



# Parks Customer Satisfaction Report 2015

---

Parks

*13 January 2016*

---

## 2015 Parks Customer Satisfaction Survey



### Key Highlights:

Issue	2015	2013	Performance
Overall satisfaction	97.63	88.94	+ 8.69 %
Feeling safe	95.26	91.18	+ 4.08%
Ease of access	97.83	97.06	+ 0.77%
Maintenance	91.70	76.65	+ 15.05%
Playground facilities	58.89	69.12	- 10.23%
Respondents	535	633	- 98



# **2015 Parks Customer Satisfaction Survey**



## **Table of Contents**

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>3</b>
Aims .....	3
Methodology.....	3
Number of respondents.....	3
<b>Results Summary .....</b>	<b>4</b>
General Satisfaction Levels- all parks in the borough.....	4
General Satisfaction Level- 'local' named park .....	4
Maintenance Scores .....	5
Performance Indicators .....	6
Performance compared with 2013 results.....	9
Playground facilities .....	9
Patterns of use .....	10
Suggestions/ areas for change .....	10
'Other' improvements .....	11
Other comments.....	11
Respondent profiles .....	13
<b>Conclusion.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>North Sheen Recreation Ground .....</b>	<b>13</b>
Appendices – Sites Timetable.....	16

## **Introduction**

### **Aims**

1. The 2015 Parks Customer Satisfaction Survey aims to assess overall satisfaction with council managed parks and highlight any areas for improvement. It will help the Parks and Open Spaces Team understand what matters to residents and help ensure spending reflects the views and habits of local residents and park users.
2. The survey is the fourth in a series of Customer Satisfaction Surveys conducted by Parks and Open Spaces Team. By asking a number of similar questions to those asked in the 2008, 2010 and 2013 surveys the survey also set out to assess the development of the parks service over this period.

### **Methodology**

In line with previous years the survey ran from the 19<sup>th</sup> October 2015 to the 11<sup>th</sup> November 2015 in which time residents were consulted either online via the council's consultation finder or onsite through face-to-face interviews.

Onsite surveying took place over a 2.5 week period from Monday 26<sup>th</sup> October to Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2015 at 20 sites across the borough (see Appendix 1). Each site was surveyed for a period of 90-180 minutes either before or after 12pm (typically between the hours of 9.30 and 11am or 3.30 and 5.00pm). Surveys were conducted by members of the Parks and Open Space Teams. On a number of occasions, surveyors were assisted by representatives from the Parks Friends Groups and Councillors. Where appropriate surveys were left in park cafes for self-completion. Additionally, steps were taken to raise the publicity 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 and other relevant associations e.g. SLWEN were contacted and asked to circulate the online survey through their mailing lists. Furthermore, posters were put up on site in the parks notice boards.

### **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	85.34%	39	14.66%
2013	633	272	42.97%	361	57.03%
2015	535	261	48.79%	274	51.21%

In total 535 responses to the survey were received. 274 of these were completed online. The remaining 261 were completed through paper-based surveys, which were captured during the onsite interviews.

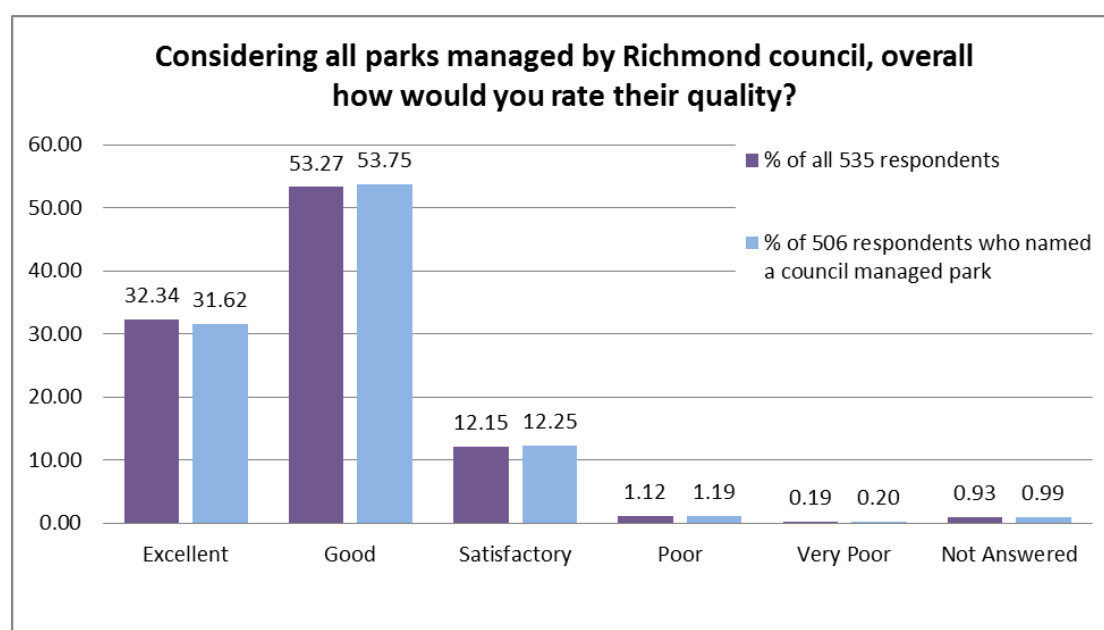
This marks a slight decrease of 15.48%; a total of 98 less respondents compared to the last survey in 2013 that captured 633 responses. The majority of this decrease came from a lower response to the online consultation (2013: 361, 2015: 274) a total of 87 less respondents and a 24.1% decrease in online responses. Nevertheless, it is a considerable increase in the number of responses compared to that of previous years. The 2010 survey received 227 onsite respondents and 39 online, whilst the 2008 survey, carried out exclusively onsite, received 211.

