
Victoria Park & National Bowls

Championship Survey

August 2013

Final Summary Report



Prepared by: The Research Solution

Christine King, Director

Tel: 01905 721440

On behalf of Warwick District Council

the **research** solution 

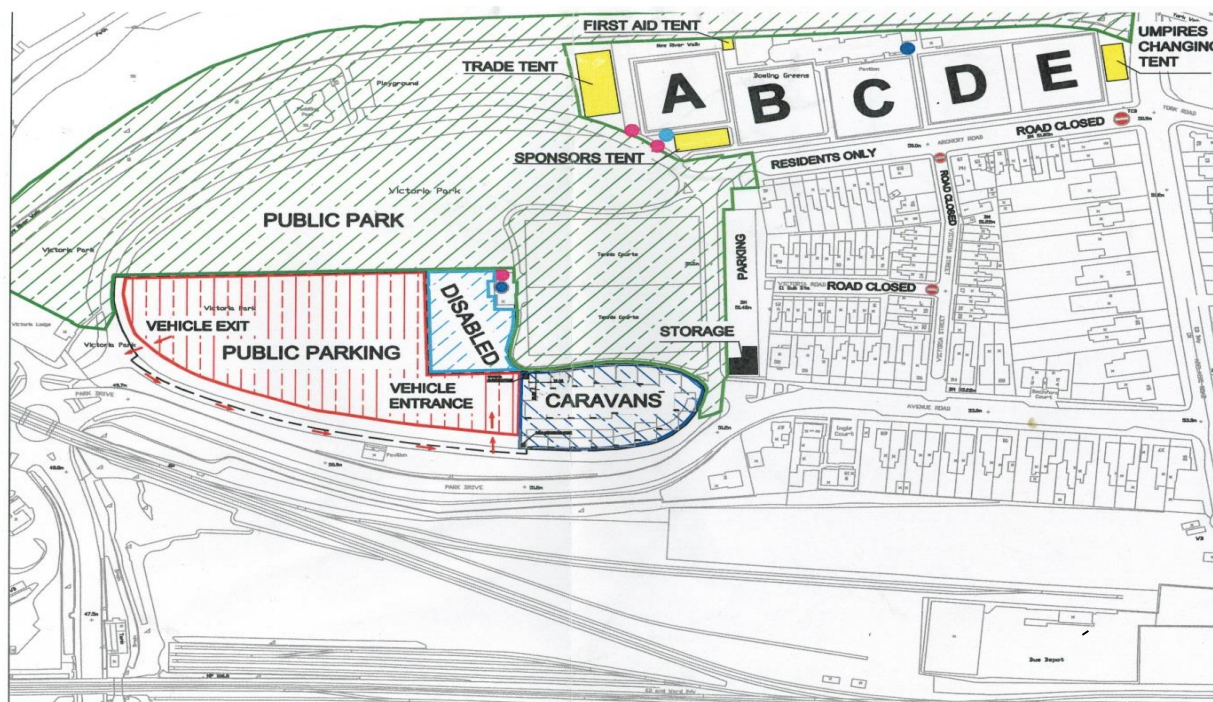
1.0 INTRODUCTION, BRIEF AND METHODOLOGY

1.1 Introduction

In July 2013, The Research Solution was commissioned by Warwick District Council to conduct a survey of visitors to the National Bowls Championship held in Victoria Park in Leamington Spa. Warwick District Council commissioned this survey in order to gain a better understanding of the use of Victoria Park during the Women's National Championships in 2013. The information gathered from both those visiting for the bowls event, but also from general park users, will be used in planning for future years events. General information relating to the park will be passed on to colleagues in the Council to inform future improvements to the park, as well as general users of the Park itself. The survey took place during the 16 days of the National Championships with a random selection of days chosen by The Research Solution.

1.2 Survey Methodology

The research was undertaken by a team of fully trained experienced interviewers. The interview period covered both weekdays and weekends, from Monday 29th July through to Sunday 11th August, covering 12 of the 16 days. A sample of 360 interviews was completed during this period, 175 Park Users and 185 competitors, spectators and officials of the Bowls Championship.



1.3 Survey Days

During the twelve days of interviewing, 360 interviews were completed. A list of the dates and numbers achieved on these days are shown below.

Table 1: Survey Days		
Interview Days	Number Achieved	
	<i>Bowls</i>	<i>Park Users</i>
Monday 29 th July	15	15
Wednesday 31 st July	15	13
Thursday 1 st August	15	15
Friday 2 nd August	15	15
Saturday 3 rd August	15	15
Sunday 4 th August	19	12
Monday 5 th August	15	15
Tuesday 6 th August	15	15
Wednesday 7 th August	15	15
Thursday 8 th August	15	15
Friday 9 th August	15	15
Saturday 10 th August	15	15

1.4 Reporting

The following summary report is broken down into two sections, one for those who were at Victoria Park for the Bowls Championship and those who were in the park on a general visit.

2.0 ALL RESPONDENTS

2.1 Summary of Results

General questions regarding the demographic profile of visitors were asked to both sets of visitors. The following section looks at responses from both respondents at the Championships and those who were using the park for a general visit.

