

Masterplan on the Future Use of Newbold Comyn

Summary of results for Stakeholder and Public Consultation

October 2020

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council's third consultation on the Future of Newbold Comyn closed on 30 June 2020. It followed two previous consultations which provided initial feedback on the reasons why people use the Comyn and subsequently on a broad range of potential facilities for inclusion in a masterplan. This last consultation presented a draft masterplan setting out the shortlisted facilities and asked people for their views.
- 1.2 The Council's consultation was undertaken using an on-line survey. The initial consultation period was extended to take account of Covid-19 and hard copy consultation material was made available on request to people without access to the internet. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic it was felt that face-to-face consultation was not appropriate. The survey resulted in 2215 responses. In addition to the on-line survey, key stakeholder groups were contacted and a number of these groups provided email feedback about the proposals.
- 1.3 The following information provides a summary of the feedback received and draws out the key questions and issues along with responses.

2. Summary of results

- 2.1 The following table shows responses for the survey questions which asked respondents to indicate their likely use and support for the proposed facilities as identified in the draft masterplan.

Question - How frequently would you use the:	Often	Sometimes	Not use but would support	No use and do not support
Golf facilities (9-hole pitch and putt and adventure golf)?	7.1%	30%	38.5%	24.5%
Football facilities (3G pitch and grass pitches)?	4.6%	9.4%	72.5%	13.5%
Cycling facilities (3 different cycle trails)?	30%	33.4%	24.6%	12%
Activity centre (high ropes, zip line, climbing)?	12.1%	36.5%	33.2%	18.2%
Children's play areas (refurbished toddler	17.3%	19.6%	56.6%	6.5%

Question - How frequently would you use the:	Often	Sometimes	Not use but would support	No use and do not support
play and adventure play)?				
Visitor Centre/Café?	22.7%	54.1%	12%	11.1%

2.2 The following table shows the responses for the questions where respondents were asked to rank their support for the nature reserve and parking arrangements using a scale of 5 to where 5 is support and 1 is do not support:

	5	4	3	2	1
The extension of the nature reserve, including the proposed locations?	74.6%	12.8%	7%	2.1%	3.8%
Extension to the parking facilities?	33%	20.7%	20.6%	9.2%	16.6%

2.3 This table shows the response to the final question which asked people to consider all the facilities together and rank their level of support where 5 is support and 1 is do not support:

	5	4	3	2	1
Considering all of the facilities together, do you support the proposed mix of facilities and their location?	42.3%	27.7%	15.4%	7%	7.6%

3. Question by Question Responses

3.1 The responses to each of the questions within the online survey are summarised below. In addition the key messages are included from the comments provided from respondents.

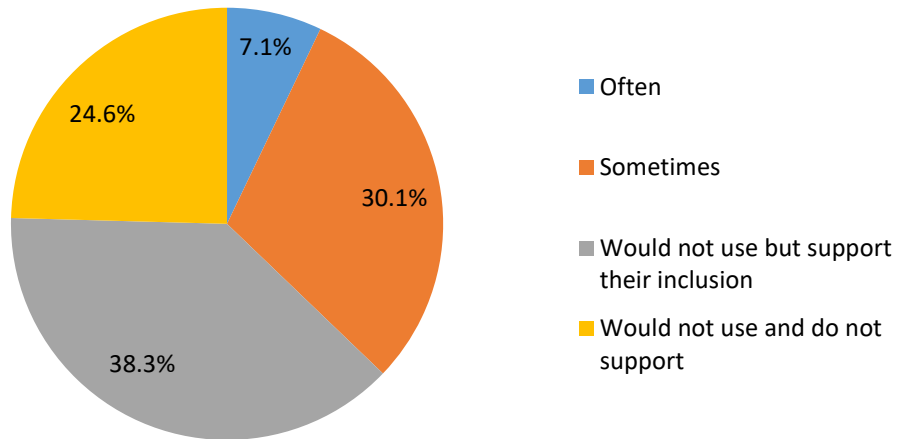
3.2 Sports facilities

3.2.1 Question 1 - Golf facilities

Proposed facilities:

- 9 hole pitch and putt course
- Adventure golf course

How frequently would you use the golf facilities?



3.2.2 Over 37% of respondents said they would use the proposed golf facilities “often” or “sometimes”. A further 38% indicated their support for the proposal but stated they would not use the facility. 25% said they would not use or support the facility.

3.2.3 Key messages from the comments:

Positive feedback:

- A welcome return of a golf facility at Newbold Comyn
- Adventure golf - good idea for children

Concerns / questions:

- Concerns about a future failure of another golf facility due to low demand and costs.
- Golf area should be left natural and available for people to walk or cycle.