## **Results summary**

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

97.76% of respondents described council managed parks in the borough as excellent, good, or satisfactory, whilst 1.31% described them as either poor or very poor and 0.93% held no view. **The indication is that almost 98% of respondents can be considered satisfied with the quality of council managed parks in Richmond upon Thames. This is 9% higher than overall satisfaction in 2013.**

However, it should be noted that, the distinction between Richmond's council managed and non-council managed parks is not always clear in the public's eyes. 29 (5.42%) of respondents later named a non-council managed park when asked to name the park they wished to comment on. **Of the respondents who named only council managed parks 97.63% rated it as excellent, good or, satisfactory whilst 1.38% claimed it was poor or very poor and 0.99% did not answer.**



A total of 12 respondents gave council managed parks a rating of poor or very poor. Of these all 12, (100%), later named North Sheen Recreation ground as the local council managed park that they wished to comment upon. This indicates that negative ratings of a local park strongly affect how residents see council managed parks as a whole, and that problems associated with North Sheen Rec have an effect on overall parks ratings in this survey. This reflects the results from 2013, where North Sheen had a negative impact on the overall results.

### **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'.

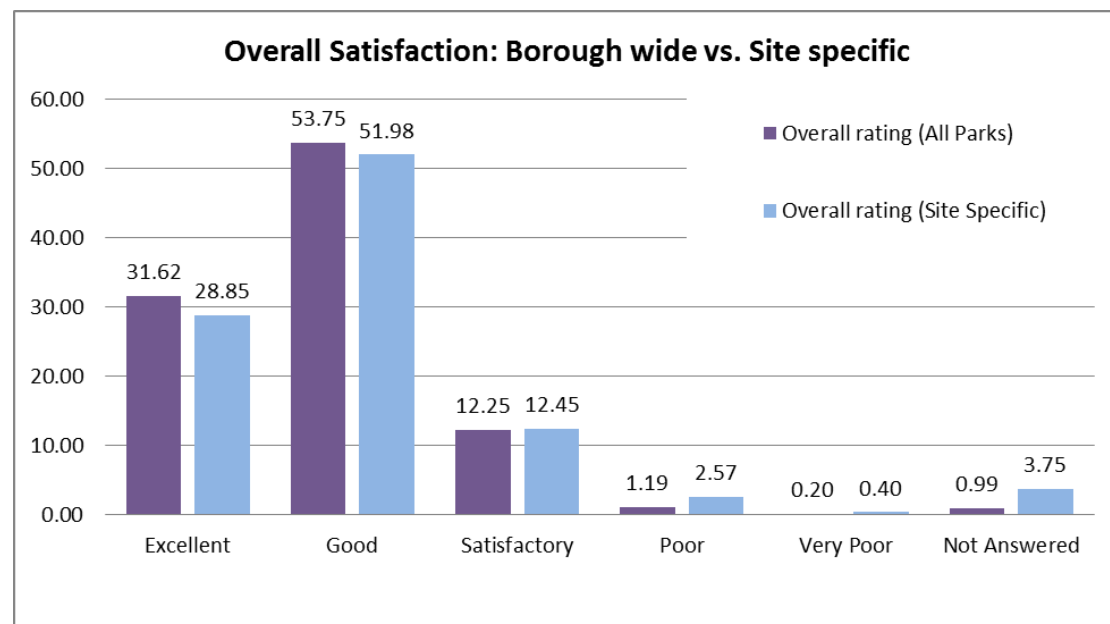
As has already been mentioned, 29 respondents named a non-council managed park as the one they wished to comment upon.

The following table shows the 'overall rating' of the 506 respondents who only named a council managed park compared to the 'overall rating' scores of all 535



respondents. **Of the respondents who named only council managed parks 93.28% rated it as excellent, good or, satisfactory whilst 2.96% claimed it was poor or very poor and 3.75% did not answer.**

The scores from respondents that only named council managed parks are marginally lower than those which take all 535 respondents into consideration.



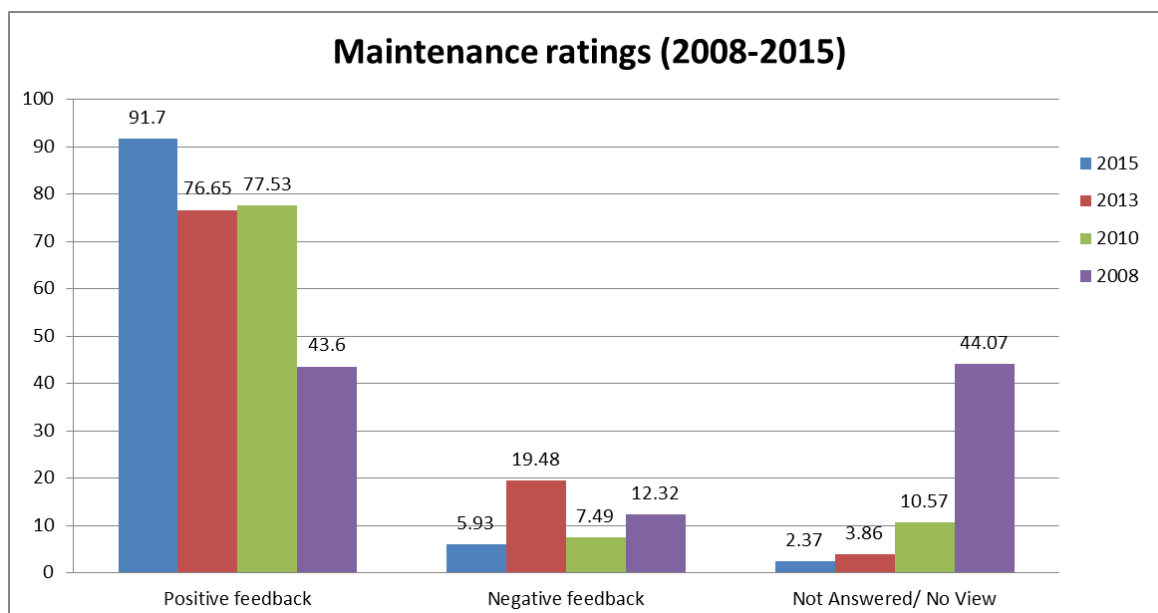
This pattern is repeated when one compares ratings for all parks across the borough and ratings for the local named park. The named parks tend to receive a marginally lower rating than all parks. For example, 28.85% of 506 respondents that names a council managed park rated their local park as excellent, compared to 31.62% of all who rated parks across the borough as excellent.