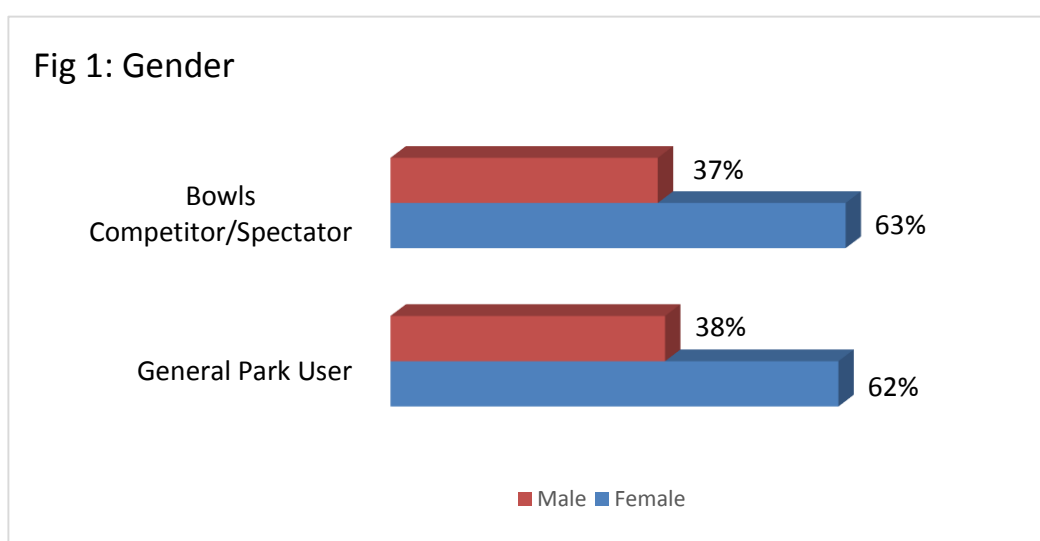
2.2 Age Groups

Over two thirds of Bowls respondents (69%) were aged 55 and over compared with only 29% of general park users. The age groups of general park users were much younger with 27% 34 or younger.

Table 2: Age Groups			
	Total	Competitors/Spectators	General Park Users
17-24	5%	5%	5%
25-34	14%	6%	22%
35-44	15%	5%	25%
45-54	17%	14%	19%
55-64	17%	21%	14%
65-74	26%	39%	13%
75+	5%	9%	2%

2.3 Gender

Of the total number of respondents interviewed at both the Nationals and the general park users, more females were interviewed than males (63% Bowls competitor/spectators and 62% general park user).



Only just over a third of all respondents interviewed at both the Nationals and general park users were male visitors.

2.4 Mode of Transport

The majority of respondents' at the Bowls Championship had travelled by car to the event (92%)

Table 3: Mode of Transport			
	Total	Competitors/Spectators	General Park Users
Car	73%	92%	53%
Walked	21%	6%	36%
Other	4%	2%	7%
Bike	2%	-	5%

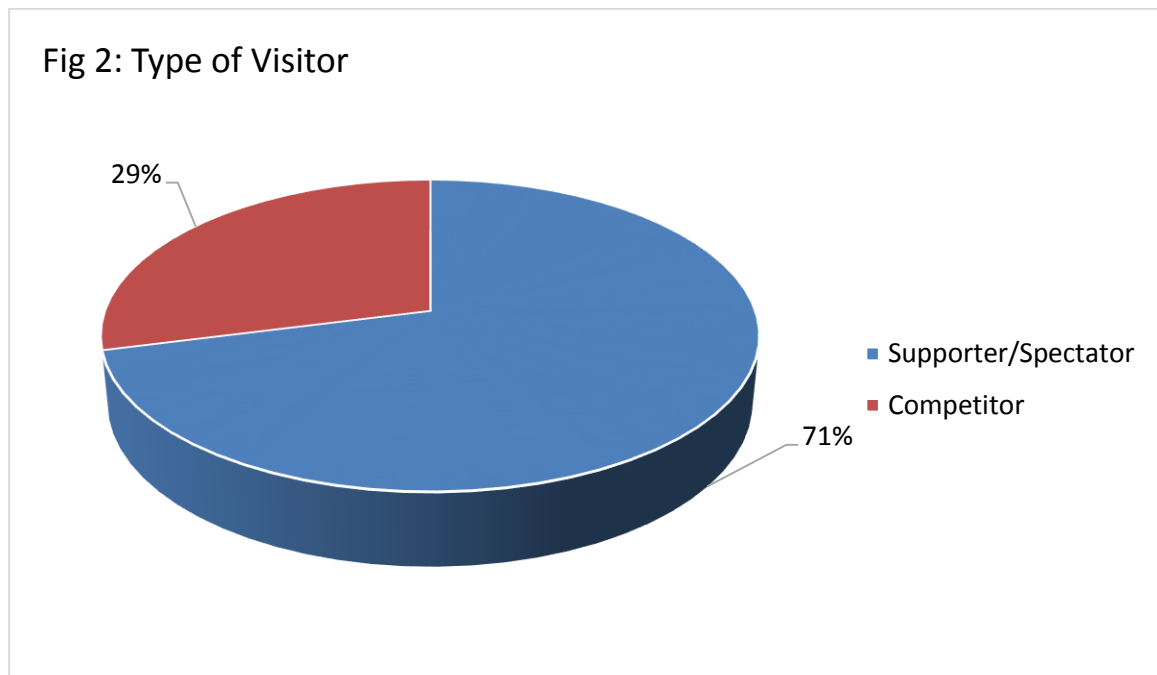
As general park users were predominantly local, use of the car was significantly lower than those who were at the park for the Nationals (53%) with a third (36%) walking to the park on the day of interview.

3.0 SECTION THREE

3.1 Summary of Results – Bowls Competitors/Spectators

3.2 Type of Visitor

Of the 185 respondents at the National Bowls Championship, Almost three quarters (71%) were spectators/supporters and 29% were taking part in the Nationals.



3.3 Origin of Visitor

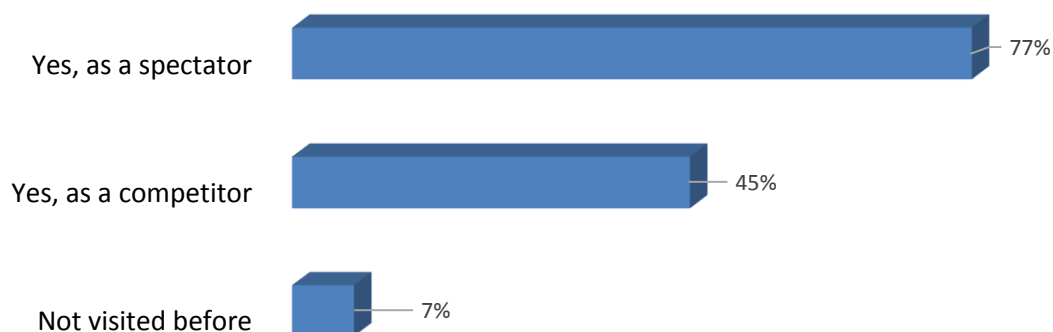
Visitors to the National Bowls Championship came from all over the country. Excluding Warwickshire, 84% of visitors came from further afield from a wide range of places. A full list is shown below. In terms of local visitors to the Nationals, 16% came from Warwickshire and of this, 8% were from Leamington Spa itself and 8% came from neighbouring areas within Warwickshire including Warwick, Stratford on Avon, Kenilworth.