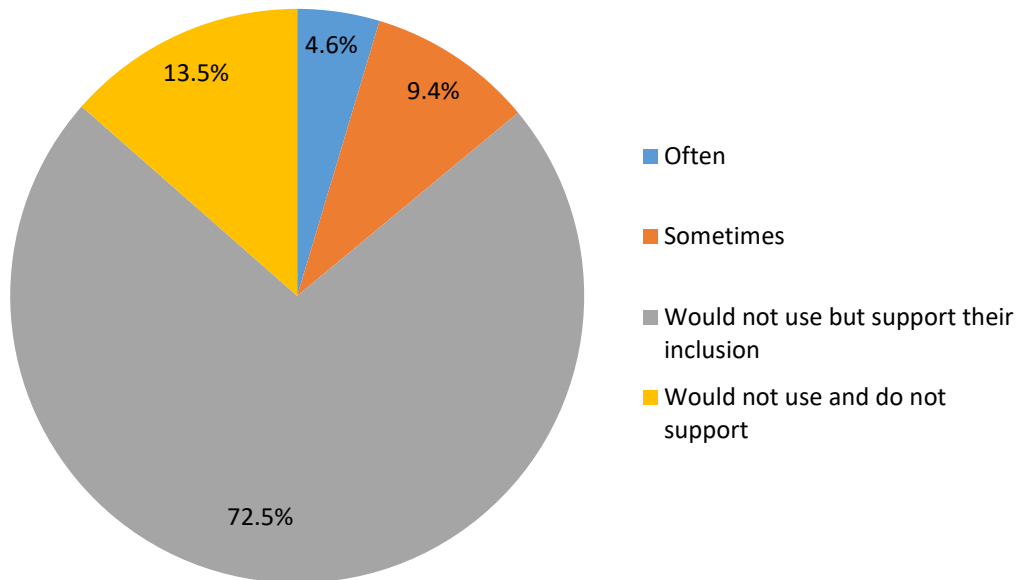
3.3 Question 2 - Football

3.3.1 The proposal:

- 14 grass football pitches of various sizes
- 3G / artificial turf pitch

(The changing facilities will be provided in the visitor centre and pavilion and feedback about this element can be found in the Visitor Centre question below.)

How frequently would you use the football pitches?



3.3.2 14% of respondents indicated that they would use the football facilities “often” or “sometimes”. A majority 72.5% supported the inclusion of the football facilities but would not use them and 13.5% stated that they would not use the pitches. (The age profile of consultation respondents is thought to have influenced responses to this question. See also 2.4 above.)

3.3.3 NB: the current football pitches are well used by junior and senior teams with demand currently exceeding supply. Warwick District Council’s Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan (2019-2029) identifies there is a need for 5-6 artificial turf pitches across the District, including an artificial pitch at Newbold Comyn. This Strategy also sets out an objective to upgrade the changing accommodation.

3.3.4 Key messages from the comments provided:

Positive feedback:

- Existing facilities well used and artificial pitch will provide a needed all year round facility

