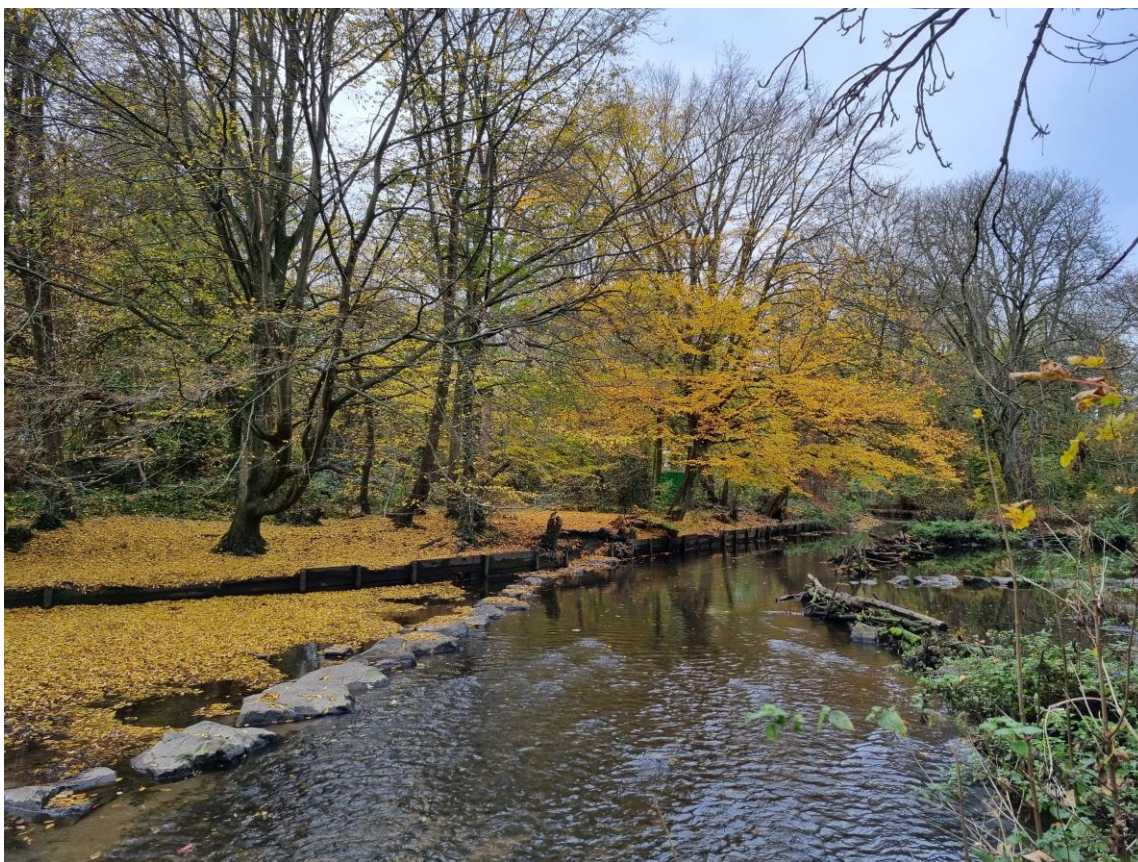


## **2021 Parks Customer Satisfaction Survey**

Issue	2021
Overall Satisfaction	94%
Feeling Safe	91%
Ease of Access	97%
Maintenance	85%
Playground Facilities	95%
Respondents	577





# 2021 Parks Customer Satisfaction Survey



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## **Introduction**

### **Aims**

1. The 2021 Parks Customer Satisfaction Survey aims to assess overall satisfaction of council managed parks and highlight any areas for improvement. It will help the Parks and Open Spaces Team understand what matters to residents and helps ensure spending reflects the views and habits of local residents and park users.
2. The survey is the seventh in a series of Customer Satisfaction Surveys conducted by Parks and Open Spaces Team with others carried out in 2008, 2010, 2013, 2015, 2017 and 2019. These surveys set out to assess the development of the parks service over this period.

### **Methodology**

The survey ran for 16 days from the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October 2021 to the 7<sup>th</sup> of November 2021 in which time residents were asked to fill out the survey online or request a paper copy. There was no onsite surveying, as has been done in previous years due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the risk in person meetings might pose to residents and staff.

The survey was circulated online, and steps were taken to raise awareness of the survey by working with the communications team to create a press release and publicise the survey through the council's social-media accounts. Park Friends Groups were contacted and asked to circulate the online survey through their mailing lists. Furthermore, posters were put up on site on the parks notice boards which included QR links to the survey.

### **Number of respondents**

Year	Total no. of respondents	Paper based		Online	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
2008	211	211	100%	N/A – wasn't introduced until 2010	
2010	266	227	85%	39	15%
2013	633	272	43%	361	57%
2015	535	261	49%	274	51%
2017	453	84	19%	369	81%
2019	767	334	44%	433	56%
2021	577	0	0%	577	100%

In total 577 responses to the survey were received all of which were completed online.

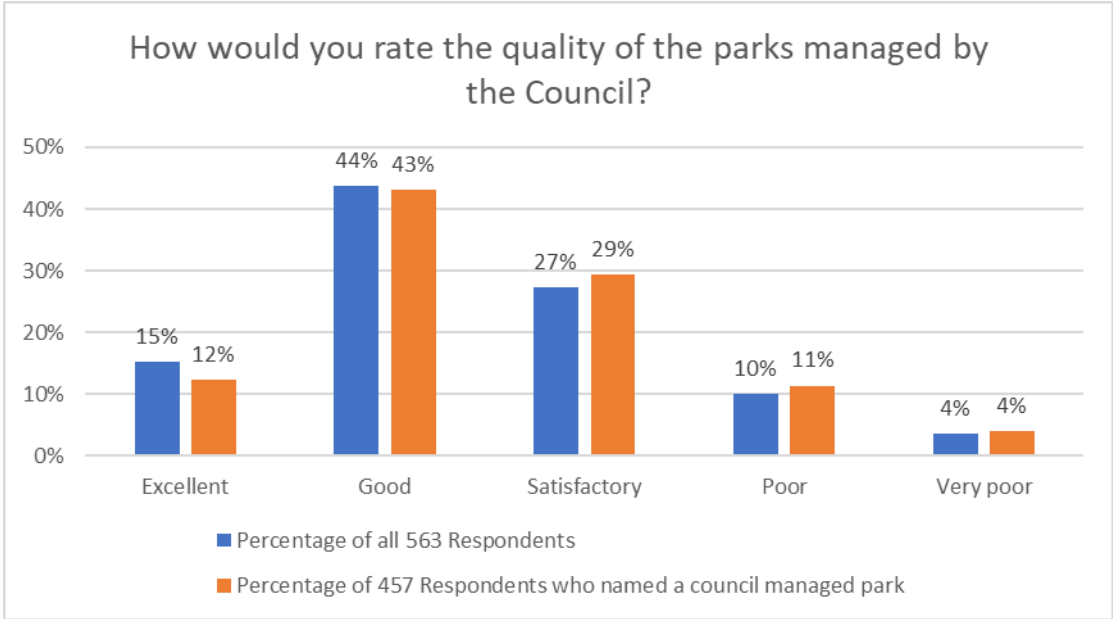
## **Results Summary**

### **General Satisfaction Levels - all parks in the borough**

94% of the total number of respondents rated the quality of council managed parks in the borough as excellent, good, or satisfactory, whilst 6% described them as either poor or very poor. 6 people out of the 577 respondents did not answer this question.