Table 4: Origin of Visitor – National Bowls Championship			
Warwickshire	16%	Oxfordshire	2%
Hants / Isle of Wight	5%	Somerset	2%
Cambridgeshire	4%	Durham	2%
Essex	4%	Northumberland	2%
Surrey	4%	Lincolnshire	2%
Yorkshire	4%	Gloucestershire	2%
Leicestershire	4%	Worcestershire	2%
Hertfordshire	4%	West Midlands	2%
Bath / Bristol	4%	Norfolk	2%
Cumbria	3%	Sussex	2%
London / Middlesex	3%	Kent	1%
Devon	3%	Cornwall	1%
Wiltshire	3%	Cleveland	1%
Northamptonshire	3%	Tyne & Wear	1%
Nottinghamshire	3%	Shropshire	1%
Berkshire	3%	Staffordshire	1%
Bedfordshire	3%	Suffolk	1%
Derbyshire	2%	Dorset / Poole / Bournemouth	1%
Buckinghamshire	2%	Scotland	1%

3.4 Visited Before

Over three quarters (77%) had visited Leamington Spa on a previous occasion as a supporter, to watch the Nationals, with 45% visiting before as a competitor. Only 7% were first time visitors to the Championship.

Fig 3: Previous Visits

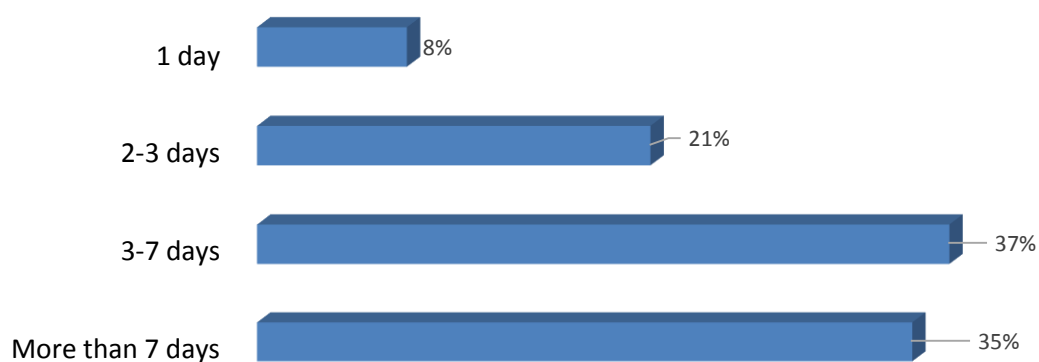


NB: responses do not add up to 100% as respondents could have visited as a spectator and a competitor on previous visits

3.5 *Number of times planning to visit park*

Respondents were asked how many times they planned to visit the park during the Nationals. The majority were staying 2 or more days with only 8% visiting for 1 day only. 37% were likely to visit for between 3-7 days and just over a third (35%) would visit for more than 7 days. A fifth (21%) intended to visit the park between 2-3 days.

Fig 4: Number of times visiting park



3.6 *Activities undertaken whilst at park*

A range of questions were asked of those at the Nationals on the frequency of certain activities undertaken whilst on their visit. Seven out of ten (70%) respondents bought refreshments on site every day compared with only 36% who purchased alcoholic drinks on site. 38% of respondents went into the town centre for shopping purposes on some of the days with over half (52%) visiting the town centre every day for something to eat/drink.

Over half (56%) did not intend to visit an attraction whilst on their visit. 60% of respondents were likely to use a hotel/B&B every day or some of the days they were stopping at the Bowls Championships.

Table 5: Activities undertaken

	<i>Every day</i>	<i>Some days</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Never</i>
Buy refreshment on site	70%	22%	3%	5%
Buy alcoholic drinks on site	36%	29%	5%	29%
Bring bowls, picnics, seating etc	18%	16%	8%	58%
Visit town centre for shopping	27%	38%	9%	27%
Visit town centre for eating/drinking	52%	18%	3%	27%
Visit local tourist attractions	7%	22%	15%	56%
Stay overnight at a local hotel or B&B	51%	9%	2%	38%

On average, visitors were stopping overnight for approximately 6 days whilst the Championships were on.

3.7 Ratings of facilities

The local shops and hotels received the highest rating with almost all (99%) rating this very/fairly good followed by car parking (91%). Changing facilities recorded the lowest “very good” rating with only 24% happy with the changing rooms at the Nationals. Facilities for spectators also rated low with only 31% rating this “very good”.