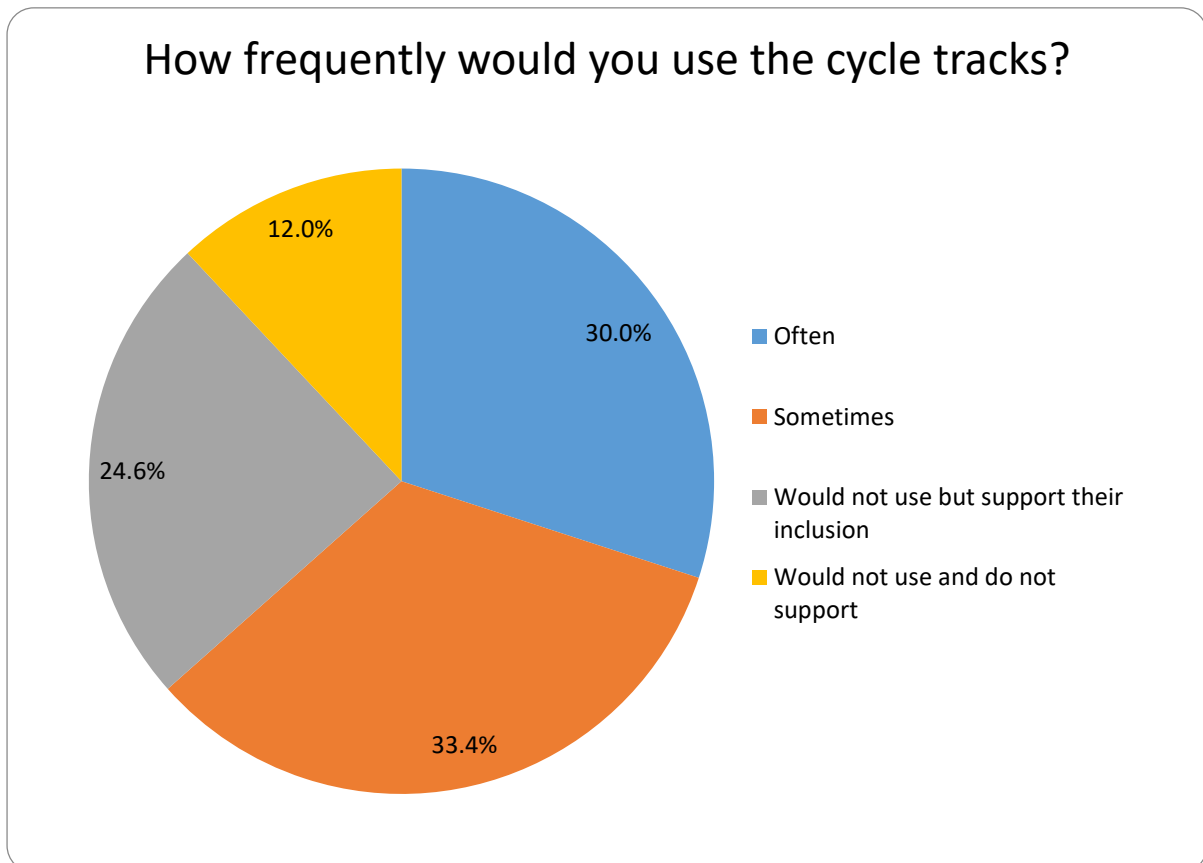
Concerns / questions:

- Potential negative impacts in relation to the floodlights and noise from the artificial pitch
- Concerns about parking arrangements and a desire to reduce additional car traffic to the site.
- Questions around the need for additional pitches.

3.4. Question 3 - Cycle tracks

3.4.1 Proposed facilities: three different cycle tracks as described below:

- shared walking and cycling family trail (approx. 5.5k)
- skills orientated bike trail (including Campion Hills existing trail approx. 3.5k)
- cross country trail (approx. 3k)



3.4.2 63% of respondents stated that they would use the facilities often or sometimes. A further 25% indicated that they supported the use of the facilities but would not use them. A minority of 12% of respondents fed back that they would not use the proposed cycle facilities.

3.4.3 The key themes emerging from the comments provided

Positive feedback:

- Cycling facilities needed as there is a lack of existing facilities in the area

Concerns / questions:

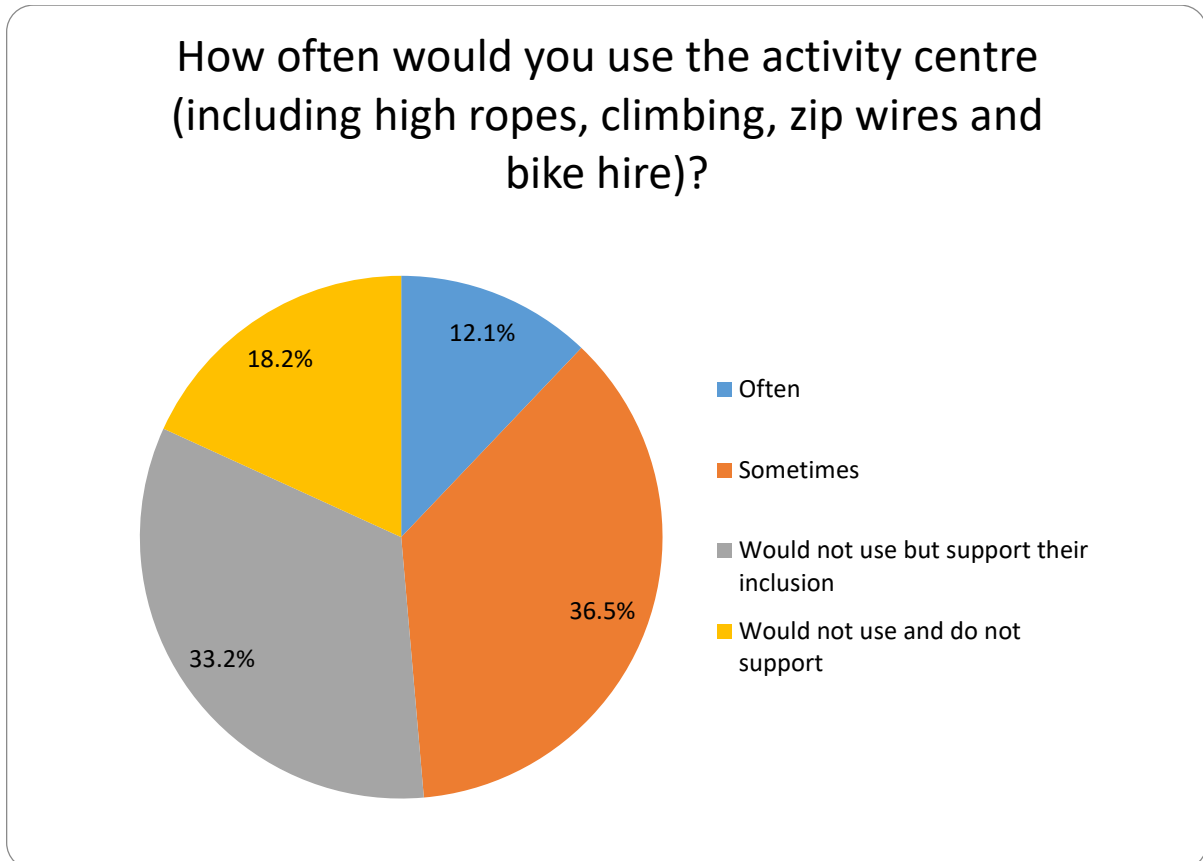
- Shared use of the paths between cyclists, walkers and dogs resulting in possible safety issues and disruption for walkers.
- Perception that proposals prioritise cyclists over walkers.

- Desire for cycle paths on the Comyn to link to existing and future cycle paths.
- Potential negative impacts of the cycle paths on habitats / wildlife / impact on peace and tranquillity.

3.5 Question 4 - Activity centre

3.5.1 Proposed facilities:

- Activity centre - including high ropes, climbing and zip wires plus bike hire



3.5.2 48.6% percent of respondents stated that they would use the proposed activities. A further 33.2% indicated that they supported the inclusion of the proposed facilities but would not use them and 18.2% do not support the activity facilities including within the draft masterplan.

3.5.3 Key messages emerging to the comments given to this question are:

Positive messages

- Exciting facility and something for families and older children
- Will encourage people to be active

Concerns / questions

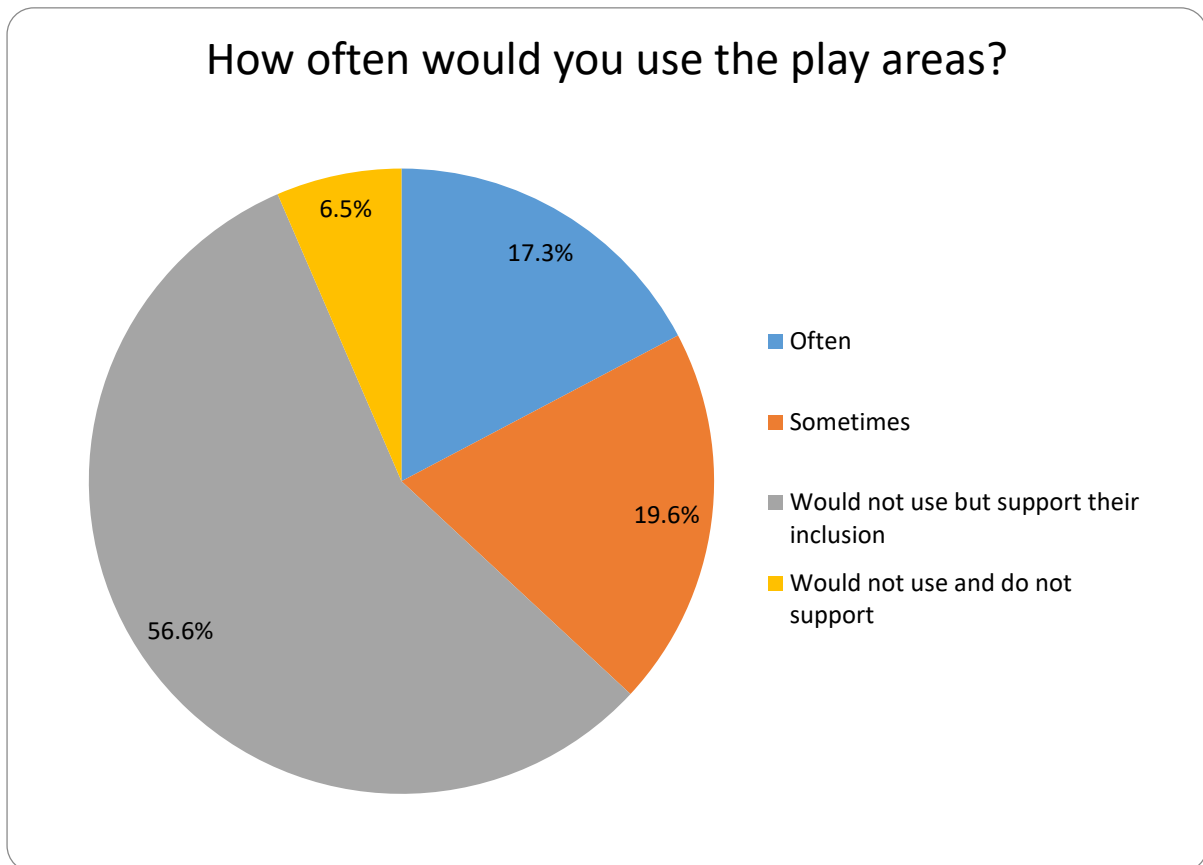
- Financial viability / questioning of demand
- Too commercial and will generate additional cars/traffic
- Potential for anti-social behaviour
- Concern about unaffordable customer pricing

