

Alexandra Recreational Ground Visitor Survey 2015



Report prepared for:
Operations Management Team

Date: December 2015

Please contact the Epsom & Ewell Borough
Council's Consultation and Communication
Team should you require any information on
the Alexandra Recreational Ground Visitor
Survey 2015
Email: contactus@epsom-ewell.gov.uk

Alexandra Recreational Ground Visitor Survey 2015

Summary of main findings:

- The survey ran from 12 to 30 October 2015 - a period of three weeks. The survey was available in both paper and electronic formats. A total of 340 survey responses were received.
- The majority of respondents were female (67%, n=204) and 33% (n=102) were male. Almost two thirds of respondents (62%, n=199) were under 55 years old. When asked about ethnicity, the majority of respondents (88%, n=280) described themselves as British white or English white. The majority of respondents (59%, n=187) said they were Christian.
- Of those that responded, 3% (n=10) indicated they had a disability according to the Equalities Act of 2010.
- Nearly seven in ten respondents (67%, n=226) visit the grounds a number of times per week. This comprises: 29% (n=98) visiting on a daily basis and 38% (n=128) visiting two or three times per week. 24% (n=80) visit the grounds two or three times per month and 8% (n=26) visit two or three times a year.
- Over three quarters of respondents indicated that they travel to the grounds on foot (76%, n=302), whilst 13% (n=52) travel by car, and 11% (n=42) by bicycle.
- The most popular reason for visiting the grounds was to 'Use the playground' (13%, n=90). This was followed by 'Go for a walk' (12%, n=81) and 'Children/family outing' (11%, n=79). Looking at the age profile of respondents; most respondents between 35-44yrs said they 'Use the playground' and use the grounds for a 'Children/family outing'. Younger respondents aged between 16-24yrs tend to use the grounds to 'Play other sports', whilst a broad age group of respondents between 45yrs and 84yrs use the grounds to 'Go for a walk'.
- The ground's top three positively rated aspects were:
 1. 'Accessibility' (86%, n=273)
 2. 'Grass areas' (83%, n=271)
 3. 'Facilities for 12's and under' (81%, n=232).
- The ground's top three negatively rated aspects were:
 1. 'Toilets' (85%, n=189)
 2. 'Range of visitor facilities' (29%, n=83)
 3. 'Park security' (25%, n=127).

- Regarding 'the park in general'; the majority of respondents (74%, n=244) rated the grounds positively, 22% (n=73) rated the grounds fair, and 3% (n=11) rated the grounds negatively.
- The three most prevalent reasons amongst respondents who ticked 'Poor' or 'Very poor' include:
 - 'Toilets needed' (36%, n=143)
 - 'Security/ Anti-social behaviour' (8%, n=33)
 - 'Pathway improvements' (8%, n=30) and 'Flowerbed/ shrubbery improvements' (8%, n=30).
- When considering improving the visitor experience, the three most prevalent suggestions for using the recreational grounds more often or staying for longer include:
 - Café needed (30%, n=107)
 - Toilets needed (19%, n=69)
 - Better range of facilities (16%, n=57).
- Of the respondents that took part in this survey, 51 people kindly provided their names and contact information for volunteering activities. This information will be passed onto the management team for future volunteering opportunities.



Objectives and methodology:

Alexandra Recreation Ground was amongst five green spaces in the Borough this year that was awarded the Green Flag Award for the fourth year. The grounds are situated in Alexandra Road about a quarter of a mile from Epsom town centre. Facilities include a multi-use games area, basketball court, bowling green, cricket pitch, three full sized and two mini football pitches, three tennis courts, a children's playground and a teenage play area.

The survey was conducted by Epsom & Ewell Borough Council on behalf of its Operations Management Team. The Team is responsible for ensuring the grounds meet the needs of local residents, visitors and develops in a sustainable way. As the ground's current management plan is now five years old and requires rewriting, this survey seeks to inform the new plan and how to make the park even better.

Questionnaire Development:

The questions were developed in liaison with the Head of Operational Services and the Patrol Ranger. Subject areas include:

- Frequency of visiting the grounds
- Method of travel to the grounds
- Reasons for visiting the grounds
- Opinions on various aspects of the grounds
- Improving visitor experience and encouraging more use of the grounds, or staying for longer
- Volunteering opportunities.

Methodology:

The survey ran for a period of three weeks (12 to 30 October 2015). A total of 880 paper surveys were distributed via the following methods:

- 660 were mail-dropped to residents who lived in close proximity to the grounds
- 140 were left at local schools and at Bourne Hall
- 80 given out in the park.

Links to the electronic version of the survey were promoted via:

- Council website (www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk)
- e-Borough Insight (Issue 21: October 2015) (<http://insight.epsom-ewell.gov.uk>)
- Twitter ([@EpsomEwellBC](https://twitter.com/EpsomEwellBC))
- Facebook (www.facebook.com/EpsomEwellBC).