Table 6: Ratings of Facilities

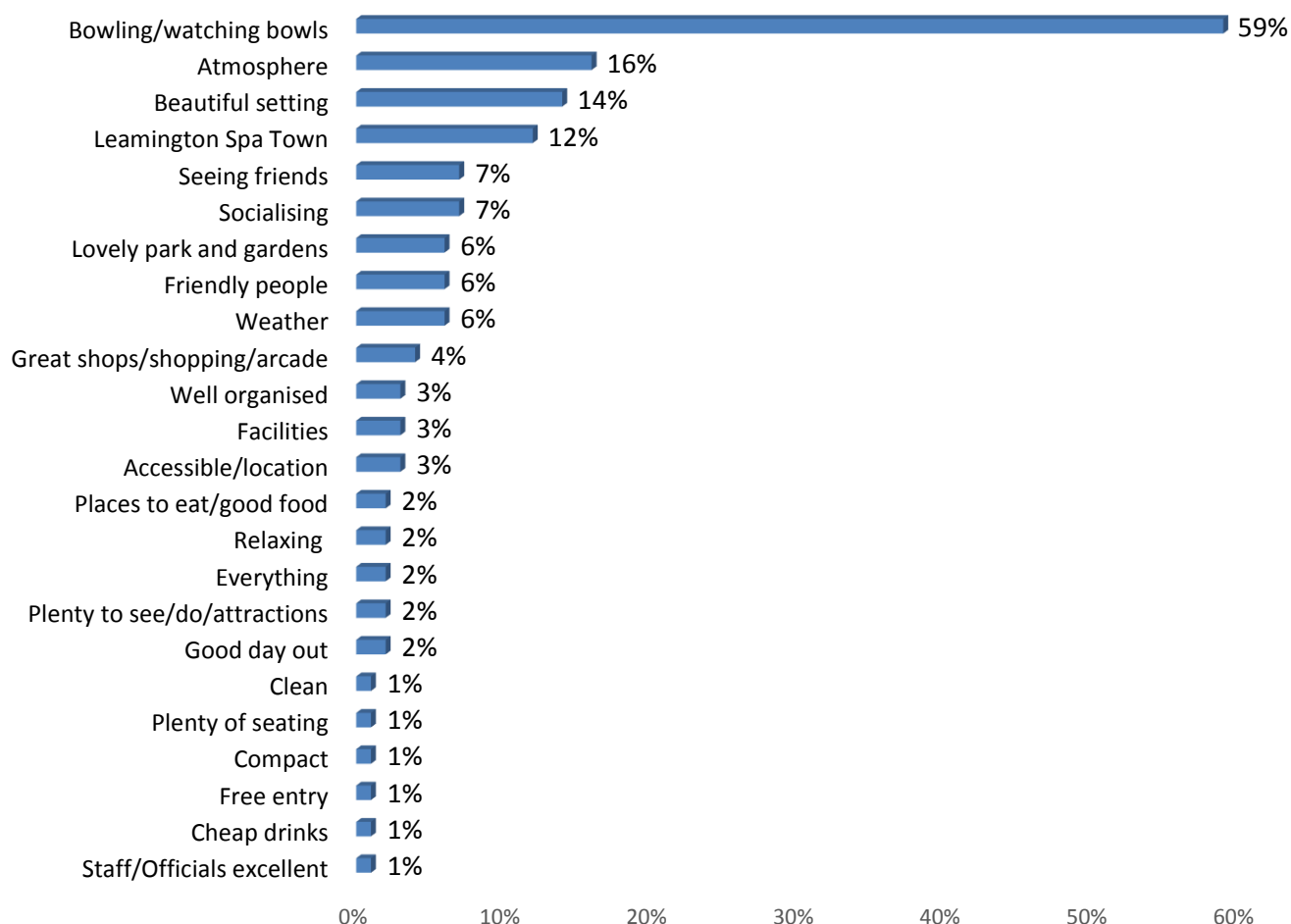
	<i>Very Good</i>	<i>Fairly Good</i>	<i>Fairly Poor</i>	<i>Very Poor</i>
Greens	44%	43%	12%	1%
Changing facilities	24%	47%	23%	6%
Catering/bars	45%	43%	12%	-
Car parking	57%	34%	3%	6%
Spectator provision	31%	52%	12%	5%

Local facilities (shops, hotels etc)	66%	33%	1%	-
--------------------------------------	-----	-----	----	---

3.8 *Enjoy most about visit*

Respondents were asked what made their visit enjoyable. As expected, the bowling/watching the bowls was top with 59% of respondents citing this as the most enjoyable aspect of their visit. The atmosphere/buzz was next with 16% of people noting this. A list of the responses are shown in the table below.