This indicates that the general impression of the borough's parks is higher than the impression of the park that the respondent visits 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 506 who had named council managed parks, 25.69% (2013: 14.89%) rated it as excellent, 51.58% (2013: 39.15%) claimed it was good, 14.43% (2013: 22.61%) said satisfactory while 4.35% (2013: 11.21%) said poor and 1.58% (2013: 8.27%) said very poor. 2.37% (2013: 3.86%) held no view or did not answer.**

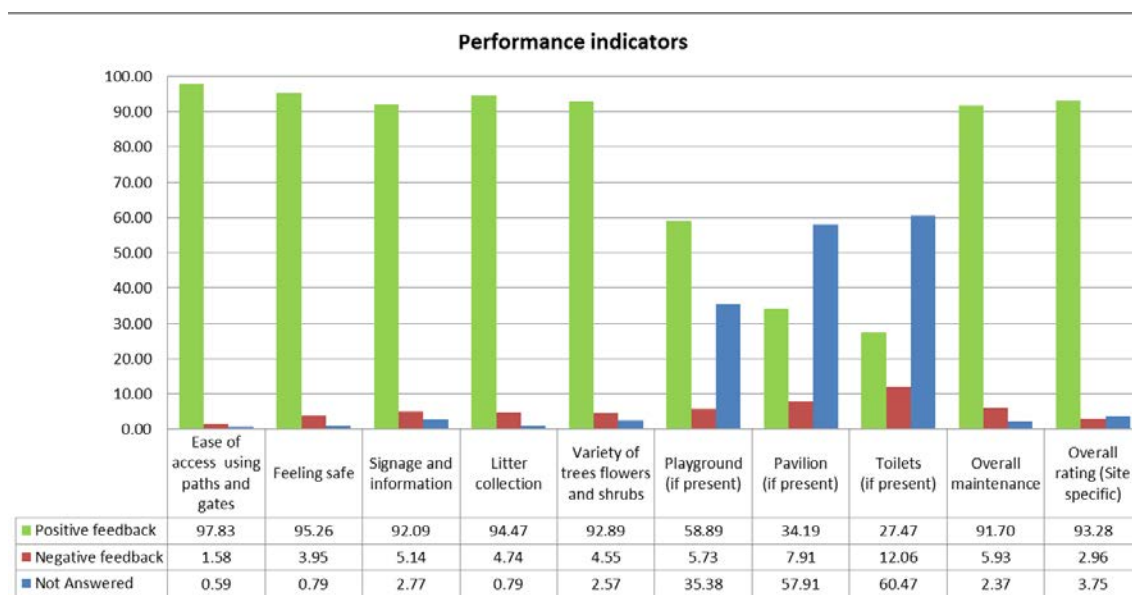
It appears that there has been a remarkable increase in the rating of maintenance when results are compared to that of 2013. There has been an increase of 15.05% in positive feedback and a drop of 13.55% in negative feedback.



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 506 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, and not answered.