A total of 340 survey responses were received. Responses to the electronic questionnaires were automatically imported into the survey design and analysis package (SNAP v11). The paper returns were sent to an outside agency for data

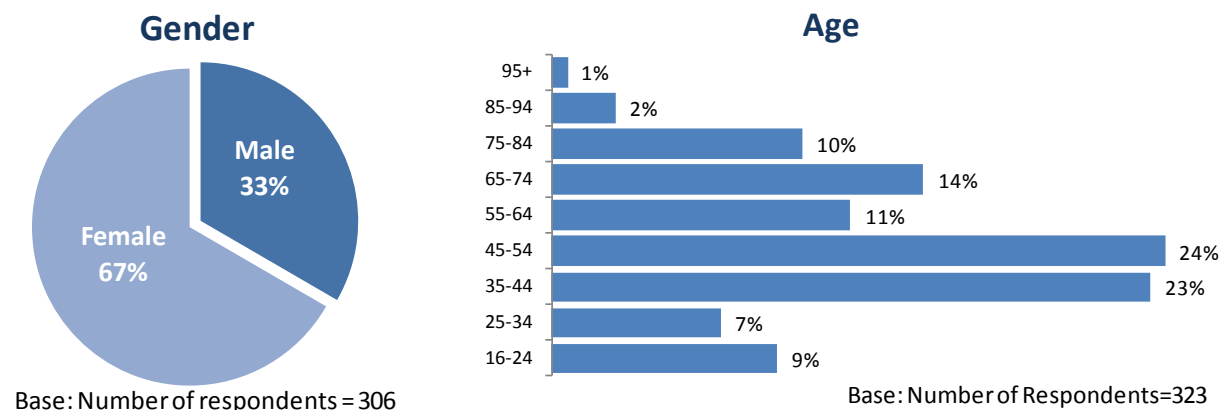
inputting, then merged with the online version. The results were analysed by the Council's Consultation and Communication Team.

The figures in this report are calculated as a proportion of respondents who answered each question – excluding No Reply responses. Percentages in a particular chart might not always add up to 100% due to rounding, or because a respondent is allowed to give more than one answer to the question.

Respondent Profile and Equalities Monitoring:

Age and gender:

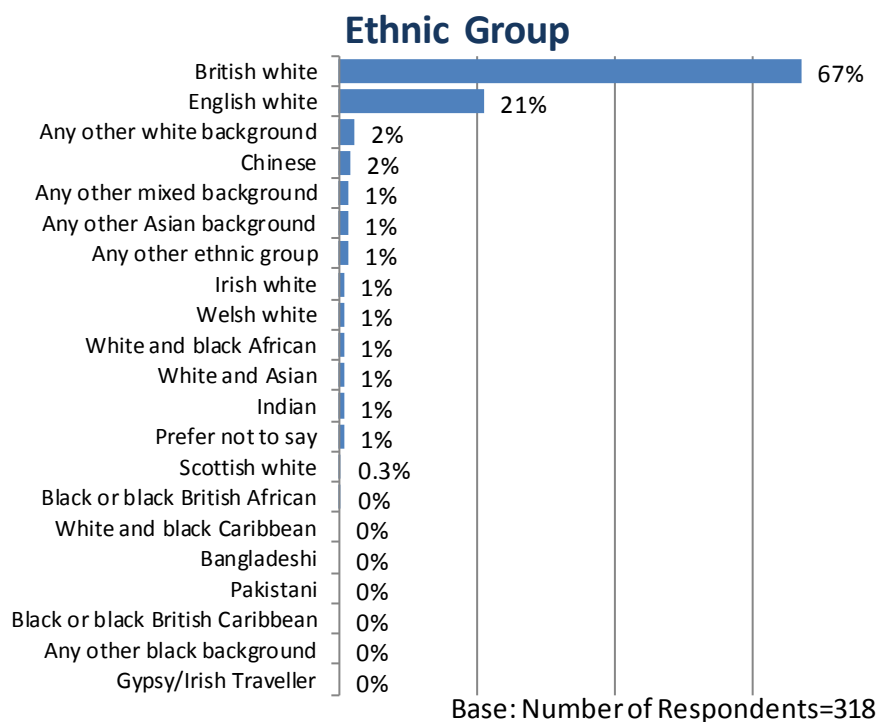
Respondents were asked their gender and which age group they fit into. The majority of respondents were female (67%, n=204) and 33% (n=102) were male. Based on age groupings; almost two thirds of respondents (62%, n=199) were under 55 years old, whilst 38% (n=124) were 55yrs and older. The highest number of respondents were people aged between 45 & 54yrs (24%, n=76) and between 35 & 44yrs (23%, n=74). It should be noted that 9% (n=28) of respondents were from the youngest age group - between 16 & 24yrs old.



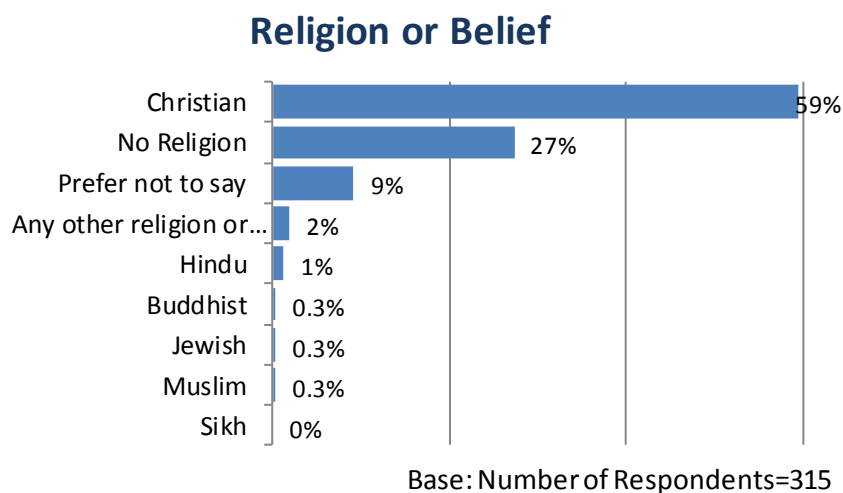
Other demographics:

Three percent (n=10) of respondents indicated they have a disability according to the Equalities Act of 2010. A person has a disability for the purposes of the Act if he/she has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

When asked about ethnicity, the majority of residents (88%, n=280) described themselves as British white or English white.