Fig 6: Most enjoyed about visit

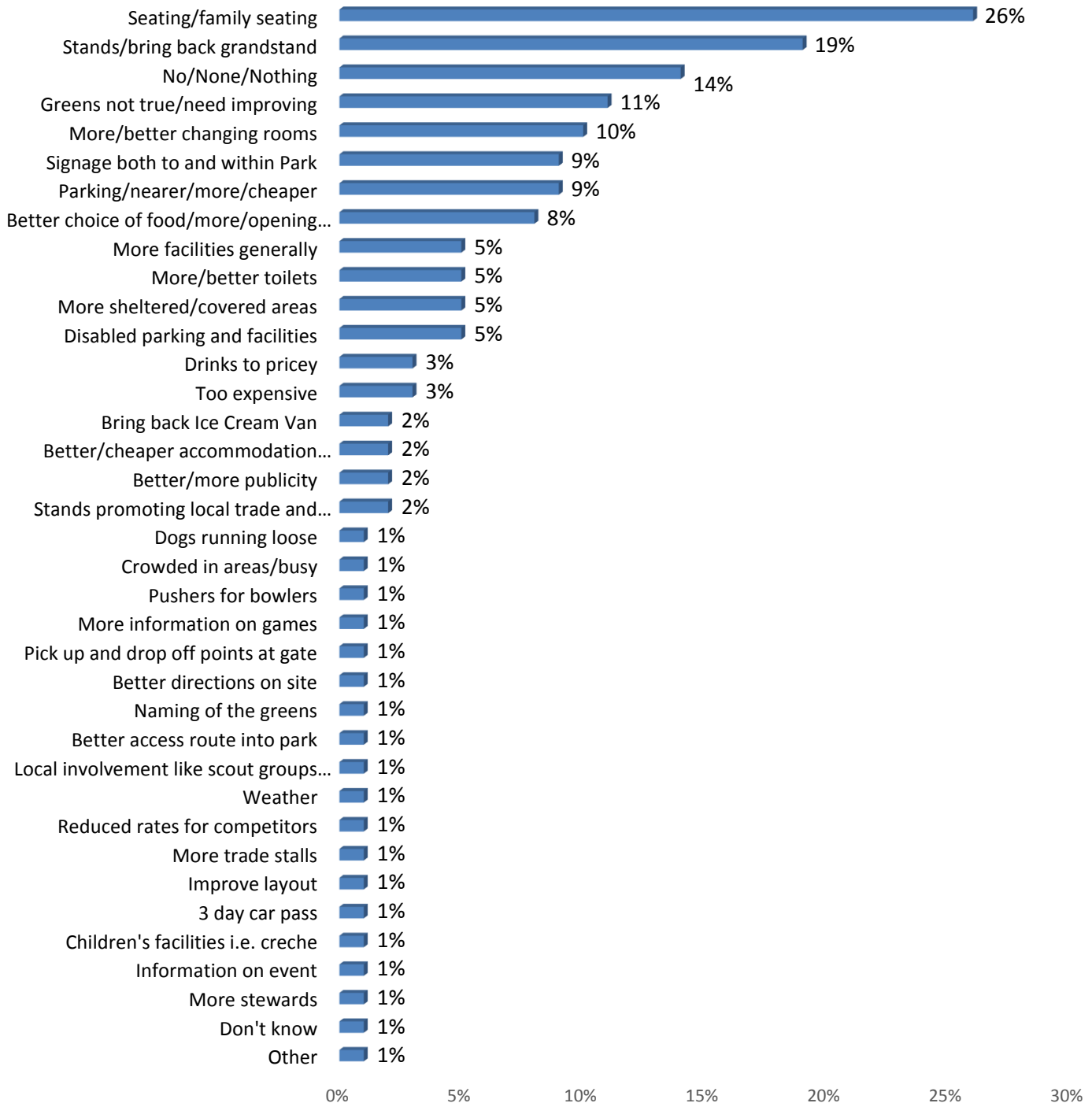


3.9 *Improvements*

There was a variety of suggestions about improving the experience at the Nationals with seating and more stands topping the list. Over a quarter wanted more seating and dedicated seating for family and friends and 19% wanted to bring back the grandstand or provide new stands. Around 14% of visitors were happy with their experience at the Nationals and did not think anything needed to be improved. However, 11% of visitors felt that the Greens needed to be improved and 10% expressed concern for better and more changing rooms, especially

with the Men's Championship being held at Victoria Park next year. A full list is shown in Figure 7 below.

Fig 7: Improvements



4.0 SECTION FOUR

4.1 Summary of Results – General Park Users

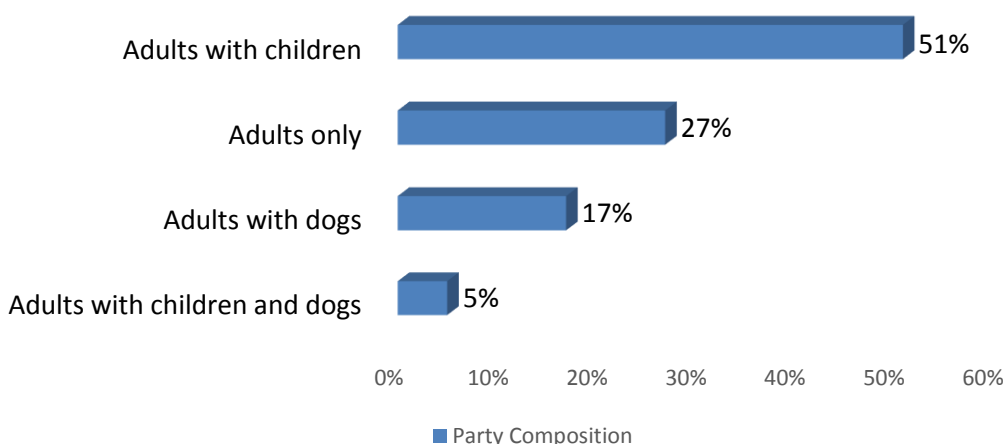
4.2 Origin of Visitor

The majority of park users came from within Warwickshire (89%) with the West Midlands supplying 4% of park visitors. 61% of park users were from Leamington Spa itself, 27% from other places within Warwickshire and 11% came from outside of the County.

Table 7: Origin of Visitor – Park User			
Warwickshire	89%	Northamptonshire	1%
West Midlands	4%	Worcestershire	1%
Leicestershire	1%	Norfolk	1%
Nottinghamshire	1%	London / Middlesex	1%
Oxfordshire	1%	Sussex	1%
Cumbria	1%	Bath/Bristol	1%

4.3 Party Composition

Eight out of ten park users were visiting with friends or family with 16% visiting the park on their own. Of the total number of respondents (185), 51% comprised of adults with children, 27% were adults on their own or in a group, 17% were adults with dogs and a small amount (5%) were adults with children and dogs in their party.

Fig 8: Party Composition

175 groups of people were interviewed during the National Bowls Championship totalling 493 individuals. The average number of people per party was 2.8

4.4 *Frequency of visit*

Park users were asked how often they visited during the summer months. Over half visited once a month or more (55%) and 12% visited a few times a year. Around 11% of visitors made a trip to the park once a fortnight and 10% once a month. A small number of respondents were on a first visit or only visited once or twice a year (6% respectively).

Table 8: Frequency of Visit	
Once a week or more	55%
About once a fortnight	10%
About once a month	11%
A few times a year	12%
Once or twice a year	6%
First visit	6%

Three quarters (75%) of park users visited the park during the winter months

4.5 *Facilities & Activities undertaken in park*

The grassed areas within the park were the most regularly used facility with 61% using this areas on their visit, followed by the children's play area/paddling pool (47%).

Table 9: Facilities & activities undertaken in park

	<i>Regularly</i>	<i>Occasionally</i>	<i>Never</i>
Children's play areas/paddling pool	47%	15%	38%
Cycling track	36%	15%	49%
Grassed areas	61%	26%	13%
Tennis courts	10%	10%	80%

Only 20% of park users regularly or occasionally used the tennis courts

4.6 Rating of facilities in park

All the ratings for the facilities in the park received high scores. The open grassed areas and tennis courts received the highest scores with a mean average of 4.9 and 4.8 respectively.