However, it should be noted that, the distinction between Richmond's council-managed and non-council managed parks is not always clear to residents. 109 out of 574 respondents (19%) later named a non-council managed park when asked to name the park they visit most often.





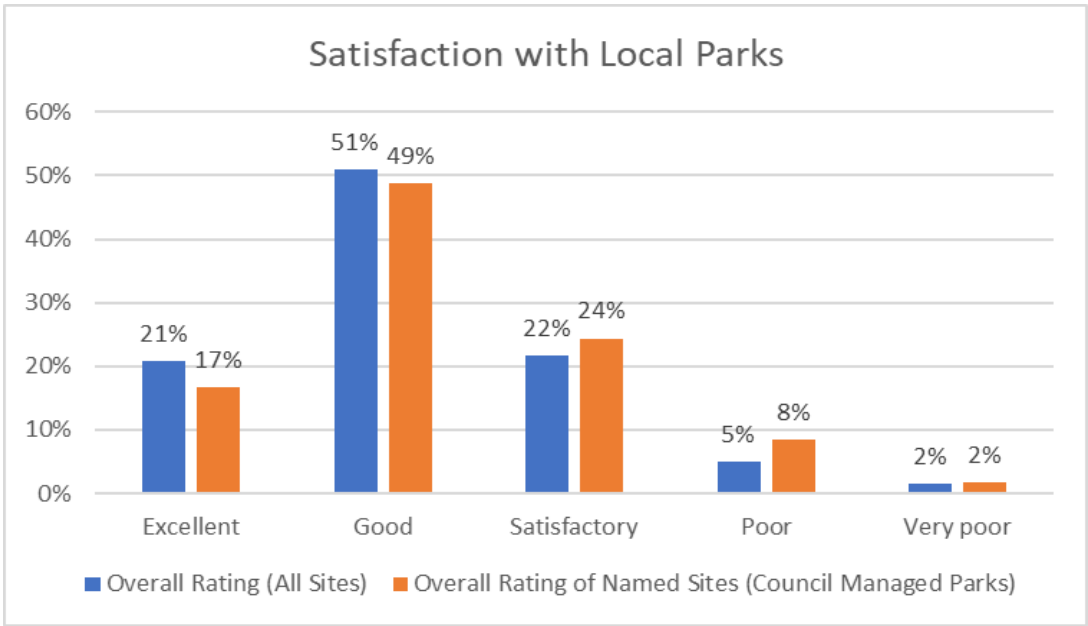
Of the total 37 respondents who gave council managed parks a rating of poor or very poor, there were 18 different parks mentioned, two of which being a non-council managed park. Sheen Common received the highest number of poor or very poor responses (21) alongside Richmond Park however this is not a council managed park.

General Satisfaction Level - 'local' named park

In addition to rating the quality of all council managed parks in the borough, respondents were asked to name the council managed park which they visited most often or wished to comment upon and give it an 'overall rating'.

The following graph shows the 'overall rating' of the respondents who only named a council managed park compared to the 'overall rating' scores of all 571 respondents.

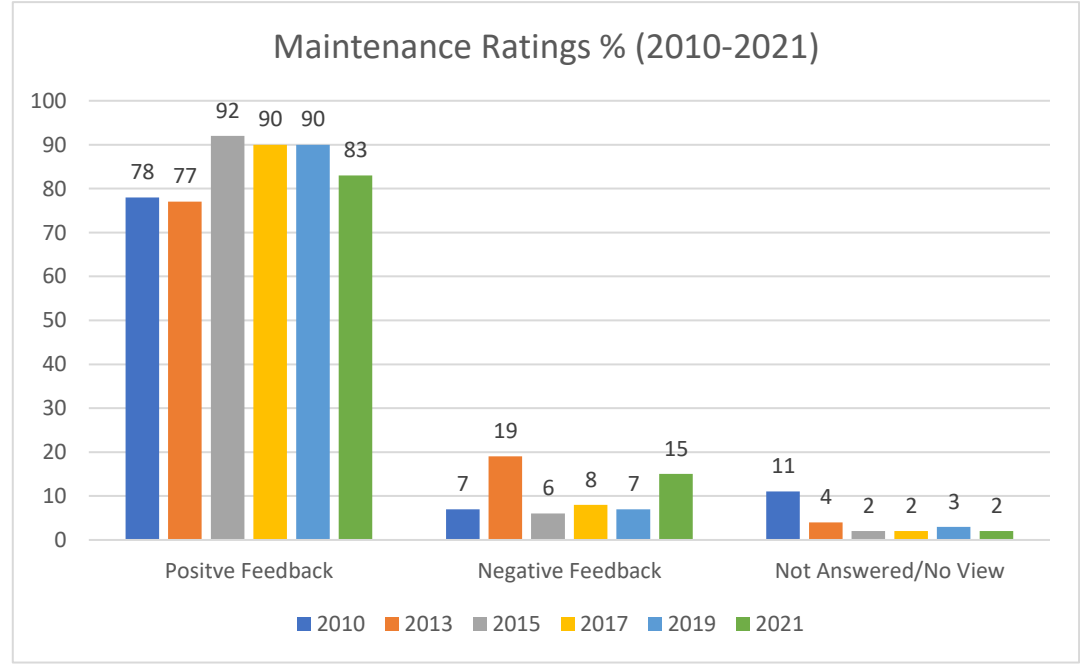
Of the respondents who named only council managed parks 90% rated it as excellent, good or satisfactory.



Named parks tend to receive a lower rating when compared to all parks, when rated as excellent or good. This indicates that the general impression of all the borough’s parks is higher than the impression of the park they visit most often. However, it must be taken into consideration that the phrasing of the two questions is not identical.