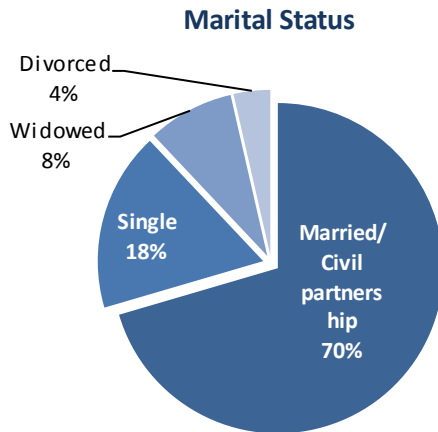


In terms of religious beliefs; almost six in ten (59%, n=187) said they were Christian and 27% (n=86) said they were not religious.

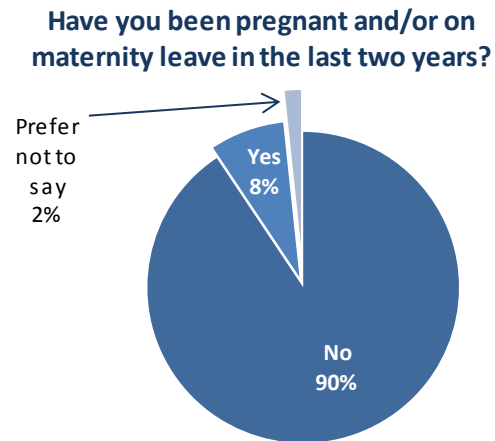


When asked about sexual orientation, 93% (n=281) said they were heterosexual, whilst 9% (n=20) preferred not to say. One person said 'Other' (0.33%) and one person said 'Gay woman/lesbian' (0.33%).

When asked about marital status, 71% (n=217) said they were married or in a civil partnership, 18% (n=54) were single, 8% (n=26) widowed, and 4% (n=11) divorced. Eight per cent of respondents (n=23) said they had been pregnant or on maternity leave in the last two years, whilst 2% (n=5) preferred not to say.



Base: All respondents=308



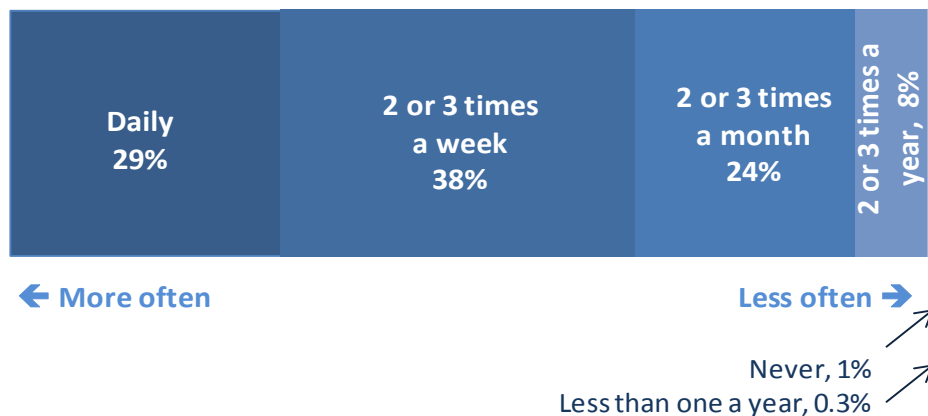
Base: All respondents=299

Analysis of results:

Frequency of visiting Alexandra Recreational Ground:

Over two thirds of respondents (67%, n=226) visit the grounds a number of times per week. This comprises: 29% (n=98) visiting on a daily basis and 38% (n=128) visiting two or three times per week. 24% (n=80) visit the grounds two or three times per month and 8% (n=26) visit two or three times a year. One respondent (0.3%, n=1) indicated they visit less than once per year and four said 'never' (1%, n=4).

Q1: How often do you visit Alexandra Recreational Ground?

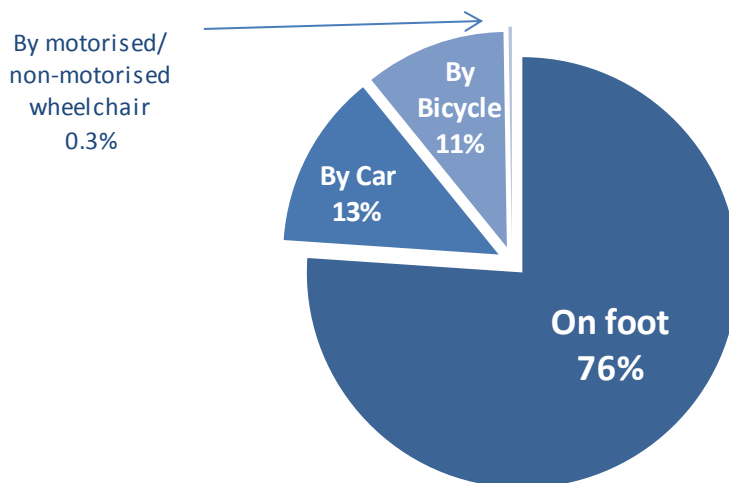


Base: Number of respondents=337

Method of travelling to Alexandra Recreational Ground:

Over three quarters of respondents indicated they travel to the grounds on foot (76%, n=302), whilst 13% (n=52) travel by car, and 11% (n=42) by bicycle. One respondent (0.3%) reported they travel to the park by wheelchair (motorised or non-motorised).

Q2: How do you normally travel to the grounds?