Table 10: Rating of facilities

	<i>Mean Score</i>	<i>Very Good</i>	<i>Fairly Good</i>	<i>Fairly Poor</i>	<i>Very Poor</i>
Open grassed areas	4.87	87%	13%	-	-
Tennis courts	4.83	83%	17%	-	-
Paddling pool	4.74	74%	26%	-	-
Children's play area	4.74	74%	26%	-	-
Car parking	4.39	48%	43%	9%	-
Refreshments/café	4.48	52%	43%	4%	-
Signage	4.39	57%	26%	17%	-

The lowest scores were for the car parking with less than half (48%) rating this as "very good". This is not surprising considering the additional traffic associated with the National Bowls Championship.

Those respondents who rated the facilities fairly poor or poor were asked to explain why. Signposting was an issue for 35% of respondents who felt that the signage to and inside the

park was not sufficient, followed by lack of parking space (30%). The café inside the park was felt to be limited in the choice of food and drink as well as erratic opening hours (17%). The paddling pool was also a concern as it was dirty and needed upgrading (11%). Other comments included: need more for teenagers, upgrade children's play area, cyclists to slow down in park and fencing off play area to make it safe (2% respectively).

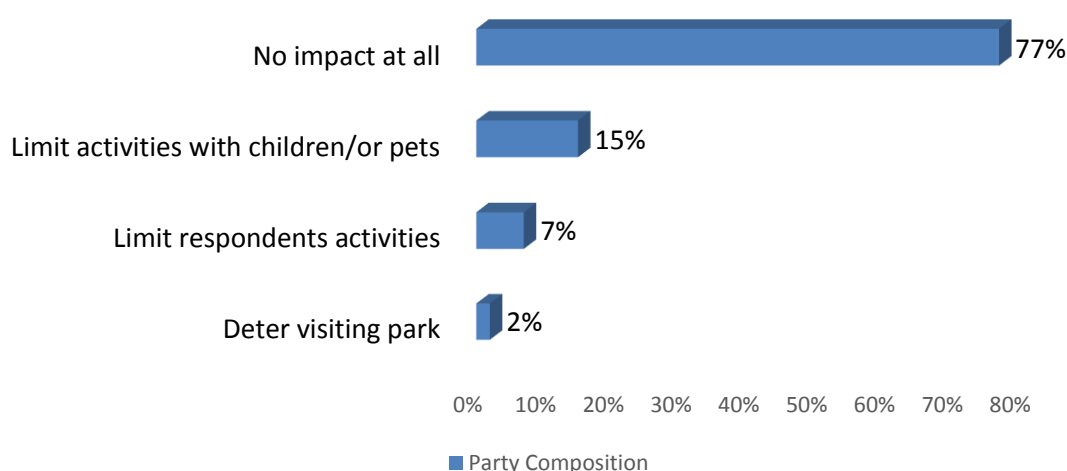
4.7 Awareness of National Bowls Championship taking place

Almost three quarters (73%) of respondents were aware that the National Bowls Championship was taking place in Victoria Park.

4.8 Impact of National Bowls Championship on use of park

The majority of park users (77%) felt that the National Bowls Championships had no impact on them, or their use of the park. 15% felt that it had limited their activities with children/pets, 7% felt it had limited their own activities and 2% said it would deter them from visiting the park whilst the Championships were taking place.

Fig 9: Impact of Championships on Park Usage



Respondents were also asked to provide additional comments on what impact the Championships had on their use of the park. Parking and the lack of parking spaces was the biggest issue with 41% stating that they couldn't park/too busy/parked on grass. Almost a third (32%) again felt that the Championships did not have any impact on their park usage whilst 11% thought it was great for the local area/nice to see it being used/great atmosphere. A further 11% felt that it limited the places to use within the park. A full list of comments are shown in Appendix 1

Table 11: Impact of Championships on park usage

Parking/parking on grass/busier/looks untidy	41%
--	-----

No impact	32%
Limits places to go	11%
Great for local area/nice to see it being used/good atmosphere	11%
Unightly with caravans	9%
Dangerous for children	6%
Have to keep dogs on lead/less space for dogs	5%
Not as busy as expected/better than last year	5%
Less inclined to come because of publicity	2%
Do not use when Bowls are on	1%
Signage	1%
Hard to keep everyone happy	1%
Closed tennis camp	1%
Shortened cycle track which made it dangerous	1%

4.9 Additional Comments on Park

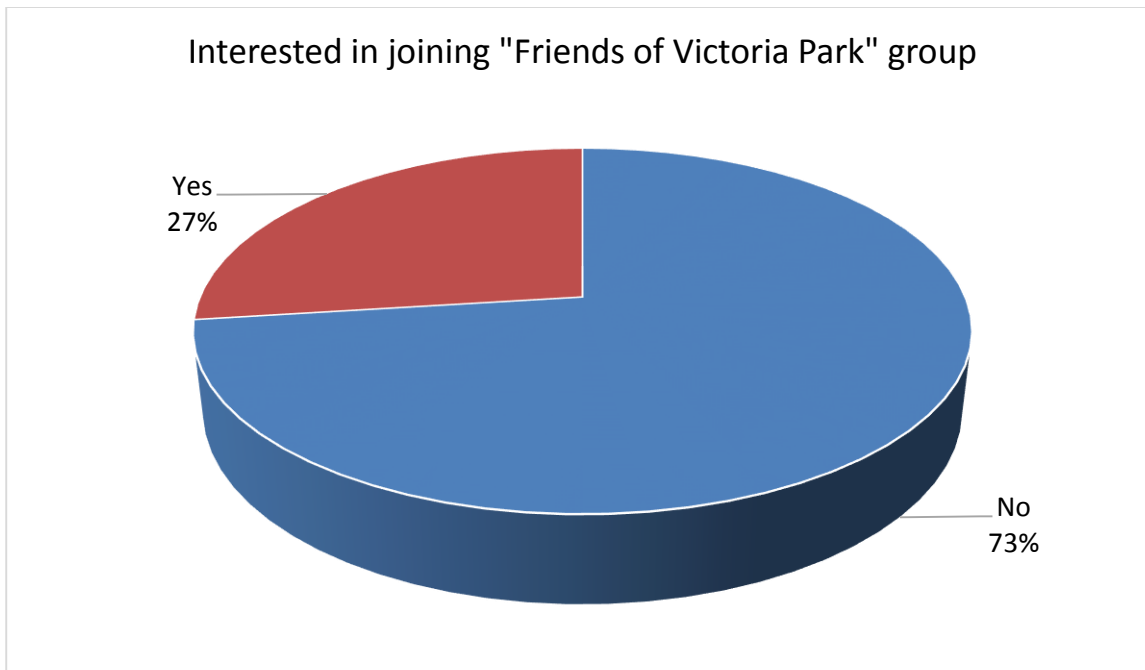
There was a variety of comments on improvements to the park. Nearly four out of ten respondents thought that the park was great/leave it as it is/love it here/beautiful. More equipment for older children (12%), improvements to toilet facilities, parking issues (8%) and café open/better food and drink/kiosks for sweets and drinks were also other notable comments. A full list is shown in Appendix 2.