Maintenance Scores

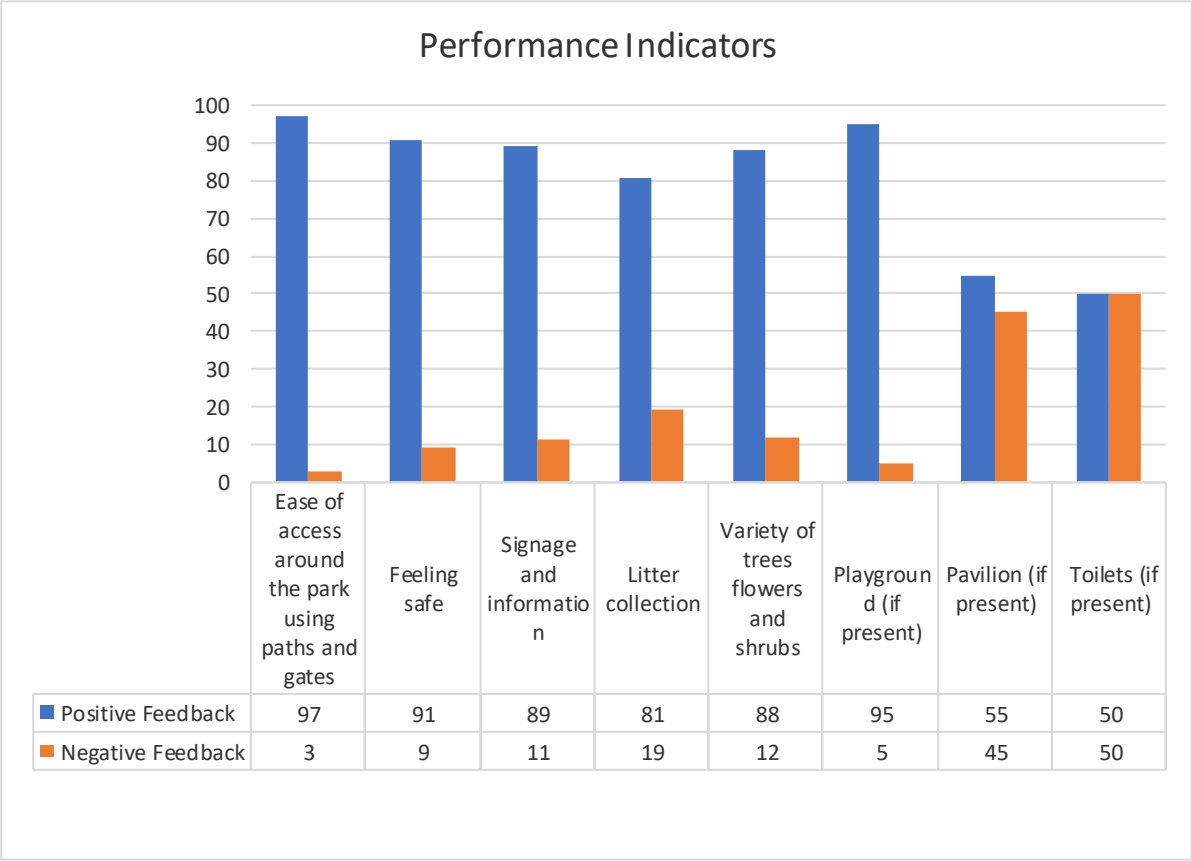
Respondents were also asked to rate the overall maintenance of their named park. Of the 457 respondents who had named council managed parks, 12% rated it as excellent, 43% claimed it was good, 29% said satisfactory while 11% said poor and 4% said very poor. 11 people abstained.



However, when comparing results from previous surveys it must be noted that collection method and phrasing of questions are not quite identical. Particularly, the scale of ratings has varied. Scores of excellent, good and satisfactory have been combined into ‘positive feedback’ whilst scores of poor and very poor have been combined into ‘negative feedback’ to allow for direct comparison.

Performance indicators

Respondents were asked to name the park that they visit most often or wished to comment upon and then rate a number of aspects on a scale of excellent, good, satisfactory, poor, very poor, no view or not applicable. The following table displays the results of the respondents who chose to discuss a council managed park and ratings have been condensed for ease of analysis. Positive feedback consists of ratings of excellent, good or satisfactory, negative feedback consists of poor or very poor. Please note that ‘not answered’ has been discounted from the total figure to calculate the percentage.