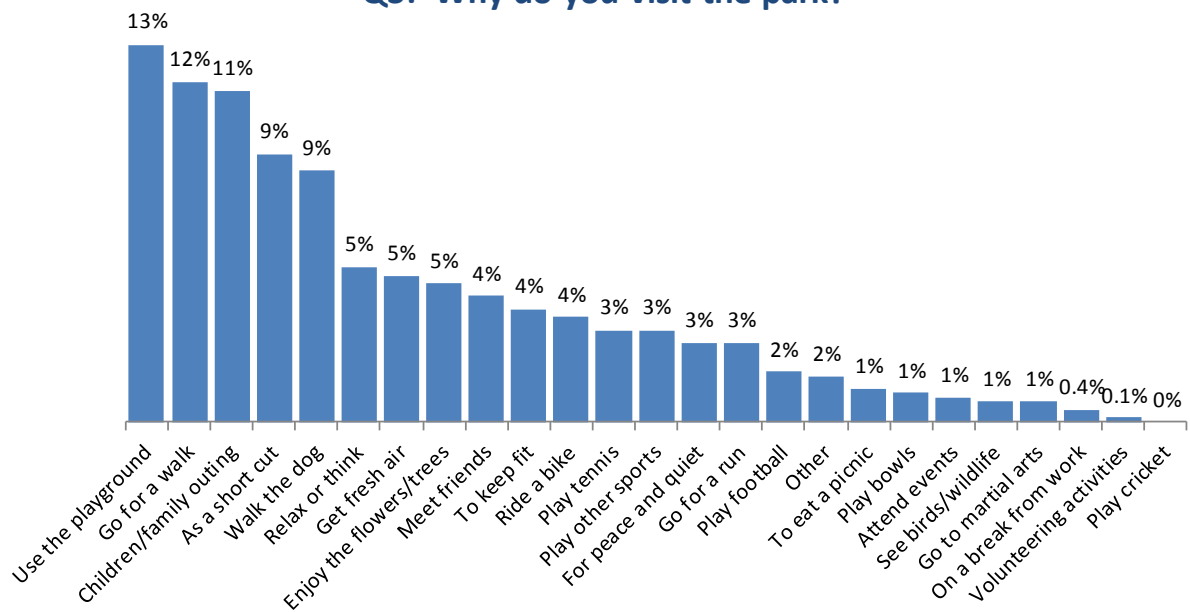
Base: Number of respondents=397

Reasons for visiting Alexandra Recreational Ground:

This section looks at the reasons for visiting the grounds (respondents were asked to choose up to three reasons). The most popular reason for visiting the grounds was to 'Use the playground' (13%, n=90). This was followed by 'Go for a walk' (12%, n=81) and 'Children/family outing' (11%, n=79). Additional reasons for visiting the grounds include:

- Walk the dog (9%, n=60)
- Relax or think (5%, n=37)
- Get fresh air (5%, n=35)
- Enjoy the flowers/trees (5%, n=33)
- Meet friends (4%, n=30)
- To keep fit (4%, n=27)
- Ride a bike (4%, n=25)
- Play tennis (3%, n=22)
- Play other sports (3%, n=22)
- For peace and quiet (3%, n=19)
- Go for a run (3%, n=19)
- Play football (2%, n=12)
- Other (2%, n=11)
- To eat a picnic (1%, n=8)
- Play bowls (1%, n=7)
- Attend events (1%, n=6)
- See birds/wildlife (1%, n=5)
- Go to martial arts (1%, n=5)
- On a break from work (0.4%, n=3)
- Volunteering activities (0.1%, n=1).

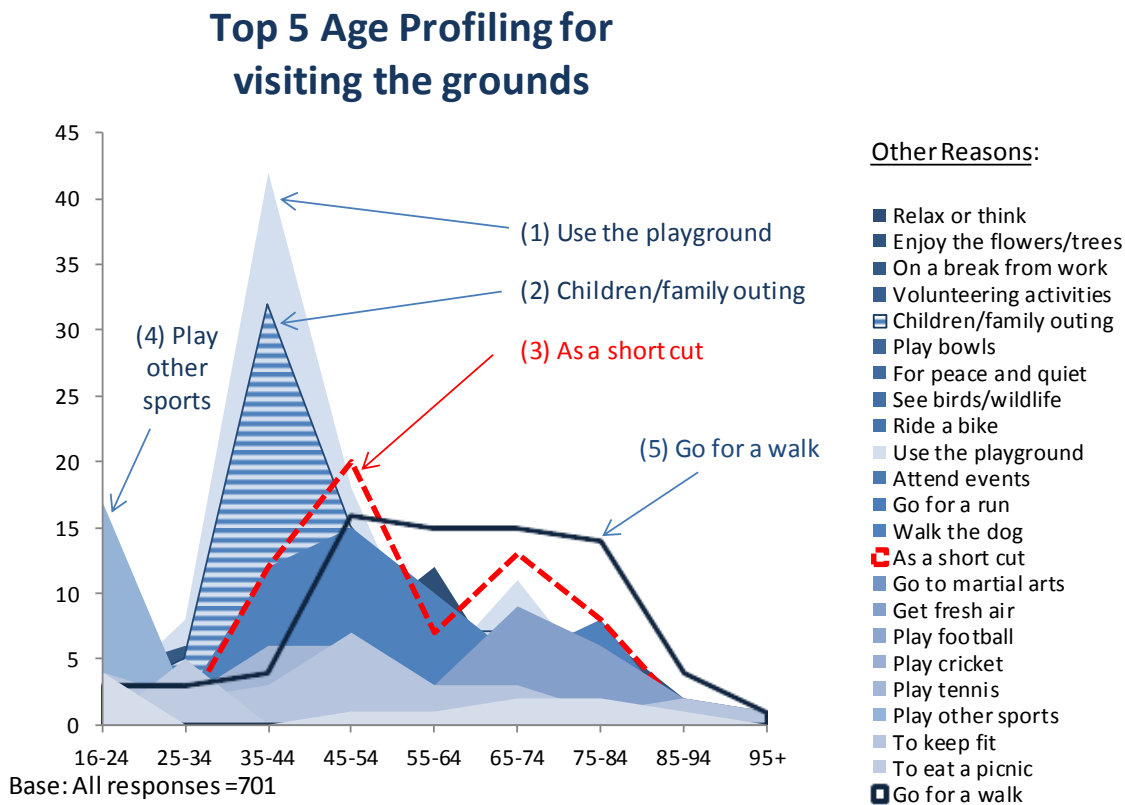
Q3: Why do you visit the park?