- Out of keeping with the character of the Comyn
- Negative impacts on environment / wildlife / quiet enjoyment

3.6 Question 5 - Play areas

3.6.1 Proposal:

- Refurbish the existing toddler play area and the existing adventurous play area for older children.



3.6.2 Almost 40% of respondents said that they would use these facilities often or sometimes. 56.6% replied that they supported the inclusion of new play areas and a minority of 6.5% do not support the inclusion of play areas.

3.6.3 Key messages from the comments provided:

Positive feedback:

- Children will like and use these facilities

Concerns / questions:

- There are already enough play areas in the area
- The play areas will need to be properly maintained
- Desire for seating to be included for parents

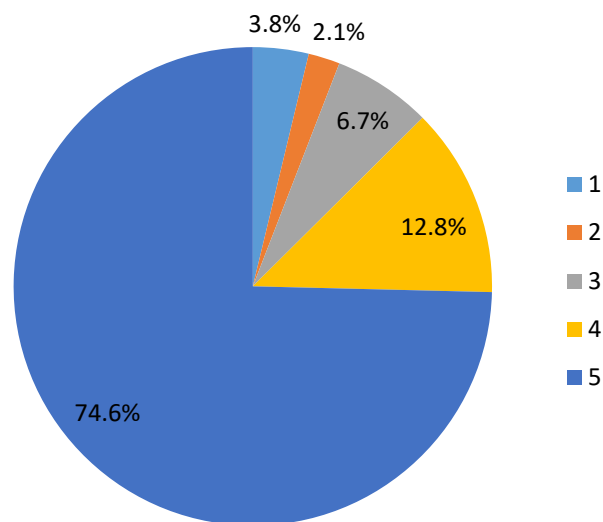
3.7 Question 6 - Nature Reserve

3.7.1 Proposal:

- Change the former golf course into new Nature Reserve to link to the existing Leam Valley nature reserve. The proposals include the enhancement of existing habitats and the creation of variety or new habitats, including grassland, wooded areas and ponds.

3.7.2 Respondents were asked to rank their support for the scheme where 1 is do not support and 5 is support. The results show strong support for the proposals to extend the nature reserve with 74.6% rating their support as a 5 and 12.8% giving a 4. Just 6.7% of respondent ranked their support as 3 and 5.9% ranked their support as a 2 or 1.

On a ranking of 1 to 5, where 1 is do not support and 5 is support: Do you support the extension to the nature reserve at Newbold Comyn, including the proposed locations?