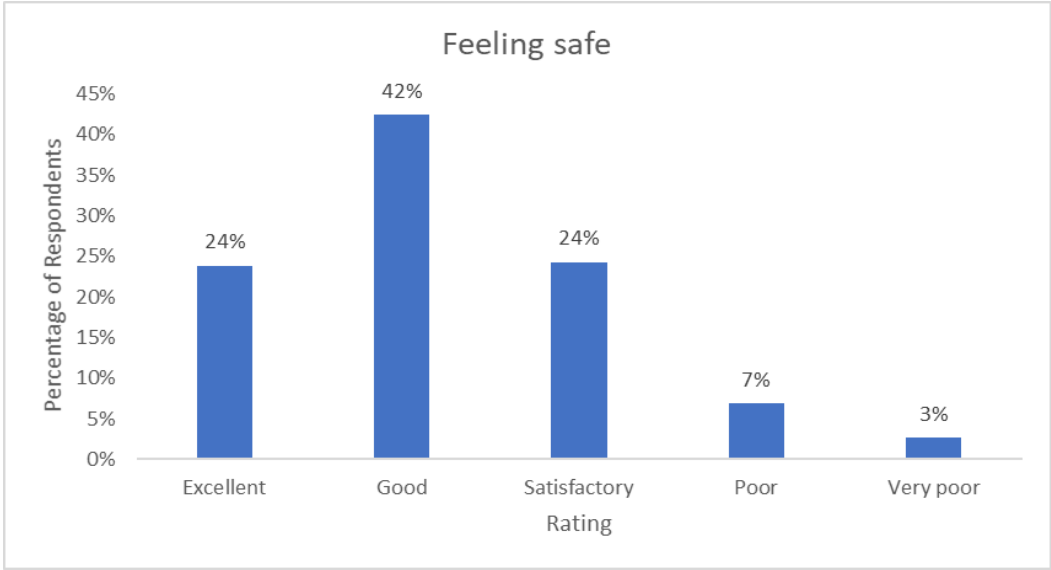
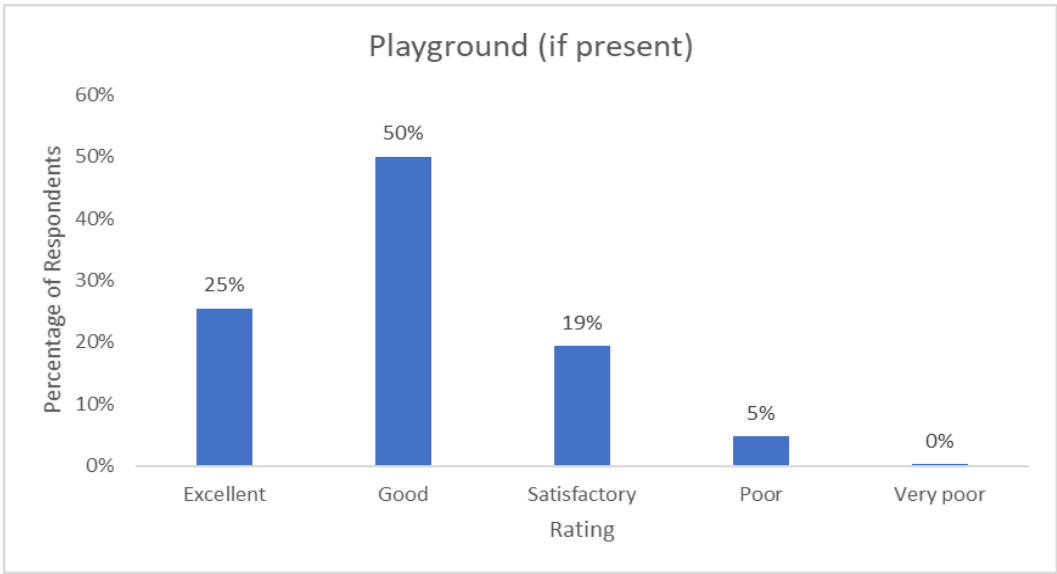
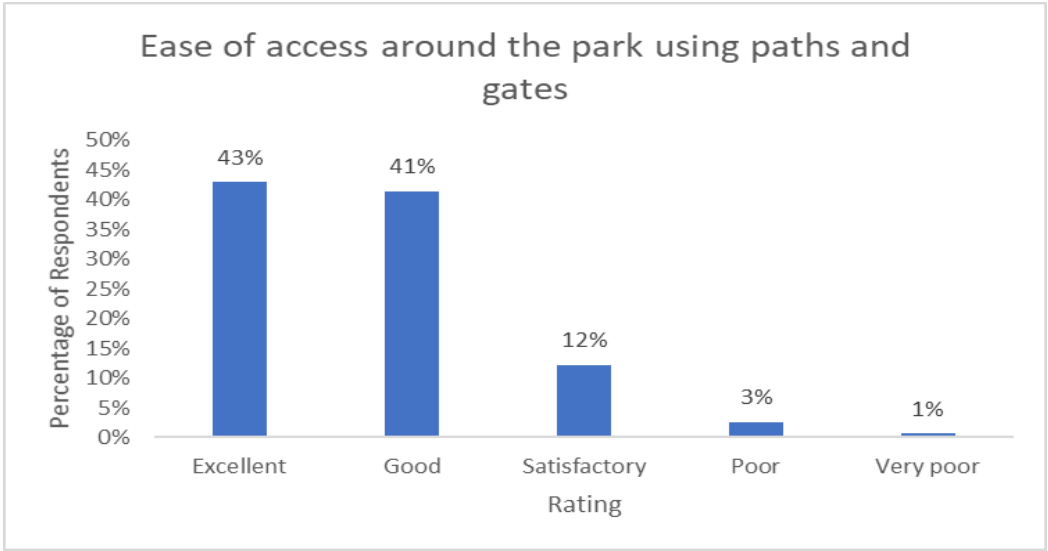
In order to judge the three top performing aspects and the three lowest scoring aspects (by comparing the amount of positive feedback with the amount of negative feedback).

**The top performing aspects;**

- 1. Ease of access with 97% positive feedback
- 2. Playground with 95%
- 3. Feeling safe with 91%

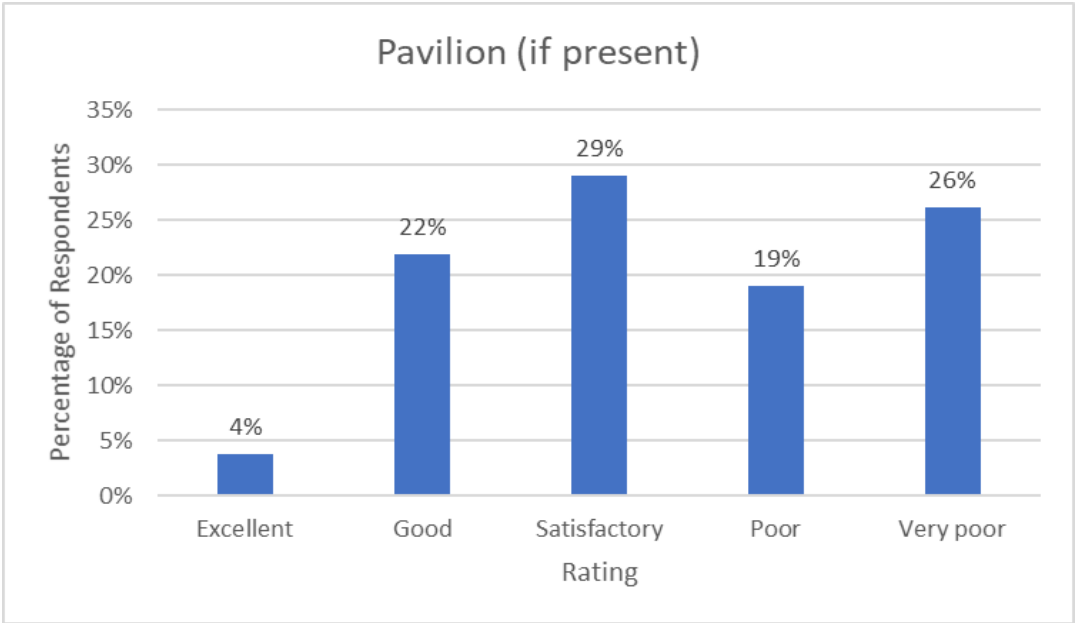
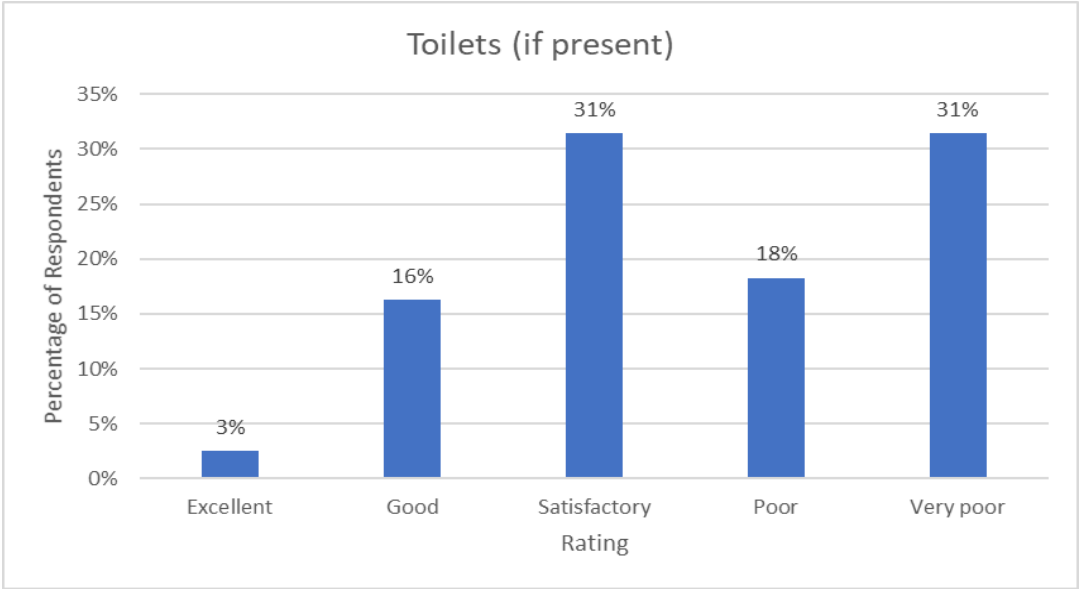
This is in line with previous results in 2019 that ranked Ease of Access, Playground and Feeling Safe as the top 3 performing aspects.