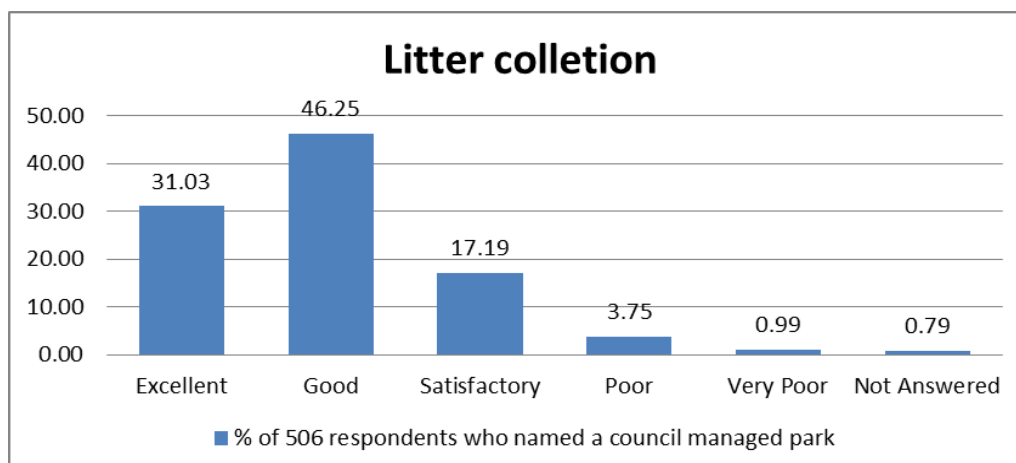
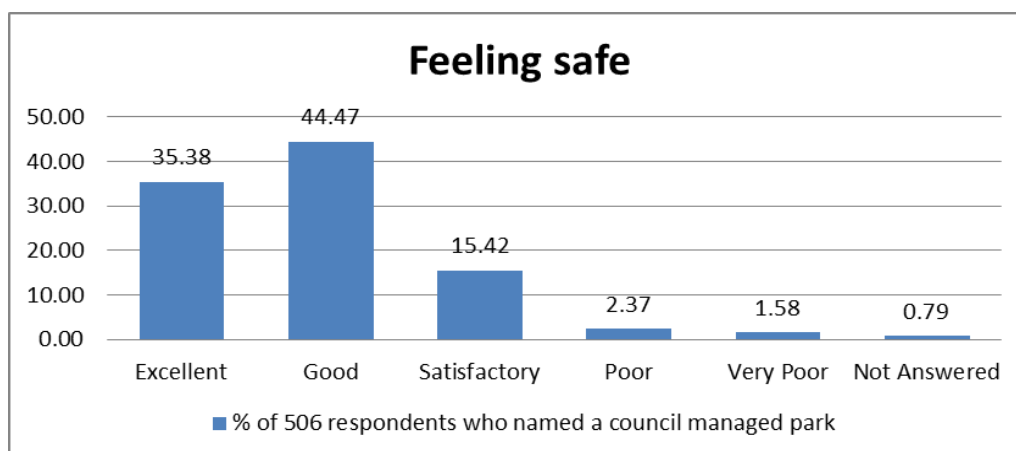
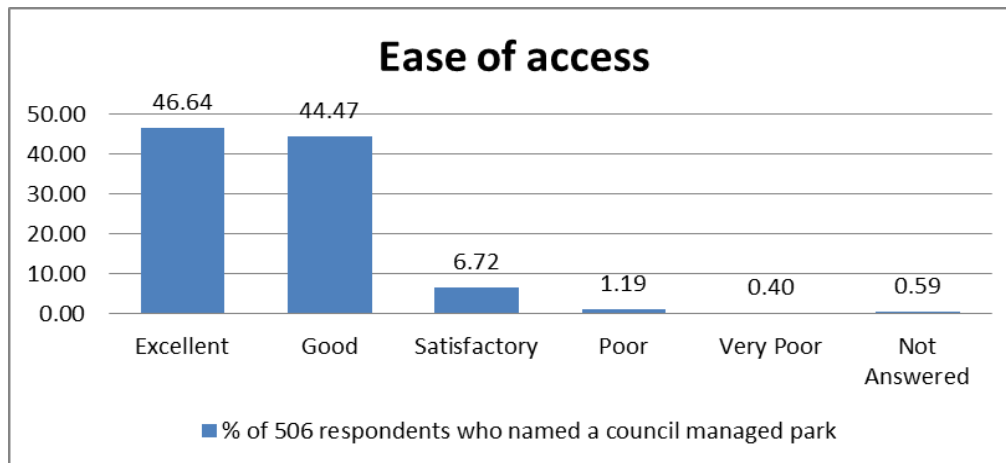
In order to judge the three top performing aspects and the three lowest scoring aspects (by comparing the amount of positive feedback with the amount of negative feedback).

**The top performing aspects are;**

1. Ease of access with 97.83% positive feedback
2. Feeling safe with 95.26%
3. Litter collection with 94.47%

This contrasts with previous results in 2013 that ranked Ease of access, playgrounds and Signage and information as the top 3 performing aspects.

Breakdown of top 3 performing aspects;



