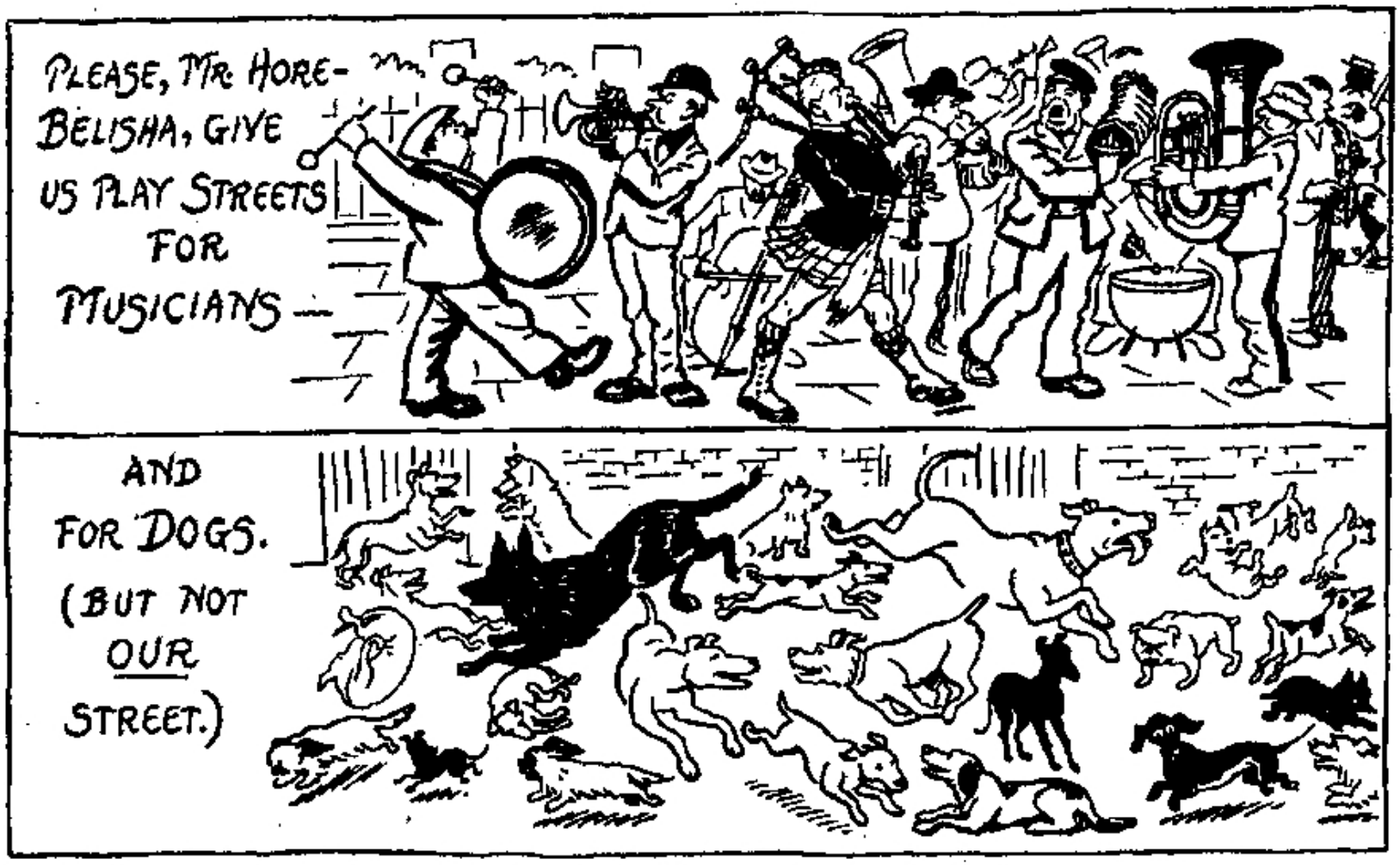
Actively promote public parks and facilities as well as more non-traditional spaces (for example, car parks outside working hours) as places where children and young people can be physically active.

Playing out offers adults as well as children an opportunity for informal exercise

On average Street Play events bring 7-10 neighbours into contact for the first time

95% of residents asked intend to repeat their Street Play event.

MORE "BELISHA" STREETS!



If we are to have Play Streets, why not also gather into one place all those who annoy us with noise in the hot weather.

CLOSED TO
MECHANICALLY
PROPELLED
VEHICLES
AND
PEDAL CYCLES

Play Street
8 am to sunset
except for
access