Breakdown of top 3 performing aspects:

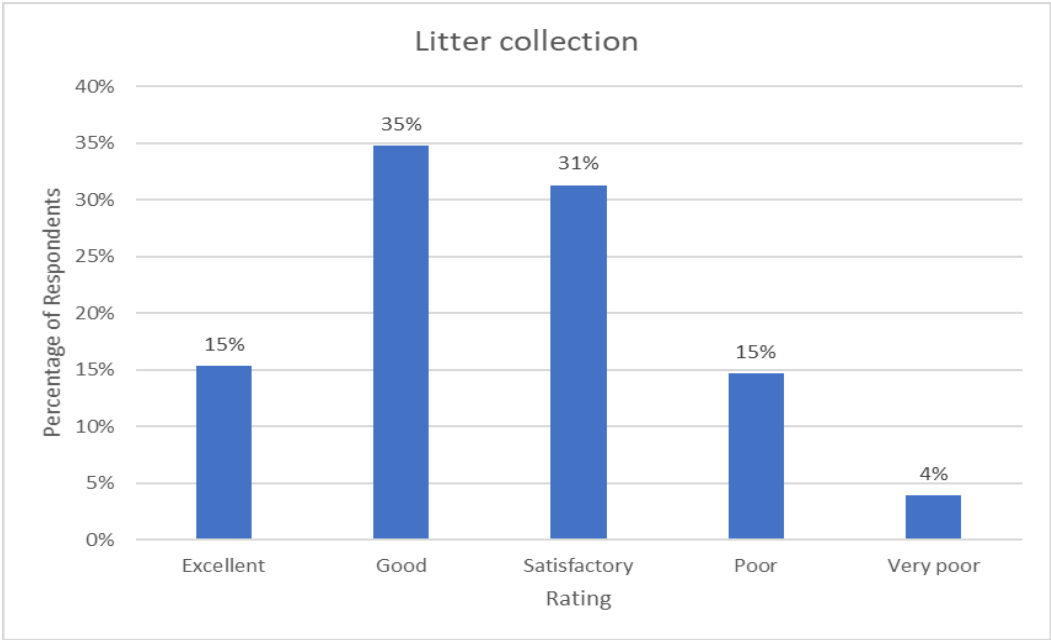


- The three lowest performing areas are;**
- 1. Toilets with 50% negative feedback
  - 2. Pavillion with 45%
  - 3. Litter Collection with 19%

Breakdown of lowest 3 performing aspects:

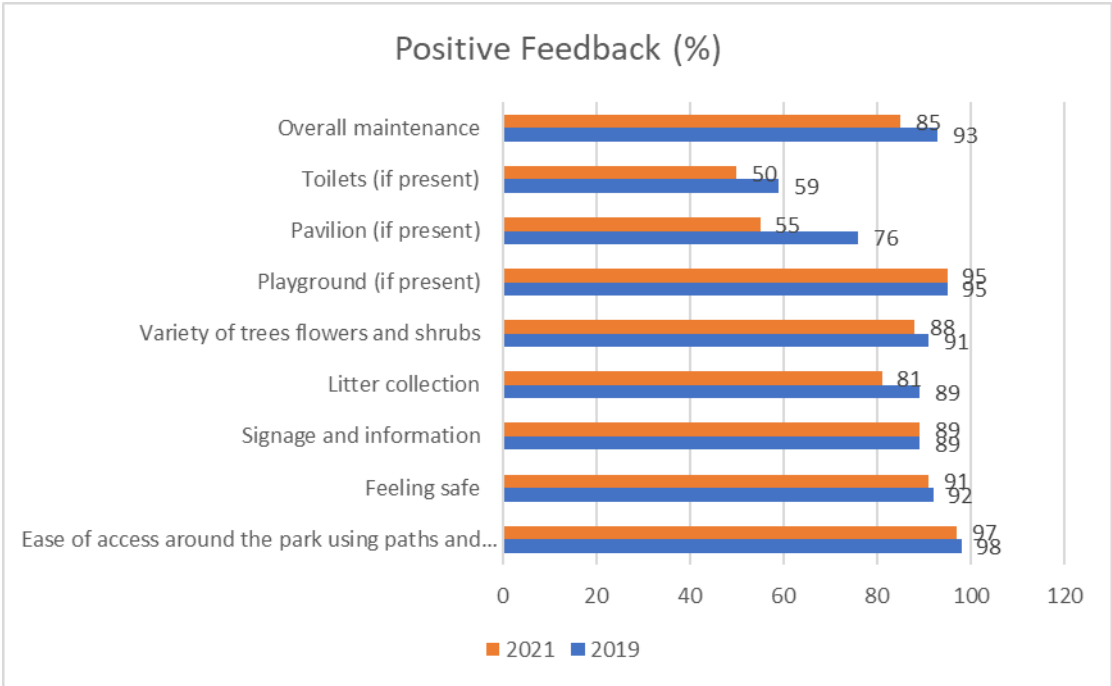






Performance compared with 2019 results

The following table displays the percentage of positive feedback from the 2019 and 2021 surveys in instances where the same aspects were rated. The areas which received more positive feedback in 2021 compared to 2019 were Signage and Information with an increase of 2% and Playground (if present) with an increase of 1%.