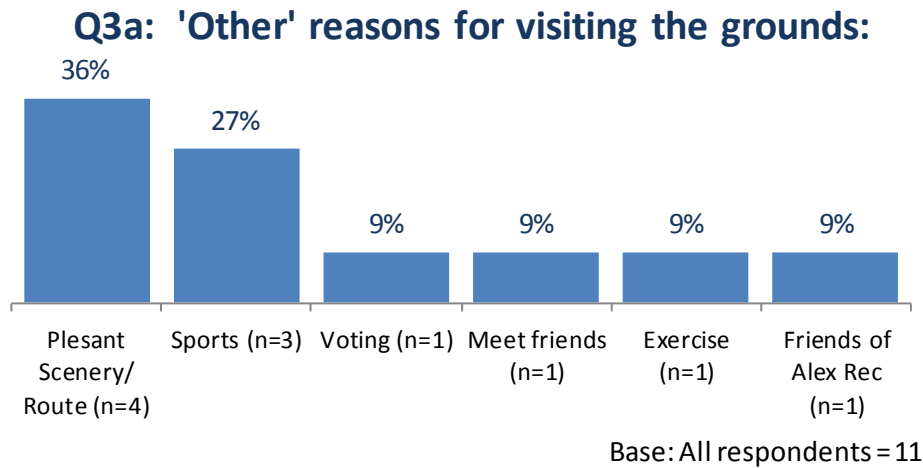
Base: All responses =701

Looking at the age profile of respondents; most respondents aged between 35-44yrs said they 'Use the playground' and use the grounds for a 'Children/family outing'. Younger respondents aged between 16-24yrs tend to use the grounds to 'Play other sports', whilst a broad range of respondents aged between 45yrs and 84yrs use the grounds to 'Go for a walk'. A broad range of respondents also use the grounds as a shortcut.

The graph below illustrates the age profiling and reasons for visiting the grounds:



The graph below illustrates 'Other' reasons for visiting the grounds:



Opinion of aspects of the Grounds:

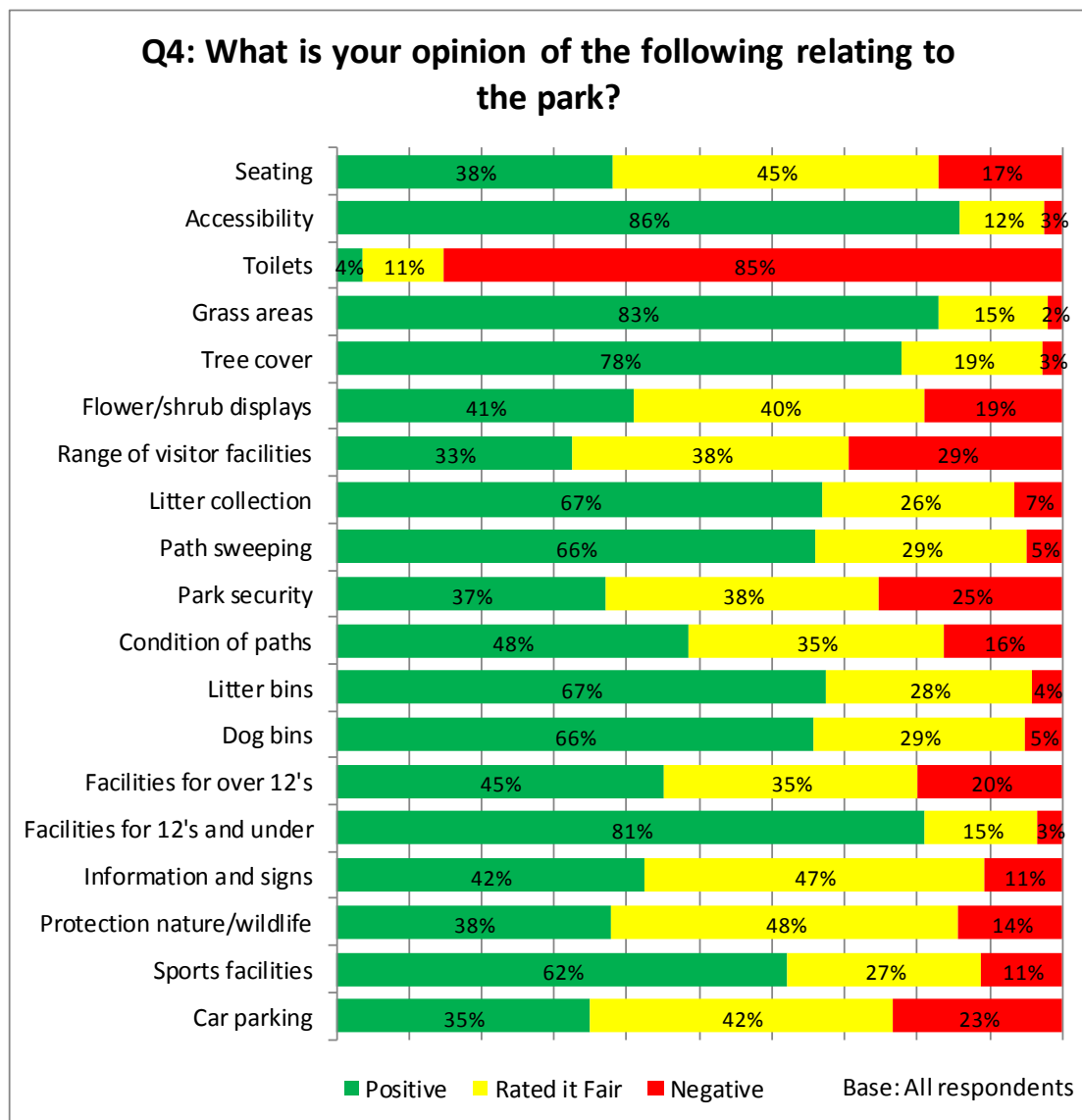
This section looks at peoples' opinions relating to various aspects of the grounds.