Table 12: Additional comments	
It's great/leave it as it is/Love it here/Beautiful	39%
More children's equipment/equipment for older children	12%
Toilets need updating/better toilets/more toilets in park	9%
Parking/need more spaces/cars too fast/like free parking/more parking needed	8%
Cafe better/open more/kiosks for sweets and drinks	7%
Like the bowls/good for town/nice to see them in park	4%
Scramble nets/zip wire/monkey bars/army slide	4%
Need better lighting/leave lights on until park closes/dangerous if on own	4%
Skate ramp to return	4%
Basketball hoops/football posts	3%
Upgrade/replace paddling pool/dangerous/dirty	3%
More dog mess bins and enforced laws on those who do not use them	2%
Bring back cricket pitch/improve cricket facilities	2%
River/improve/keep clean	2%
Litter	2%
More picnic tables/seating/benches	2%
Bowling should take place when children at school	2%
Ice cream van on both sides of park	1%
Good for small children	1%

Keep dogs on lead	1%
Running distance markers	1%
Baby changing facilities	1%
Graffiti	1%
Pitch & Putt	1%
More CCTV	1%
Better access to the park	1%
Regular bowlers to use proper car parks	1%
Great Cycle track	1%
Open air concerts/events	1%
Water Fountain	1%
More for children when Bowls Championship on	1%

4.10 Interest in joining newly formed group "Friends of Victoria Park"

Almost three quarters (73%) were not interested in the joining the group. Only 27% expressed an interest, including some who were already part of the group or who had joined the Facebook group.



Appendix 1: Impact of Championships on use of Park

Please describe how the championships impact on you or your use of the park
None
Only parking full
No, I think they're good for the town / extra money coming in
I have no interest in bowls but make no difference to my children's enjoyment of the park
Nothing
It hasn't
None at all
The car parks busier during it
If I had the elder boys playing cricket would have been a problem as limited area after parking/why not have the bowls in September after school hols
The people from bowls have shortened the cycle track and made it smaller and not safe
Closed tennis camp because of it
Limits areas to go
People come to church
Too much parking / Lack of space / Looks untidy not relaxing
Car park in park area
Have to keep dog on the lead
Parking
Focus attention on sporting events
Makes it unpleasant with the caravans / Not enough parking with the bowls
Do not use park when they are on
Car parking - taking up the grass in the park
Cars parking on grass limits space
Don't want caravans/cars parking on the grass at this end. Park under the archways instead
Poor access for dogs, dangerous with cars. Not well maintained. Parking irregular
Parking on grass space
Don't at all
Great for local area
Parking
Parking and traffic awful / Better signage for bowls
Car parking / Should not be used for camping
Parking is hard
If I had remembered they were on I wouldn't have come because of parking
Puts me off because of the parking congestion
Interesting
None
No impact but visually not as attractive
Too much car parking / Delivery vans are dangerous especially for children
Grassed area taken over by parking / Safety concerns with too many cars parked
Parking is an issue, takes up too much space

Cannot take dog in certain areas / Car parking is not good
Brings more people to park / Uses facilities to park
Parking and everything is fine
Parking is on field, takes up too much space / Caravans and cars need to come off park
Parking limited / Brilliant having nationals
Enjoyable / Interesting
Camping too close to children's camp & tennis club
Can't park my car because it's too busy
Parking on grass and caravans does not look nice
Lovely attraction and nice to see
Effects use of grass / Would not let kids cycle on track with the cars parked there
No effect at all
No impact
Parking was difficult
No impact
No Impact
Next year the Men's Championship will take up too much of the park - I have signed a petition against it
Less inclined to come because of publicity about the Bowls affecting availability of park for the rest of us
I wasn't sure what was open to the public because of the campaign in the local press against the men coming here next year
There was/is a furore about the Bowls but in fact the traffic has been well managed and plenty of green space left
I almost avoided coming because of the Bowls but it is not as busy as I thought it might be. Next year - who knows? Dreading it
Parking may be a problem especially when Men's Championships are here too.
I did think it might be too busy to park but it was okay
Parking - too many cars zooming around especially in a children's park
My daughter thought because of the Bowls we would not be able to cycle all around. Not sure whether we can or not. I thought it would be busier than it is.
They don't!
Not safe for children to cycle during the bowls championship
Because of the parking
Less space for children and dogs but it is better this year
It is difficult to keep everyone happy - there must be a sensible way through
They don't worry me at all. Nice to see it is all being used
On the car parking field. I usually use it myself and it gets very full
They don't really impact at all - no problems
They don't!
No special impact - it's fine and there is a good atmosphere around
Am not bothered one way or the other
Parking is difficult round here when the Bowls is on