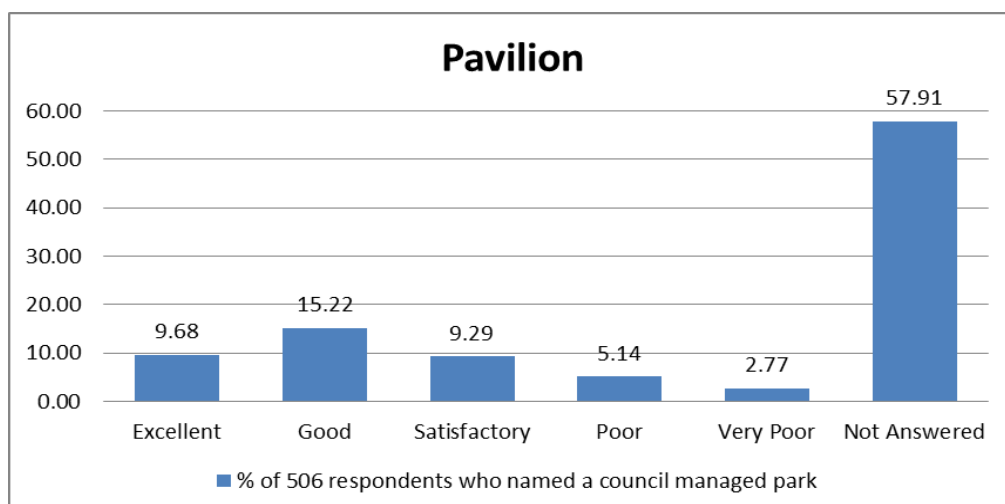
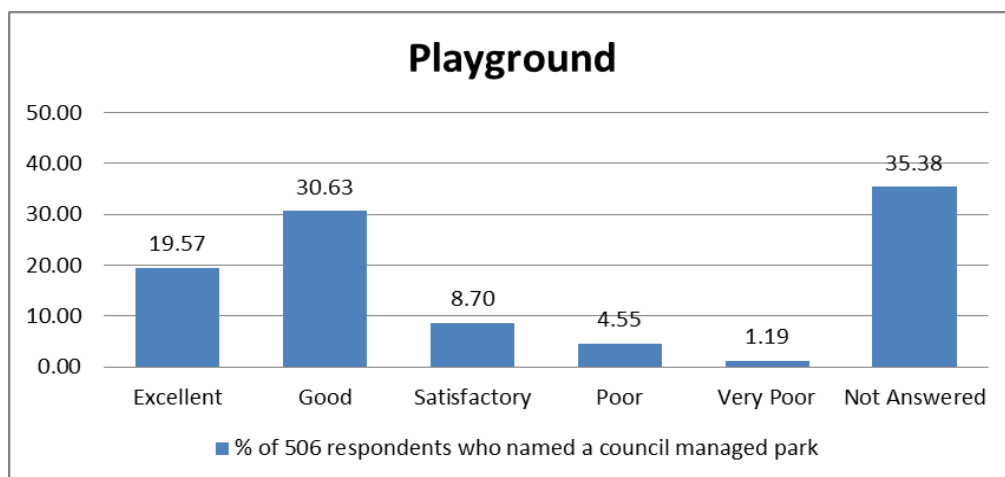
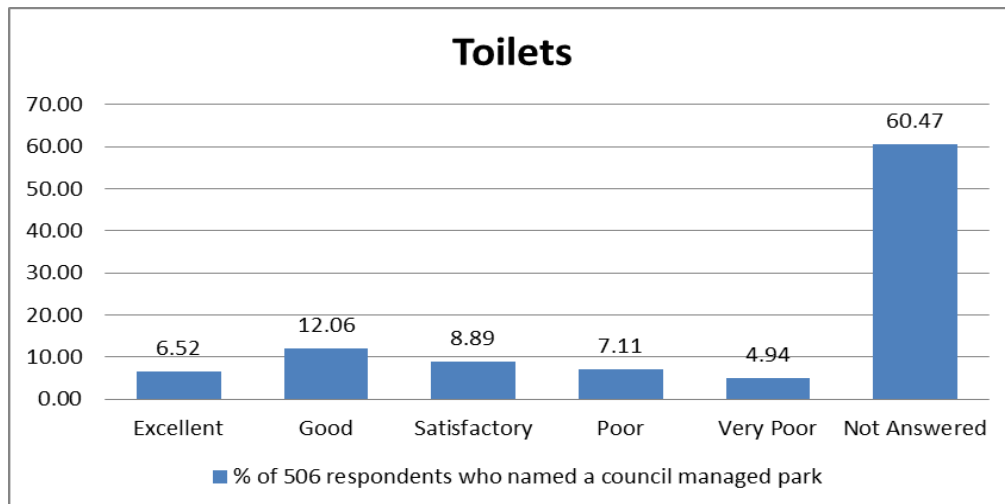


**The three lowest performing areas are;**

1. Toilets with 27.47% positive feedback
2. Playground with 58.89%
3. Pavilion with 34.19%

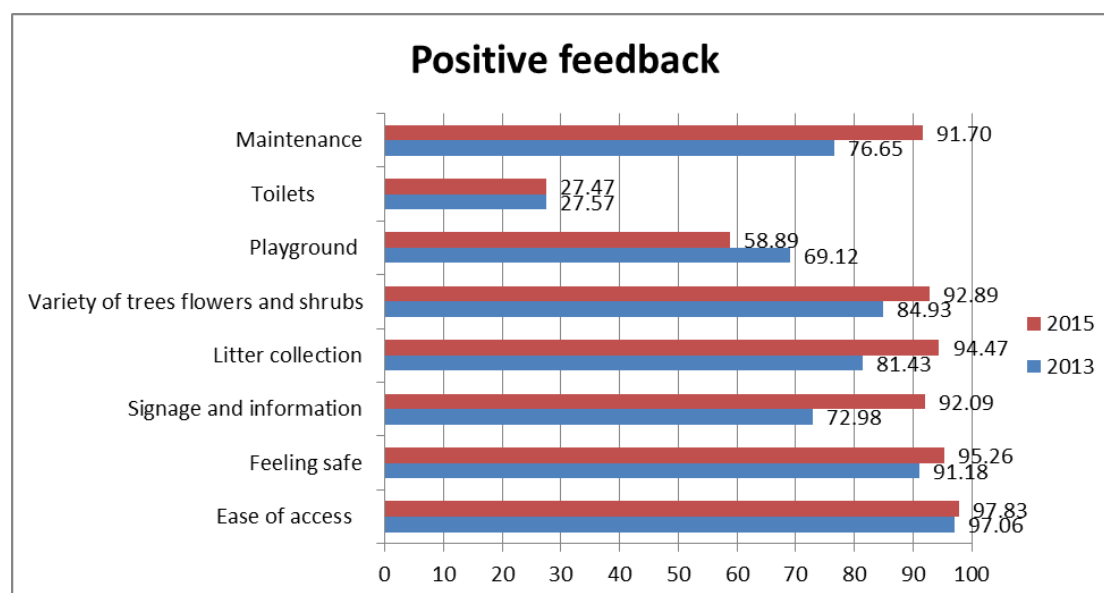
It should be noted that these three facilities are only present across some of the sites; hence people did not always provide an answer or ranked them as poor for not being present, which brought the overall positive statistics down.