- The ground's top three positively rated aspects were:

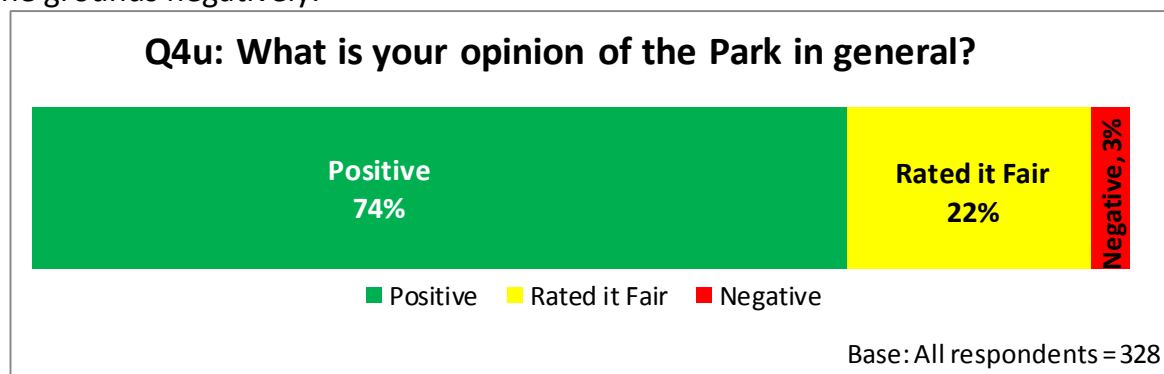
1. 'Accessibility' (86%, n=273)
2. 'Grass areas' (83%, n=271)
3. 'Facilities for 12's and under' (81%, n=232).

- The ground's top three negatively rated aspects were:

1. 'Toilets' (85%, n=189)
2. 'Range of visitor facilities' (29%, n=83)
3. 'Park security' (25%, n=127).



When asked about 'the park in general', the majority of respondents (74%, n=244) rated the grounds positively, 22% (n=73) rated the grounds fair, and 3% (n=11) rated the grounds negatively.

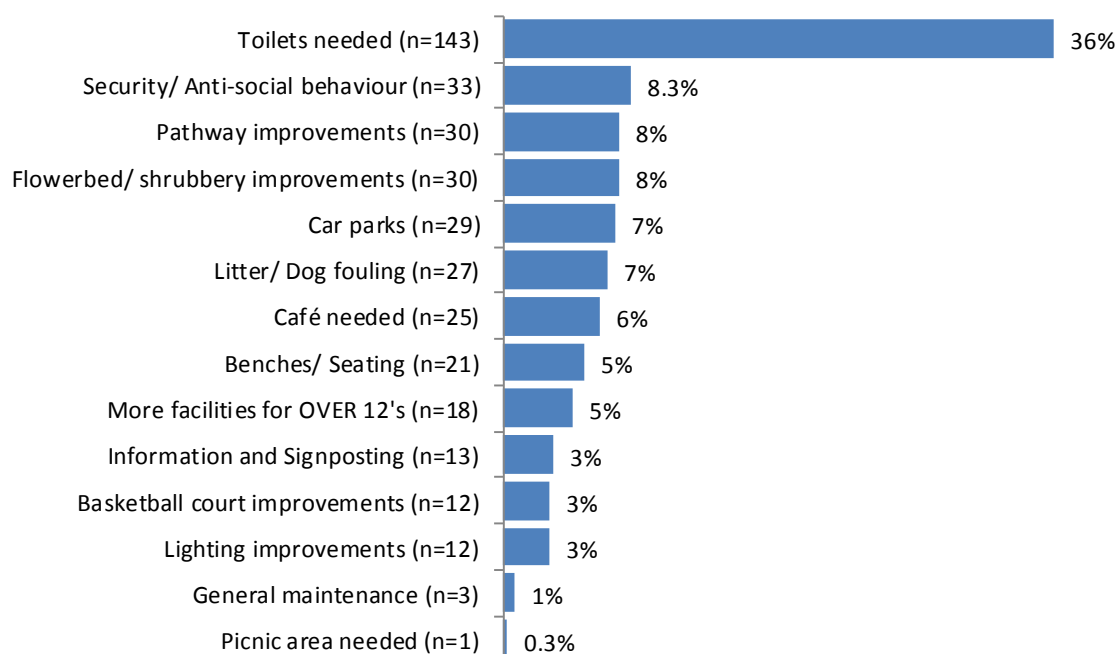


Respondents who ticked 'Poor' or 'Very Poor' for any of the aforementioned questions were asked to provide reasons for their answer. The three most prevalent reasons for 'Poor' or 'Very poor' responses include:

- 'Toilets needed' (36%, n=143)
- 'Security/ Anti-social behaviour' (8%, n=33)
- 'Pathway improvements' (8%, n=30) and 'Flowerbed/ shrubbery improvements' (8%, n=30) - tie.

The table below illustrates the frequency of common themes:

Q5: If you ticked 'Poor' or 'Very Poor', on any of the options, please give your reasons below:.