3.7.3 Key messages from the comments provided:

Positive feedback:

- Nature/wildlife is highly valued and very well supported for inclusion
- Support for natural regeneration (i.e. allow nature to take its course with minimal intervention)
- This is most valued proposed facility with-in the masterplan

Concerns/questions:

- Would areas continue to be accessible to walkers? Both from mobility perspective and right to roam/public access
- Concerns arising from shared of cycle paths / walking trails within the nature reserve
- Different users (cyclists, walkers, dogs, horse riders) sharing space vs. allocation of single use space
- Nature reserve needs to be accessible
- Include facilities to allow people to engage with wildlife – information boards, educational trails

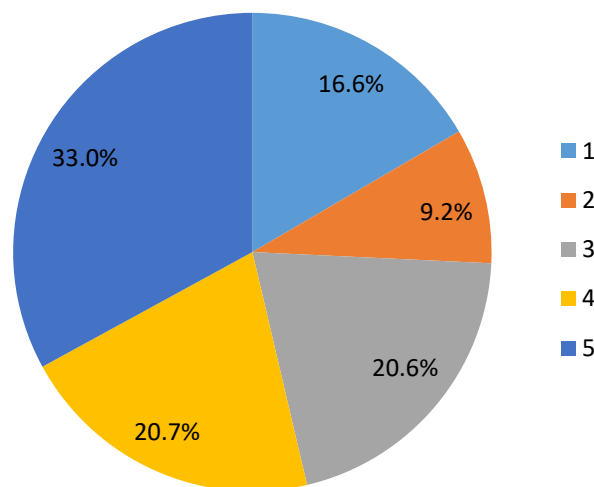
3.8 Question 7 - Parking Facilities

3.8.1 Proposal:

- Increase the parking capacity by approximately 150 additional spaces subject to planning permission. The additional spaces are intended ensure there is sufficient on-site parking and to reduce on street parking on neighbouring roads.

3.8.2 Consultees were asked to rate their support for the extension of parking facilities in the proposed locations, where 1 was not supported and 5 was supported. Some 53.7% of respondents ranked their support for the proposed parking facilities as 5 or 4. 20.6% of respondents rated their support as 3 and just over a quarter of respondents (25.8%) rated their support as 2 or 1.

On a ranking of 1 to 5, where 1 is do not support and 5 is support: Do you support the extension to the parking facilities, including its proposed location?



3.8.3 The key messages from the comments provided are summarised below:

Positive feedback:

- Additional parking is needed, particularly at weekends
- Additional parking on site will alleviate overspill parking on neighbouring roads

Concerns / queries:

- Proposals should encourage car free travel/improve cycle/pedestrian access not encourage or create additional car travel
- Demand for electric vehicle charging points and cycle parking
- Demand for improved links to the Comyn to enable people to walk / cycle rather than additional parking (including from Lillington)
- Car parking charging be considered to encourage people to come on foot or by bike
- Demand for increased parking in Radford Road
- Concern of traffic impact on Newbold Terrace East.
- Demand for better public transport to the Comyn
- Proposals are not aligned with the WDC Climate Emergency Action Plan
- Additional parking is not needed – current car parks are not full

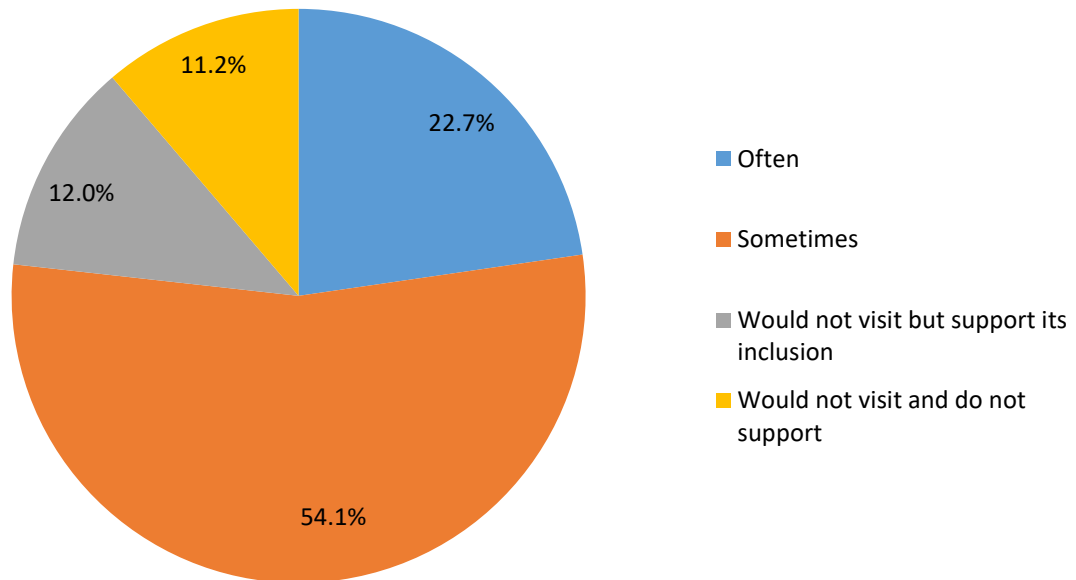
3.9 Q8. Visitor Centre/Café

3.9.1 Proposals:

- Visitor Centre with Café. The building would house also the football pavilion. The two facilities would be accessed by separate entrances. The current football pavilion would be demolished.