**Breakdown of lowest 3 performing aspects;**



### Performance compared with 2013 results

The following table displays the percentage of positive feedback from the 2013 and 2015 surveys in instances where the same aspects were rated. **The most significant increase in positive feedback is the signage and information in parks with an increase of 19.11%, and maintenance with an increase of 15.05% and litter collection 13.04%.**



**There has been a slight fall in the amount of positive feedback in overall playground facilities (10.23%).**

Again, it should be taken into consideration that the collection methods for each set of results were not identical. Some of the negative feedback for toilets and playground in the 2015 survey was attributed to condemnation of the lack of such facilities.

### Playground facilities

Since 2013, there has been a 10.23% decrease in playground facilities. After looking at the respondents who rated these as Poor or Very Poor, it was clear there were 2 parks that brought the overall satisfaction level down. These were; North Sheen Recreation Ground and Sheen Common.

#### **North Sheen Recreation ground**

(31.03%) of negative feedback was attributed to North Sheen Recreation ground.

**Reasons:** Currently it is felt that the play equipment is unsafe for young children; this was reflected in the majority of comments provided by respondents. However it must be noted that work had yet to start on site when the survey took place but we have now completed on a total upgrade of both toddler and junior play areas with an investment of over £80k as a result of extensive consultation with users.

#### **Sheen Common**

(27.58%) of negative feedback was attributed to Sheen Common.

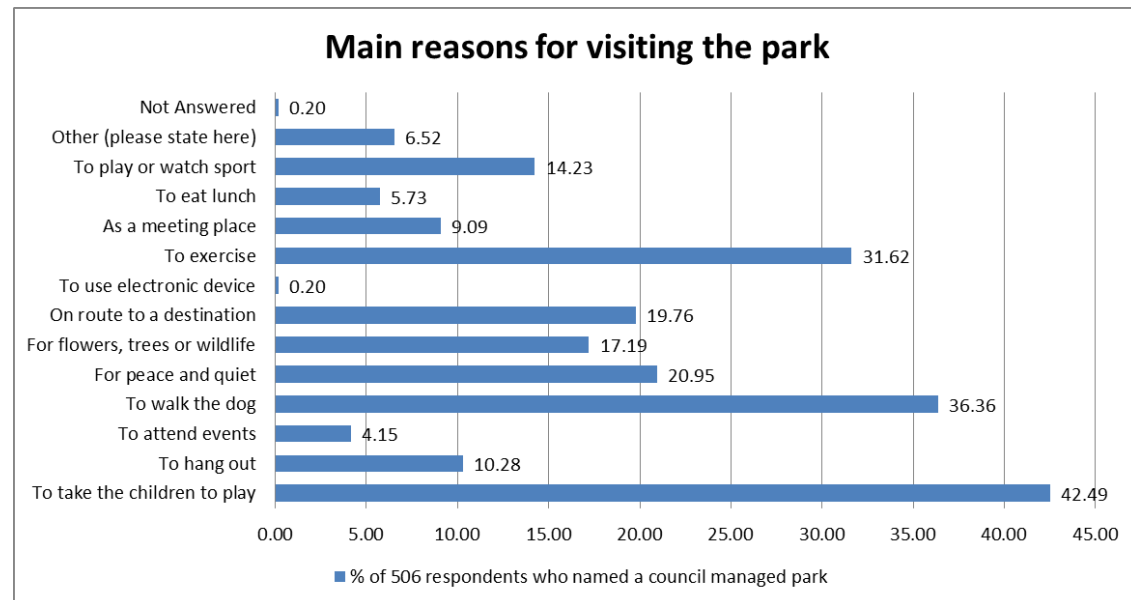
**Reasons:** Currently Sheen Common does not have any play facilities, therefore it may be the case that people in favour of having a playground implemented viewed/rated its current state negatively, as opposed to leaving blank for not being present. It should be noted that following the last survey, an extensive consultation over introducing a woodland play area was carried out in 2014. Unfortunately there was not enough support to progress with the work and consequently the idea was rejected. Full details for this consultation can be found [here](#).

### Patterns of use

Respondents were asked why they visited their named park. **Of the 506 respondents who named a council managed park, the most popular reasons for visits were:**

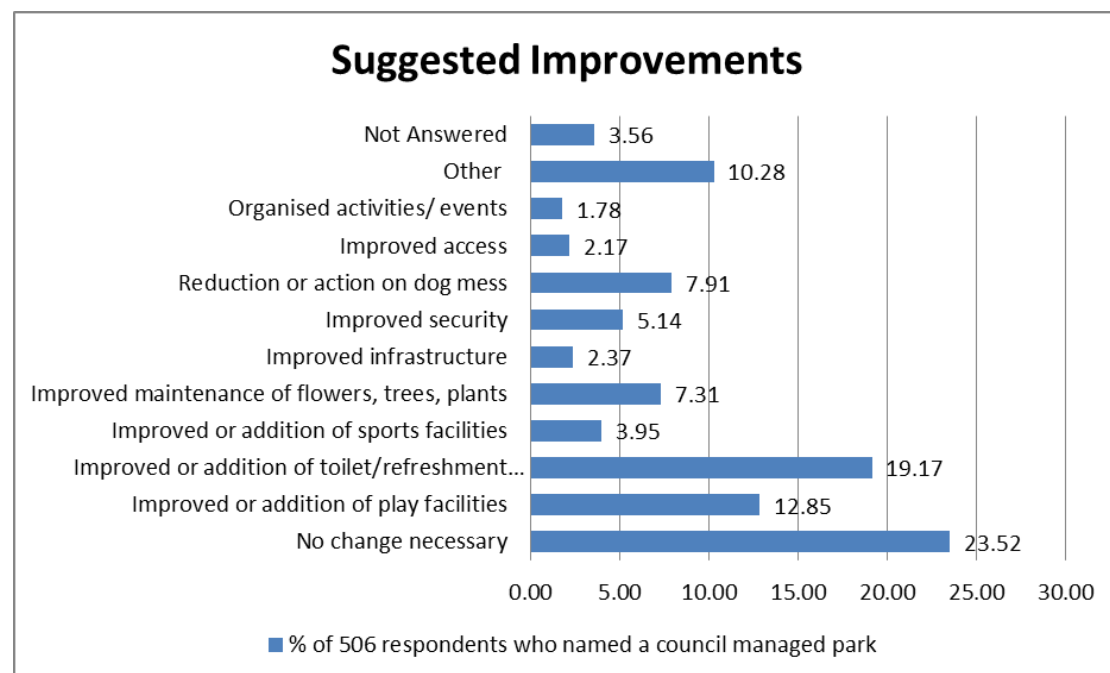
1. To take children to play (42.49%),
2. To walk the dog (36.36%),
3. To exercise (31.62%).