The table also shows that there was a significant decrease in positive feedback for Pavilion (if present) by 22% and Toilets (if present) by 9%. Playgrounds received 95% positive feedback in line with 2019, along with Signage and Information. There were no increased in positive feedback for any category.

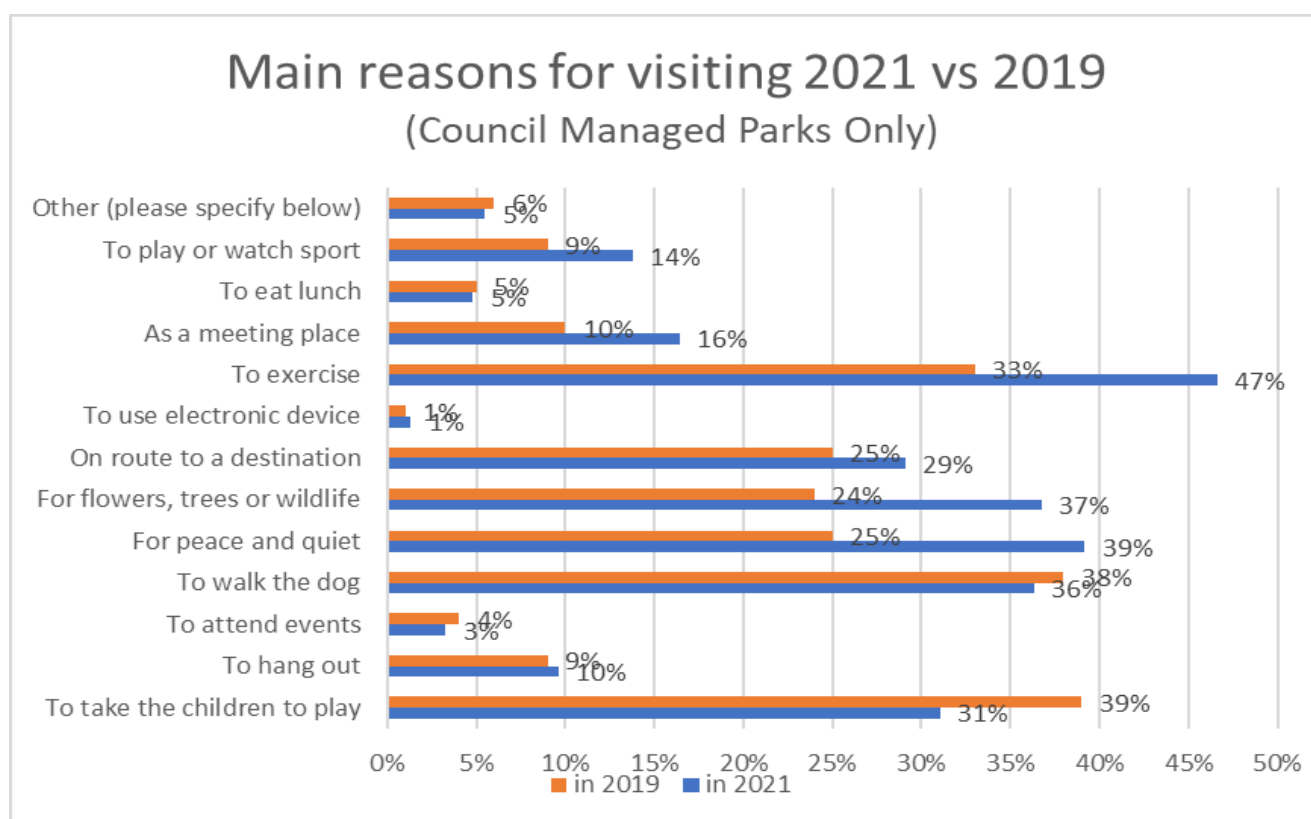
### Patterns of use

Respondents were asked why they visited their named park. Of the 457 respondents who named a council managed park, the most popular reasons for visits were:

1. To exercise (47%),
2. For peace and quiet (39%),
3. For flowers, trees and wildlife (37%)

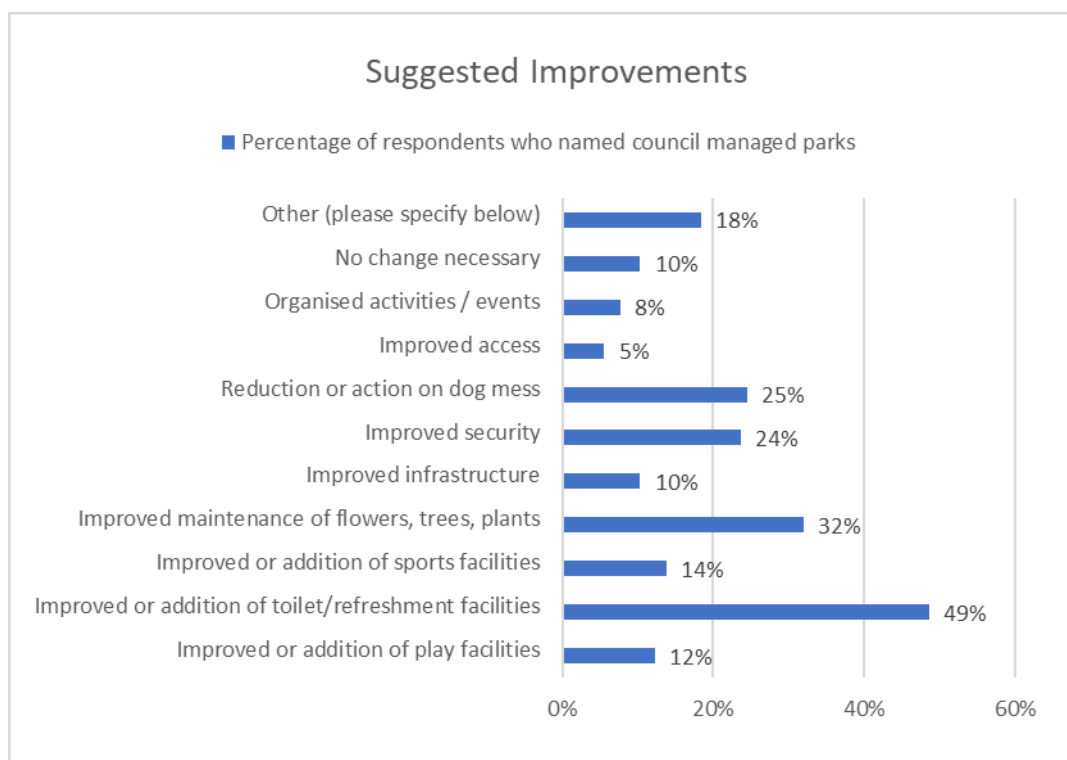
There has been a significant change in what our Parks and Open spaces have been used for in comparison to 2019. Over the pandemic we have seen an increase in people visiting our Parks and Open Spaces. Most notably there has been a significant rise in people listing the main reason to visit their local park is for exercise, this has risen by 14% on 2019. There was a 14% increase in people stating their main reason was 'For peace and quiet' and a 13% increase in 'For flowers, trees and wildlife'.