3.9.2 The substantial majority of respondents (76.8%) of respondents said they would visit the visitor centre often or sometimes. A further 12% said they supported the inclusion of the visitor centre within the proposals but would not visit and a remaining 11.2% did not support the proposal and would not visit.

How often would you visit the Visitor Centre/Café?



3.9.3 The key messages arising from the comments provided to this question include:

Feedback in support of the proposal

- Toilets are much needed for people visiting the Comyn

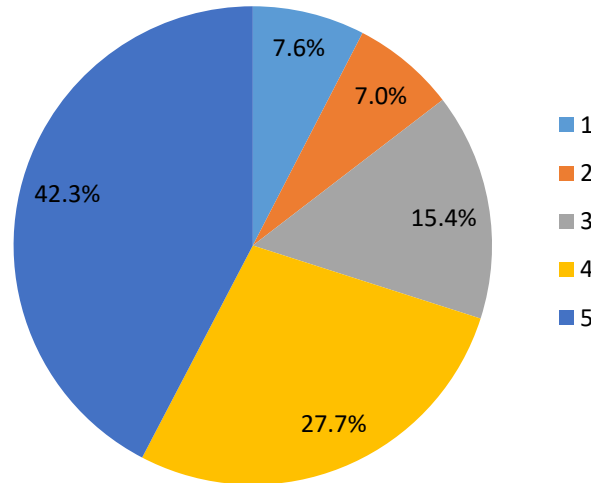
Concerns / questions

- Café not required / already have a pub / café in leisure centre / many cafés in Leamington
- Viability concerns
- Keep area as natural as possible
- Should be “eco building” with focus on sustainability (no single use plastic, responsibly sourced products)
- Is it optimally located? (Concern it is too far from some of the pitches)
- Café should be good quality (The Aviary in Jephson Gardens quoted several times as example of good quality provision)
- Support for modestly sized café/visitor centre

3.10. Question 9 - Overall support for proposed mix of facilities and their location

3.10.1 Consultees were asked to consider the draft masterplan as a whole and rank their support where 1 is no support and 5 is support. In total 70% of respondents ranked their support as 5 and 4. 15.4% of respondents ranked their support as 3 and a remaining 14.6% as a 2 or 1.

On a ranking of 1 to 5, where 1 is do not support and 5 is support: Considering all of the facilities together, do you support the proposed mix of facilities and their location?



3.10.2 Key themes emerging from the comments provided to this question include:

Messages supporting the proposal

- A good mix of proposals

Concerns/questions

- Proposals are “overkill” and too commercial
- Concern there is insufficient demand for the facilities
- Simplify the project / do less
- Concern about additional parking/traffic impacts
- Proposal should include improvement of existing paths for pedestrians / Parkrun
- Lack of emphasis on walkers as perceived main users
- Concern that walkers/cyclists/ runners will be competing for space
- Wildlife should be the priority

4. Other Feedback

4.1 The following tables summarise the key themes and questions arising from other feedback provided from local stakeholder groups and also from the more general comments from the online survey.

4.2 Agreeing the masterplan will be the first stage of the design process. The masterplan acts as the skeleton or framework for the more detailed work which will be needed in order to progress each of the facilities for a planning application. As can be seen below, several of queries raised through the consultation relate to the work which will need to be done as part of the next phase of more detailed design process.

4.3 Scale of development / inclusion of commercial facilities

Feedback / question	Response
Should the facilities be aimed at local people only or designed to attract people from further afield?	<p>Based on feedback and discussions with Councillors, it is felt that the Comyn should be developed as a local attraction i.e. primarily for people living within the District.</p> <p>However, there is a need for the Comyn to be financially sustainable. Currently the Council incurs considerable costs to maintain the site. The commercial elements of the masterplan will help to make the Comyn more affordable and assist with securing the long term financial sustainability of the site.</p>
Is there enough demand for the commercial facilities?	<p>The current situation regarding Covid-19 has had a significant effect upon the leisure operator market nationally. We have recently undertaken market testing with potential operators. The exercise resulted in low levels of engagement. This reflects a reduced capacity to actually engage in the market testing and also a reduced appetite for exploring opportunities given the current uncertainties.</p> <p>As a result, the draft masterplan has been amended to remove the activity centre (high wires and zip line) and the golfing attractions (9 hole course and adventure golf). Those areas of the Comyn will be earmarked for future outdoor activities and further work will be undertaken by the Council to identify suitable facilities when there is greater stability in the market.</p>
Is the visitor centre with café needed?	Previous work and consultation has identified that there is likely to be good levels of demand