These correspond with the results from 2013.



### Suggestions/ areas for change

Respondents were asked “What changes would like to see to enhance your enjoyment of this park?” and to rate the desirability of a number of potential additions to their park (based on previous suggestions from 2013). Additionally, respondents were given the option to give spontaneous 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 with (19.17%),
2. Reduction or action on dog mess (7.91%),
3. Improved maintenance of flowers, trees and plants (7.31%),

Surprisingly, 23.52% of respondents said they like the park the way it is and do not feel any changes are necessary.

#### 'Other' improvements

10.28% of respondents went on to detail suggested improvements that weren't already noted. Please note although 52 respondents provided an answer, some of included comments on more than one area. Suggestions included;

	Count	% of 52 answered
Parking	1	1.92
Pavilion/ toilet refurbishment	6	11.54
Sports facilities (Inc. cycling, tennis, bowls, running & 3G pitch)	7	11.54
Play facilities (addition & maintenance)	6	9.62
Keep natural (less developed)	5	9.62
Clearance (litter/recycling)	7	13.46
Signage & more information	4	7.69
Horticultural (Inc. more flowers, less chemicals & undergrowth)	4	5.77
Access (gates/ fencing & opening hours)	4	7.69
Café/ Shelter for bad weather	3	5.77
Surface and pathways	3	3.85
Fewer low flying planes	1	1.92
Night lighting	5	9.62
Fireworks event	1	1.92
Enforcement (dog walkers)	2	1.92
Park Keeper	1	1.92
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	

#### Other comments

Respondents were asked "Are there any other comments you wish to add about this Council managed park?" A total of 364 comments were received, due to the sheer volume of comments the top reoccurring themes have been listed below with a snapshot of a few quotes for randomly selected parks.

#### **Play facilities:**

- Murray Park: *"The new play equipment appears to be good quality, provides a range of activity for children and young people and it is very popular"*.
- Kings Fields: *"Please can you improve the children's play facilities; it is in a desperate need for an update"*.

#### **Toilet/ refreshment facilities:**

- Hatherop: *"I think there are toilets on site in the football changing pavilion but I've never seen them open"*.
- Palewell Common & Fields: *"Toilets not often accessible and in a poor state"*.

**Sports facilities:**

- Sheen Common: *"The sports facilities are well below average. The tennis and cricket coaches do their very best with what they have, but the facilities are substandard"*.
- North Sheen Recreation Ground: *"So lovely to see it used so well particularly the children's football"*.

**Pavilion:**

- North Sheen Recreation Ground: *"Lovely pavilion, lots of users"*.
- Moormead and Bandy Recreation Ground: *"Pavilion to be brought back to use - keep as a community resource"*.

**Horticultural:**

- Hatherop: *"wild flowers planted this year were lovely"*.
- Ham Lands: *"Some of the small parks that I visit e.g. Alpha Road; Benn's Alley has very dull planting schemes - car park style bushes. I realise the Council doesn't have sufficient funding to maintain them all but maybe it should make a big push to get more volunteers involved in growing flowers and food in parks. Could also plant more fruit trees to provide free fruit"*.

**Security:**

- Carlisle Park: *"Better security over locking & unlocking park"*.
- Old deer park: *"The park is a little bleak, being so close to the A316, but that may add to the feeling of security given that anything that happens on the park is visible from the road"*.

**Dog mess:**

- Carlisle Park: *"Some enforcement over dog mess"*.
- Radnor: *"Enforcement over dog mess"*.

**Access:**

- Crane Park/ Kneller Gardens: *"The work you have done to improve the park has been outstanding. I especially like the wildflower meadows and the changes to the river embankment to allow more accessibility to the river"*.
- Hatherop: *"Occasionally the management of the rugby ground block the access with dangerous items - tyres, pieces of metal or concrete, large pieces of wood, there has been broken glass etc. etc. - this is very dangerous and unfriendly. It's unclear as to where the park ends and the rugby ground begins"*.

**Events/ Activities:**

- Kew Green: *"When events are taking place, reminder about leaving litter behind"*.
- Kings Field: *"Organised activities/ events, particularly for families"*.

**No Change/ Preserve:**

- Terrace Gardens: *"The gardeners are superb and their hard work and dedication is obvious. I am concerned that much of this hard work is regularly damaged by ball games taking place just below Hollyhocks cafe where the beds are used as goal posts. It is not unusual to see 'goal keepers' falling into/retrieving balls from the flower beds. I'm all for youthful exuberance but I am constantly amazed by the cavalier attitude taken by parents and carers alike in ignoring this"*.
- Ham Village Green: *"is an important resource for the area and should be left exactly as it is to preserve the semi-rural nature of the area"*.