It doesn't really affect me at all but some locals don't like it.
No impact particularly, we can still have a nice time and do what we want to do.
Just the parking
It's not too bad, I just use the park for running and training.
No problem at all - it's all fine here
No impact - we are here to enjoy the tennis courts and kids play area
With the car parking. Too many cars to use the park safely with a toddler
Difficulty parking
Bowls would be better played when kids are not on holidays - car parking etc. impacts to a large extent on our use of the park with the kids
It limits my ability to walk my dog - he ran onto the greens the other day

Appendix 2: Additional Comments

Please make any other comments or suggestions you wish to...
No, it's good
The bottom of paddling pool and the surround gets very slippery so dangerous
Need zip wire now as some of the children are older
Basketball hoop would be fun / maybe a skate park
None
Needs more dog mess boxes / I've only found one
I like the environment here and the experience of that game never seen before / looks like grown up marbles
The dog mess drives me crazy / enforce the laws
A couple of goal posts / a skate park more for older children / basketball nets
I'd like them to bring cricket back here
It's a nice park I like the way they all connect along the river (can follow parks into lower town)
Needs an ice cream van this end of the park
I like the way areas for younger children are fenced off
The edge of the pool is slippery and in the pool itself is dangerously slippery
The floor round the paddling pool needs improving / a better safer and cleaner
It's a nice area just off the town but needs some play for eight years plus / Scramble nets
I love it here / Safe for kids and a good site
A zip wire more for 8 years and older
More monkey bars and climbing for older kids
I like the way the small park play areas enclosed /maybe fence off the river too
I think the bowls should continue as good for the town and only 2 weeks so why moan
Where are the toilet blocks here
Keep dogs on the lead all the time as safer for the kids
A water fountain on the pavilion and more equipment for older children
Staff from bowls very good and good walk ways safer this year
Needs more equipment in children's play area
Football / Basketball and other equipment for older children
Needs cafe / Need running distance markers
It's all very nice
Better cricket pitch / Better access to toilets especially for disabled
Preference given to locals. Care given for dog owners over cars parking
Happy with all parks in Leamington
Field not being used / Not use car park on field - park and ride
Not good for women alone / More parking / Better lighting open access / Poor toilets / Better baby changing facilities / Dangerous and dark in winter
Graffiti on bridge / Surface of tunnel when wet

Why don't they use area by station as well to develop the park
Lighting - safety
Do not use as a car park
Generate money through tourism
Refreshments all year round
Pitch and Putt
Alternative parking
Ok as it is
Refreshments not always open
Is there sufficient CCTV?
Make parking for bowling in Leamington instead of in park
No negatives about bowls / River is filthy
Bigger play area
Sports pitch / Organised activity
Distance on track is useful
Poor directions better access needed
Happy as it is
No
Lovely grounds / Location
Parking
Children's play area needs upgrading
Play facilities are up to date
Ramp needs to come back
Well looked after / Children's play area looks good
More picnic benches / Kept beautifully
If bowls are here every year more awareness needs to be made / Put something on for kids
Cricket pitches have disappeared
Looks great
It's good and nice to see people
Excellent
Very good
Nice enough place
Quite good
Well kept / Convenient
None
It's pleasant and well kept
Very nice park / The bowling adds to it
The litter left by teenagers by the bandstand is disgusting
It's lovely and it's nice to have free parking especially with a little one
Nice not to have parking on the park
No comment either way about the event

A mini net on the tennis court / Roads outside park are dangerous cars going too fast / Improve traffic management
Skate ramp been taken away, want it back / Older children need somewhere or something to do
Like the park to remain as it is
Love the park and everything about it
Come here for the skate park but not here / Beautiful setting
Need fencing around children's play area / Looks good, lots of improvements, need public toilets
More toilets
Better facilities for tea and coffee / Fence the river off from playing area
Needs to be a park keeper to control litter
Quite happy
Park is lovely
Ensure regular bowlers use proper car parks
Good space
Car parking bit small
Very well cared for
Pleased there is no parking fees
Refreshments not available all the time, cafe open more often
Fencing down by the river, need fencing around the children's play area
More shade by the paddling pool
Great cycle track
Perfect for a range of people / Nice open area / More picnic tables
Looks nice playing for the children
Nice park (needs to be left as a park)
Alcohol sales in a cafe. Perhaps a glass of wine while kids are playing!
The toilets are not too clean, there needs to be more in the kids area.
Toilets could be better and more visible
It's a pleasant park. St Nicholas can get too busy and crowded
Outdoor climbing wall - facilities for older children - skateboarding ramps
Climbing frame and monkey bars. Return of skateboard track
Toilets closer to the play area
Need a big slide, trampoline
It is great as it is - we love it and so do the children
No, it's a lovely park. We love coming here.
Monkey bars and army slide
Skateboarding facilities - army slide - otherwise good as it is. Climbing Wall
Big climbing frame - Army slide - more activities for older children at lower end of area
It's a beautiful park - everything we need is here
Very pleased. We love it as it is. Skateboarding track was good
It's lovely for children and families. Something for everyone

A few more seats by the river would be nice
More parking would help bring people here. Nice to have events here sometimes
It's a great park - tough on the kids during the Bowls Championship - they lose out
College students come and use the park and leave all their litter behind - it's horrid
Toilet facilities nearer the playground
It's all ok here - room for everyone to do what they want
Toilets for the younger children near play area. Kiosk for sweets and drinks
It's nice, leave it as it is
None - it's fine, good for dogs
Lighting very necessary - really dangerous after dark especially in the winter. Lights should stay on until 8.30 when the gates are locked
Coffee stand near the playground. Toilets nearer
No it is fine as it is
Very good facilities but toilets near the playground area please
In the winter it is very dark when the lights are turned off - which is before the gates are closed.
Please could dog lovers pick up waste after their dogs - there are signs!
Open air concerts in the summer
Toilets nearer the playground. Drinks stand there as well
Very well kept
It is a lovely park - just concerned about the cars and safety
It's lovely
It's great
No opinion really
None
It's a lovely park
Bowls to be played when kids not on holiday
Very nice park
It's a lovely park