Feedback / question	Response
	<p>and a sustainable business case for the development of a visitor centre with café. The visitor centre concept is that it will be more than “just a café” and will provide information and education about the Comyn and potentially other nature sites in the area and also a venue for community activities. The café will be very different to the pub in terms of the look and feel and the type of refreshments on offer.</p>
<p>Is the site being over-developed?</p>	<p>The site is approx. 120ha. The masterplan was designed to promote physical activity and increased engagement of local people with the site. There is a mix of free to access and commercial elements, design to ensure a long-term sustainable strategy for the site. The masterplan has been devised after an assessment of need and comprehensive stakeholder consultation. There has been careful consideration to ensure that the facilities included on the masterplan can be sensibly accommodated on the site to ensure that the facilities are not too crowded. The layout of the site will be tested again when work starts on the detailed design of the site. This will also be considered as part of the planning application.</p>
<p>Should the masterplan be reviewed in light of the Council’s Climate Emergency?</p>	<p>As with any Council development, the Council will be seeking to ensure that the re-development will under taken with as minimal as possible impact on the environment and ecology. The new buildings (visitor centre, repurposed golf house will be as close to zero carbon as possible.</p> <p>We will look to include green measures where possible/viable including; electric car charging points, safe cycle storage and use of sustainable materials etc.</p> <p>We are aiming to improve bio-diversity on the site through the creation of the new nature reserve, including a variety of habitats. This will help to mitigate the effects of climate change.</p> <p>(See also below - Travel and Parking)</p>
<p>Is the masterplan now affordable following financial pressure created by Covid-19?</p>	<p>Covid-19 has created financial challenges for the Council. In order for the Council to</p>

Feedback / question	Response
	<p>implement the masterplan, it will need to be affordable.</p> <p>The Council will look to implement the masterplan in a phased way over a period of years. This may mean that some elements do not come forward in the immediate future.</p>

4.4 Travel / Parking

Question/Issue	Response
<p>The planned additional parking spaces will encourage people to drive to the site – this is not considered desirable.</p>	<p>Further work is planned which will confirm the number of additional car parking spaces needed for the site. This will include undertaking a Traffic and Parking Assessment study.</p> <p>As part of the next stages of the design, the Council will also look at way to encourage people to visit the Comyn by bike and on foot. This will include looking at footpath and cycle way improvements and also bike parking on site.</p> <p>The Council is prepared to look at implementing the additional parking in a phased approach as and when each of the new facilities is created.</p>
<p>Will the Council introduce car parking charging to discourage visitors coming by car?</p>	<p>The Council is undertaking a Council wide review of its parking charging policies. The Comyn will be considered as part of this review.</p>
<p>Concern about the impact of increased traffic on Newbold Terrace East and neighbouring roads.</p>	<p>This will be looked at as part of the traffic and parking study in consultation with the County Council.</p>

4.5 Pathways / Cycle Paths within the site

Question/Issue	Response
<p>Queries about suitability of shared use paths (walking and cycling) and desire for improvement of paths</p>	<p>This will be looked at as part of the detailed design work. The aim will be to ensure that pathways can be safely enjoyed by both walkers and cyclists and that the routes enable as full an access as possible to the site, whilst avoiding sensitive wildlife habitats.</p>

4.6 Transport/Access links beyond the site

Questions / Issues	Response
Requests for improved connections to cycle and pedestrian paths networks in the wider area	The access links beyond the site will be looked at as part of the next phase of the project. This will include joint working with County Council.
Improvements wanted for pedestrian access to the site	Again, this will be looked at as part of the next stages of the design work.

4.7 Accessibility

Question / issue	Response
Demand for improved accessibility within the site for people with disabilities, reduced mobility and people with buggies.	This will be addressed in the detailed design stage. The footbridge near to the Radford Road will also be considered as part of this work.

4.8 Dog walking

Question / Issue	Response
Will dog walkers still be able to use the Comyn?	Yes - dog walkers will still be able to walk their dogs on Newbold Comyn

4.9 Environmental Impacts

Question / Issue	Response
Concerns about ecological impacts on the site (e.g. potential light and noise pollution) arising from the facilities	Environmental Impact Assessments will be required as the proposals progress. These will identify if there will be negative impacts on the site's ecology and if so what mitigations will be required to resolve the issue.