Base: Number of respondents=397

A more detailed analysis of the literal responses is listed below:

Q5: If you ticked 'Poor' or 'Very Poor' on any of the above options, please give your reasons below: (Base: All respondents=397)	
Theme:	Examples:
1. Toilets needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A large community park which is also used by the children of three local schools needs to offer easy access toilet facilities during daylight hours to enable families to utilise the park more fully without the need to rush off home to use a toilet. • We desperately need toilets! The lack of toilet facilities is appalling and means children have to use the bushes. • No toilet facilities is a real problem for such a popular park (especially for small kids). • Alexandra Park would be vastly improved by toilet facilities. • No toilet facilities. • Toilets would be really helpful!
2. Security/ Anti-social behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little evidence of any security. • No night security and many teenagers on an evening's night drinking come back through the park and behave antisocially with foul language and noise disturbance. • A degree of anti-social behaviour has crept into the park in recent years, particularly at night.
3. Pathway improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The path from Wallace Fields into the park is in a very poor condition with lots of trip hazards. • Path at top of park that leads from Alexandra Road to Wallace Fields is awful. Generally paths are not that friendly to buggies. • Paths not adequately maintained.
4. Flowerbed/ shrubbery improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flowers/shrubs displays - large section of the park which is currently fenced off, would be nice to see something other than brambles and nettles in there. • The gardens are not very beautiful. • Flower and shrubs displays non-existent.
5. Car parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited parking. • Very little parking causing problems on local roads. • Car parking is very limited.
6. Litter/ Dog fouling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The dog litter is appalling. There are still many people who walk their dogs in the park but do not pick up their dog's poo! This is especially prevalent on the paths. Also, there are numerous people who allow their dogs to wander off their leads, this is extremely unnerving to young children, especially when the dogs come running

	<p>towards them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The bins are disgusting because some of them are too full.
7. Café needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a very well used park and there must be a market for café/shop. • Some sort of refreshment stop it café would be very welcome. Many mums in the area would be happy to run it!
8. Benches/ Seating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not enough seating for parents and visitors. • There should be more seating spaced out around the park. • Not enough benches.
9. More facilities for over 12's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very poor facilities for over the 12s. • Nothing for over 12s. • The playground is very small, best suited for the under 5s. There is not enough to entertain older children, they therefore overtake the playground and can intimidate younger children.
10. Information and Signposting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More signage required. • Inadequate signage. • No significant signs.
11. Basketball court improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basketball court is in a very poor condition, especially the backboards. • The basketball court is in a very poor condition. • The basketball court needs re-doing because the hoops don't look stable and are worn out and the floor needs resurfacing.
12. Lighting improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs more lighting in the evening, sometimes doesn't feel safe because of poor visibility. • I feel scared when dark as inadequate lighting.
13. General maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tennis courts were resurfaced to a very poor quality and are rubbish. • Not very well maintained in general.
14. Picnic area needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No picnic facilities.

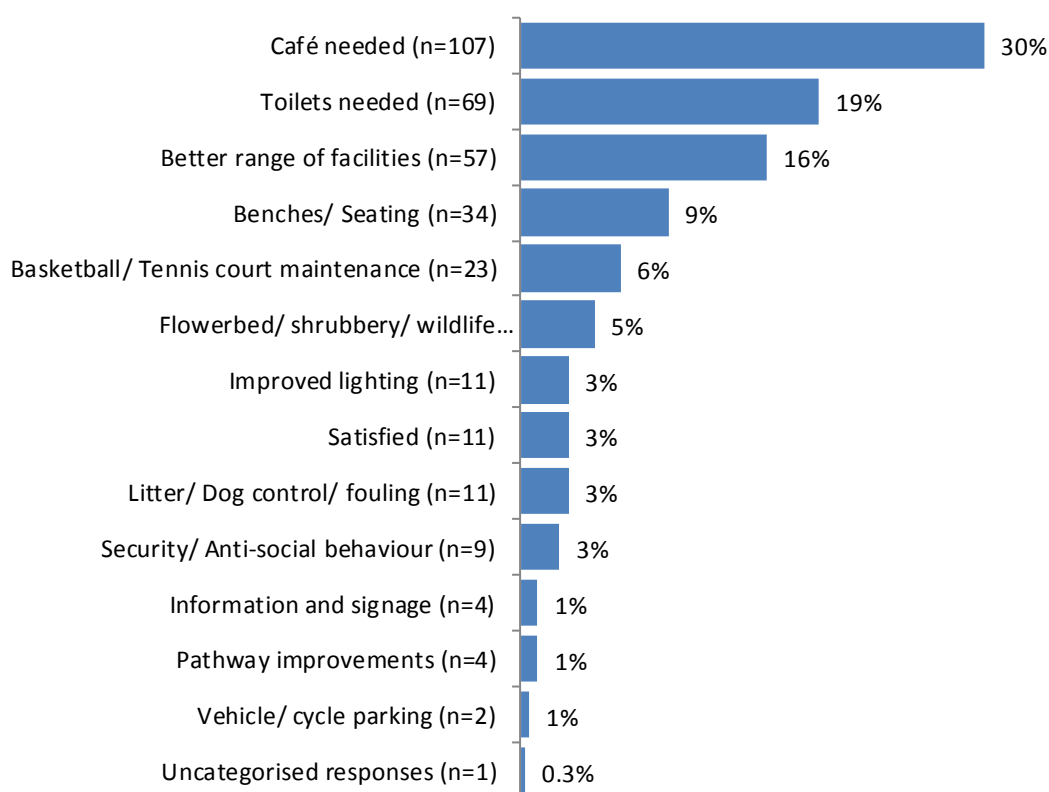
Improving visitor experience and encouraging more use of the grounds or staying for longer:

This section looks at the visitor experience and suggestions for using Alexandra Recreational Grounds more often or to stay for longer. When considering improving the visitor experience, the three most prevalent suggestions for using the recreational grounds more often or staying for longer include:

- Café needed (30%, n=107)
- Toilets needed (19%, n=69)
- Better range of facilities (16%, n=57).