These rises could be attributed to the effects that national lockdowns had on businesses, with an increase in people primarily working from home. Which meant they were more inclined to visit their parks and open spaces for exercise. There has also been a reported surge in interest in nature, which can be seen by the increase in people reported visiting for flowers, trees and wildlife (1).



### Suggestions/ areas for change

Respondents were asked "What changes would you like to see to enhance your enjoyment of this park?" and to rate the desirability of a number of potential additions to their park. Additionally, respondents were given the option to give suggestions of what they might like to see to enhance their enjoyment of their named park, by filling out the 'Other' box.



This highlighted three 'top' changes that respondents would like to see. They are:

1. Improved or addition of toilet/refreshment facilities (49%),
2. Improved maintenance of flowers, trees and plants (32%),
3. Reduction or action on dog mess (25%)

10% of respondents said they like the park the way it is and do not feel any changes are necessary.

#### 'Other' improvements

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of 84 Answers
Sports Facilities (addition and maintenance)	4	5%
Play Facilities (accessibility, maintenance)	3	4%
Water Features / Facilities	2	2%
Reduce ASB (patrols and monitoring, police)	9	11%
Clearance (litter, recycling, more bins)	14	17%
More Seating	2	2%
Dog Control (dog areas, fouling, enforcement)	5	6%
Removal of Pests	1	1%
Pavilion/Toilet (addition or maintenance)	6	7%
Cafe	7	8%
Maintenance (facilities, pathways, drainage)	15	18%
Accessability (gates, fences and access for mobility)	3	4%
Appearance	1	1%
Night Lighting	3	4%
Community Engagement, Education and Activities	4	5%
Horticultural and Biodiversity (plants, trees and food)	10	12%

Parking (bikes, cars)	2	2%
Signage and Information	1	1%
Regulate Usage (cyclists, personal trainers, sport clubs, schools)	6	7%

### Other comments

Respondents were asked “Are there any other comments you wish to add about this Council managed park?” A total of 324 comments were received, only 258 of which listed a council managed park; most common themes are listed below with some comments from respondents.

### **Toilet/Refreshment Facilities:**

- Murray Park: *“We love the parks and visit all the time. Always feel safe. Biggest request is fit toilets especially for changing baby and for elderly relatives to use.”*
- Castlenau Recreation Ground: *“Lovely large park ☺ needs more seating, toilets, a covered area & refreshment stand. There is room to implement the above ideas.”*
- Carlisle Park: *“Would love to see an improvement to the toilets and the forever promised cafe go in the pavilion! That would be amazing! Thank you”*

In 2021 the renovations of Buccluech Gardens toilets and café, were complete. The café is open and ready to serve the community. Radnor Gardens café has also opened for business in July, the new lease holders carried out some refurbishments including installing a decking and a green wall. The Friends Group of Kneller Gardens are also crowdfunding to purchase café equipment and make a community space in the pavilion.

### **Play facilities:**

- Sheen Common: *“The new natural playground is first class. A fantastic addition to the local area. It is very well used, subtle, wonderful for children, parents and grandparents and brings the community together. Thank you for this”.*
- Radnor Gardens: *“It doesn’t have enough play equipment for younger children. The slide and climbing frame are too high and there is only one baby swing. A smaller slide and ground trampoline would help make it better for babies and toddlers to play”.*
- North Sheen Recreation Ground: *“My memory may be deceiving me, but a decade or so ago, this park looked, and was, grim. Now, it is lively, friendly, welcoming. Babies have always been well served by the traditional playground, and the addition of the trip wire has obviously made many friends among older kids. Many constituencies use the facilities - teens playing basketball court, dog walkers, footie of course, family picnics - and, to my experience, co-existing pleasantly. If drugs or anti-social behaviour are a problem. I've never experienced it personally”.*



In 2020 the Parks Team, with help from our contractors and the Friends of Sheen Common have delivered a new natural playground which is located in the woods alongside a nature trail.

There have been play upgrades in Wellesley Road, including a floor trampoline, swing, climbing net and play panels. At Alpha Road Gardens a basket swing and play panels were installed. There has been a renovation of the play area at Carlisle Park, where new toddler items were installed in the main play area and items from the previous toddler area were removed and kept to furnish other sites across the borough, in its place a new outdoor gym was installed. Additionally, there were updates to Grimwood Road Recreation ground, a new standing seesaw, carousel, ground trampoline and play jeep have been installed and new plantings have been placed in the raised planters.



Picture 1: Natural Play Area East Sheen Common

### **Sports facilities:**

- Carlisle Park: *"Thank you for the improvements that you have made in 2021 to Carlisle Park! We use the exercise equipment and tennis courts daily and also exercise on the grass and walk our dog there. We are very lucky to have such a lovely park close to our house."*
- Westerley Ware: *"Lovely park we mainly use for the tennis facilities. These are very well managed and easy to use, and kept very tidy and user friendly."*
- Sheen Common: *"Tennis courts are excellent but the leaves make it slippery in autumn. Would it be possible to have the leaves cleared regularly?"*



Picture 2: Outdoor Gym Carlisle Park

The Parks team have installed outdoor fitness gyms at 2 locations in 2021, at Carlisle Park and Moormead and Bandy Recreation Ground. At Carlisle park the outdoor gym has equipment that is suitable for differently abled bodies. There has been updates to the sports pitches in Hatherop Park, a new 9v9 pitch has been designated. The Council are also proposing to trial additional under 10's afternoon skate session at King's Field. The Parks team have also helped to facilitate the refurbishment of the Tennis Courts at Kneller Gardens and Moormead and Bandy Recreation Ground, this included resurfacing and providing gated access.

#### Pavilion:

- Sheen Common: *"Beautiful space that is let down by the indoor facilities-changing rooms/toilets. I have been a playing member of the cricket club for 20 years and have seen no improvement. The dream for the club would be a proper pavilion as almost every other team in the borough/our league has. Feel it would really help the local community."*
- Carlisle Park : *"There is a pavilion building currently unused which would make a great cafe. There aren't any local cafes in walking distance of the park and it would create a focal point for the playground"*
- Carlisle Park: *"It is an absolute travesty that the Pavilion, built specifically for public use, is closed. The toilets are horrific. This would be a fantastic community asset, unfortunately it is just declining and the cost of repair just increasing. Let's get it open as a cafe! Nobody will use the now defunct showers so let's use the space for the community."*

The Parks team are working with the Friends of Heathfield Recreation Ground to remodel and upgrade the pavilion in the near future. The Parks team have secured funding for refurbishment works on the pavilion in Kneller Gardens, with works scheduled to be complete in January 2022.