The graph below illustrates common themes:

Q6: Can you think of one thing that would encourage you to use Alexandra Recreation Ground more often or to stay for longer?



Base: All respondents=360

A more detailed analysis of the literal responses is listed below:

Q6: Can you think of one thing that would encourage you to use Alexandra Recreation Ground more often or to stay for longer? (Base: All respondents=360)	
Theme:	Examples:
1. Café needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A little café selling tea and cake. Nothing huge, just a little outlet • A lovely café like Reigate and Banstead park - they are first class cafe and would encourage people to stay longer. It's long overdue for this park. • A café like Cheam Park would be brilliant, don't even have to sell a wide variety of things. ...ice creams in the summer and tea and coffee throughout the year. • The addition of a small tearoom would be ideal for

	<p>visitors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Somewhere to get food and drink. • Tea & cake/snacks stall. • Yes, a cafe next to the playground. • A simple cafe facility. • Café or mobile coffee van.
2. Toilets needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toilets! It is just crazy that such a lovely facility cannot provide toilets for visitors. There have been endless occasions we have had to leave early! • Toilet facilities would enable me to stay longer with children. • Toilets - we often have to go home for this reason. • Access to a public lavatory. • Provision of toilet facilities. • Loos!
3. Better range of facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other things to do like adventure golf for example. • More facilities for children & adults. • More extensive play equipment. • Put in some new play equipment for the under 12 play area, it hasn't changed in at least 8 years. Would be nice to have a few new things, one of those trampolines would be great. • Fitness circuit around the park with exercise stations. • Outdoor gym equipment.
4. Benches/ Seating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More benches. • Nice seating areas. • Benches and seats surrounded by trees and flowers (but in the 'sun'). • More seats at the top end of the park. • A few more seats.
5. Basketball/ Tennis court maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fixing the basketball court will definitely encourage me and many other people to come and play at the park as there are many people who play basketball on a regular basis. • If the basketball courts closest to the bowling green where fixed up, because neither hoops have nets, plus the furthest hoop has a broken back board and seems to have been set alight. • Refurbish the basketball court. • It would be great to have the tennis courts resurfaced as they are very bumpy.

6. Flowerbed/ shrubbery/ wildlife improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It would be pleasant to have more flowers/bedding areas. If more wildlife could be encouraged in some way, beehives, bat/bird boxes, etc. • More trees/plants to encourage wildlife. • More flowers. • Seasonal flower gardens.
7. Improved lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lighting could be a lot better. • More street lighting, it is very dark in some places. • Better lighting around pathways.
8. Satisfied	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It suits my needs very well. • We love Alexandra Park, it's a fantastic park, well used by local residents. • Very satisfactory as it is!
9. Litter/ Dog control/ fouling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Litter clearance, as often as possible. • Please fine people who don't pick up their dog's mess. • Less dogs. • There should be some restrictions so dog owners have to keep their dogs under control more.
10. Security/ Anti-social behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park keeper patrolling it. • Stop the drugs. • Better security.
11. Information and signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better information about facilities and scheduled activities. • Better information about when the organised sporting events will be. There is nothing more annoying than turning up to walk the dog but not being able to as there is an organised match being played. If the times / dates were advertised I would avoid these times. • Sometimes I would like to play tennis but I am not sure if the court is taken. Maybe an app. that tells you if the court is free?
12. Pathway improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better walking pavements - not great for disabled people to access. • Better paths in park and along top of park as there are too many holes and bumps, children always fall over. • Improving paths for children.
13. Vehicle/ cycle parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More parking. • Cycle parking provision.
14. Uncategorised responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The weather!

Volunteering opportunities:

In response to the question on getting involved in volunteering activities, 51 people kindly provided their names and contact information for volunteering activities. This information will be passed onto the management team for future volunteering opportunities.

Conclusion:

The results of the survey show that people visit the grounds on a regular basis – with over two thirds of respondents visiting the grounds a number of times per week. Over three quarters of respondents indicated they travel to the grounds on foot - which would suggest they live nearby, or in close proximity to the grounds. The three most popular reasons for visiting the grounds was to use the playgrounds, followed by going for a walk, and for a children/family outing. Looking at the age profile of respondents, most respondents aged between 35-44yrs use the playground and use the grounds for a children/family outing. Whilst a broad range of respondents aged between 45yrs and 84yrs said they use the grounds to go for a walk, most younger respondents aged between 16-24yrs tend to use the grounds to play other sports.

The ground's most positively rated aspects were its accessibility, together with grass areas and the facilities for 12's and under. Whilst the vast majority of respondents' opinion of the park in general was positive, the ground's three most negatively rated aspects were the lack of toilets, its limited range of visitor facilities, and park security. When asking respondents to provide reasons for scoring any aspect of the park 'poor' or 'very poor', a number of respondents cited the lack of toilet facilities – with some people saying they have to leave early because of this.

The most popular suggestion to encourage people to use Alexandra Recreation Ground more often or to stay for longer was the need for a Café. This was followed by the need for toilets – and a number of respondents cited both (i.e. a café with toilets). Other suggestions included the need for a better range of facilities, more benches/seating in the grounds, and better maintenance of the basketball and tennis courts.

As a result of the survey, 51 people kindly provided their names and contact information for volunteering activities. This information will be passed onto the management team for future volunteering opportunities.

Overall, visitor responses were very positive with a few developmental areas identified.