### Horticulture/Biodiversity:

- Murray Park: *"Biodiversity in the park is very poor. More spaces should be provided for wildflowers. The one area where this happens is most nettles. Grass should be left long under trees. The bank by the skatepark should be wildflowers, as should other areas. The park accommodate more trees."*
- Terrace Gardens: *"The terrace gardens are a beautiful gem in Richmond. The council continues to do an excellent job on the maintenance of the flowers, however, the anti social behaviour from young people in the evenings has become an unacceptable nuisance."*



Picture 3: Diamond Jubilee Gardens

### Security:

- Hampton Common: *"Hampton common has a lot of drug dealers & antisocial behaviour after dark. Mopeds are frequently driven around the park. There is also a lot of wildlife being targeted after dark in Hampton common & Oak avenue Nature reserve !!"*
- Twickenham Green: *"I have lived very close to Twickenham Green for the past 20 years. I've always felt safe, including when crossing the Green at night, despite the high-profile murder of Amelie some years ago. That was until fairly recently, as over the lasy month there has been an acceleration of large groups gathering, antisocial behaviour, intimidating behaviour at night and I worry for my children's safety. I consider myself quite streetwise, but now I won't go there after dark this is really distressing to me to see such a decline in the place that I call home."*

The Parks team work closely with our enforcement contractor, Parkgaurd, to reduce ASB in our parks and open spaces. Parkgaurd work collaborively with The Council to deliver the enforcement service, they are tasked to visit multiple sites a day particularly those were there have been issues reported of ASB. Parkgaurd engage with our local communities to educate and rereassure them when on site visits. They work closely with the Safer Neighbourhood Team and SPEAR, to share information and complete joint shifts.

### **Dog Control and Fouling:**

- North Sheen Recreation Ground: *"The dogs are out of control here. There is poo everywhere, the dogs jump on people, even inside the cafe and fenced playground areas! It is almost always the same people with really badly behaved dogs. There should be an enforcement of dogs off leads."*
- York House Gardens: *"I love the peaceful environment of York House Gardens and walk my old dog there because dogs are supposed to be under control and on lead. I'd like to see this enforced."*

The Parks team work with our enforcement contractor, Parkgaurd, to enforce our Dog Control PSPOs. If reports are received that there are repeat offenders who are not clearing up after their pets, The Council inform Parkgaurd who will attend the site and engage with park users and issue Fixed Penalty Notices if required.

### **Accessibilty:**

- Hatherop Park: *"Better access and improved facilities for wheelchair users, the visually impaired and the hard of hearing."*
- Ham Common: *"The Common is ringed by busy roads with only one pedestrian crossing, the main access routes should have pedestrian priority"*

The Parks team works to ensure that there are good levels of access to all our Parks and Open Spaces. The Council have made improvements to the access in Little Park (Crane Park) by installing a new ramp and footbridge. The Council also work with consultants and Friends Groups to provide better accessibility to our parks, for people who experience barriers to access. The Friendly Parks for All scheme has dedicated 5 parks in our borough which have accessibility at the forefront. These parks are Barnes Green, Carlisle Park, Ham Village Green, Heathfield Recreation Ground and Kneller Gardens.

### **Litter/Bins:**

- Wellesley Road: *"It's great that the gate has a lock that can be slid across when inside the park. We regularly see council staff members come to empty the bin and they also scour the park for any litter. Play equipment is always in a good condition. The recent addition of extra play equipment has gone down well!"*
- Terrace Gardens: *"The litter can be appalling. Youths enter the gardens after closure, consume alcohol and drugs and leave bottles, cans, broken glass everywhere."*

We continually work with our Street Cleansing contractor to ensure our borough is kept free of litter. If reports of litter or fly-tipping are received these are passed onto our contractor for removal as soon as possible.

### **No Change/ Preserve:**

- Leg O' Mutton: *"Its lovely because it is quite wild. Please dont make it too manicured."*
- Carlisle Park: *"Thank you for this and all the brilliant parks in the borough".*
- Radnor Gardens: *"This small park has given us the chance to observe wildlife on the river in all weathers and in all seasons in the last two years."*





Picture 4 Ham Lands Robin

### Respondent profiles

Based on the 575 respondents who specified their gender, a higher number of women answered the survey at 61% to 35% men. It should be noted that 4% of respondents selected “prefer not to say”.

Of the 575 respondents who specified their ethnicity, the majority of respondents were of a White or a White British ethnic background at 84%, a figure which is roughly in line with data from the 2011 census for Richmond upon Thames (86%).

6% of respondents considered themselves to have a disability. According to the 2011 census 2% of residents between the ages of 16-74 are considered permanently sick or disabled.

The two most captured age bands whom participated in the survey were respondents aged 45-54 (23%) and 55-64 (22%). The two least captured age bands were respondents aged 19 and under (1%) and 20-24 (0%).

### Conclusion

Overall, the survey indicates that Parks and Open Spaces continue to operate to a high standard. General satisfaction measures at 94% for all council managed parks, and positive feedback for rating of local council managed parks is at 90%.

Significantly, 97% of respondents rated the ease of access in parks as excellent, good or satisfactory.

There has been some major changes since 2019 on why residents visit our parks, which can be attributed to effects of the pandemic. Globally there has been a significant rise in people visiting parks during lockdowns (2), London Borough of Richmond upon Thames also experienced this increase in users. With an increase in people accessing our Parks and Open Spaces we have seen a rise in residents accessing our parks for exercise (47%), for peace and quiet and for flowers, trees and wildlife.

The most consistent negative feedback was related to the toilet and pavilion facilities in our parks. We are taking steps to improve the facilities available across several parks in the borough. In Buccleuch Gardens renovation works of the old toilet block to create a new café were completed and a café opened on site this year. We are also working with the Friends of Heathfield Recreation Ground to upgrade the pavilion on the site.

We are constantly working with parks cleansing and our contractors to maintain a good standard of cleanliness in our parks and ensure that they are safe for all to use.

As in the survey in 2019, it has been recognised that there are some improvements that could be made in terms of the questions included in the survey. Suggestions include ensuring the wording specifies whether the questions relate to an individual park, or Council parks in general. It is also suggested that in the multiple-choice questions, less popular choices should be removed as an option, for e.g. 'To use an electronic device'.

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