### Respondent profiles

Based on the 506 respondents who names a council managed park, a higher number of women answered the survey at 64.62% to 32.21% men.

The majority of respondents were of a White or a White British ethnic background at 86.96%, a figure which is roughly in line with data from the 2011 census for Richmond upon Thames (85.9%).

4.15% of respondents considered themselves to have a disability. According to the 2011 census 2.03% of residents between the ages of 16-74% are considered permanently sick or disabled. This indicates that the survey did well in reaching residents with disabilities.

The two most popular age bands to participate in the survey were respondents ages 35-44 (29.05%) and 45-54 (20.16%). The two least captured age bands were respondents aged 85+ (0.40%) and Under 16's (1.19%). This may be due to the timing of the survey being in the winter or parents who were accompanying younger children would typically answer the survey as opposed to asking the child's opinion. 485 respondents specified that they had children, out of this 352 has children aged 15 and below.

### Conclusion

Overall the survey indicates that that Parks and Open Spaces continue to operate to a high standard. Despite the more negative responses associated with North Sheen Recreational Ground, general satisfaction measures at 97.63% for all council managed parks, and positive feedback for rating of local council managed parks is at 93.28%.

Significantly, 95.26% described their feeling of safety in a council managed park as excellent, good or satisfactory. This is a 4.08% increase from results in 2013 (91.18%).

The 2015 Parks Customer Satisfaction Survey can be seen as a successful example of the council's commitment to engage with its residents. Since it started in 2008, the number of respondents has increased (from 211 to 535), which, to a large extent, can be attributed to the increased focus on the online aspect of the survey.

As a final note, it had been recognised that there are some possible improvements that could be made In terms of the delivery of the survey. Suggestions include offering respondents more than 1 option for the "What changes would like to see to enhance your enjoyment of this park". Additionally, numbers for the online survey decreased by 98 this year, meaning ways of better promotion will need to be reviewed.

### North Sheen Recreation Ground

Looking back at results from the satisfaction survey in 2013, the results from North Sheen Recreation Ground were disproportionately negative in comparison to the rest of the data. When responses from respondents who had chosen to comment on North Sheen rec were discounted from the analysis, for example, positive feedback in relation to the rating of the quality of parks in the borough rose to 92.73% from 88.94% whilst negative feedback drops from 9.33% to 5.27%.



When asked what changes they would like to see to enhance their enjoyment of a named park, 50.6% of respondents from North Sheen Rec made a suggestion that related to sports facilities, particularly the state of the grass and football pitches. Several responses refer directly to KPR football club. The next most frequently suggested change was the reintroduction of a permanent park keeper at 16.87%.

When looking at the breakdown of data this year, a total of 7 respondents rated their park as poor or very poor. 6 (85.71%) of there were based on North Sheen Recreation Ground.

Option	Total out of 506 respondents who named a council managed park	% of 61 respondents who answered for North Sheen Rec	% out of the 506 respondents
Excellent	8	13.11	1.58
Good	37	60.66	7.31
Satisfactory	9	14.75	1.78
Poor	5	8.20	0.99
Very Poor	1	1.64	0.20
Not Answered	1	1.64	0.20
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>100.00</b>	

When reviewing the overall comments of all 61 respondents for North Sheen Rec, the top 2 suggested improvements were;

1. **Play facilities** – (29.51%) felt play equipment is unsafe for young children and there is a lack of up to date equipment for older children (e.g. Skate Park).
2. **Maintenance over grass** – similarly to 2013 (26.23%) of respondents feel the state of the grass and football pitches is neglected and dangerous for children playing sports, due to the large amount of holes of patchy/ muddy surface.

It should be noted that since the 2013 survey the parks department has worked closely with the newly reformed Friends of North Sheen Recreational Ground and this is recognised in some of the respondent's comments. Work had yet to start on site when the survey took place but we have now completed on a total upgrade of both toddler and junior play areas with an investment of over £80k as a result of extensive consultation with users. Further work to follow in the New Year includes footpath upgrades and horticultural enhancements to improve access and add biodiversity and interest. This also highlights the importance of carrying out these surveys to understand our users concerns and they act as catalyst for engagement and investment.

Overall, the number of respondents commenting negatively over this park has considerable decreased since 2013;

**2013:** 83 respondents answered, 30 (36.14%) answered poor or very poor

**2015:** 61 respondents answered, 6 (9.84%) answered poor or very poor.

Hence there has been a 26.3% decrease in negative feedback over this park.

Some comments on the matter included:

- *"The children's playground is tiny, lacking any kind of variety and is in poor condition. With so many young children in the area it is really unfortunate that such a large open space is so poorly managed".*
- *"The quality of playing pitches is poor and not enough attention is paid to improving. There is always dog mess to be cleared up and holes to be filled in. It seems that most people living in the immediate vicinity would prefer to*

*have NSR as their private facility with no sport provided, despite the enormous amount of work that Kew Park Rangers put in”.*

- *“It would transform North Sheen Rec if it were maintained as a sports area that local kids can play on, rather than as a patch of grass that people occasionally walk their dogs on. The grass is thin and patchy, the surface is uneven - frequently with sizeable holes in which kids can twist their ankles - and it doesn't drain well in the wet weather. Would it be possible for you to put in place a more intensive maintenance regime, for the benefit of the local kids?”*

## Appendices

### Appendix 1

*Below is a list of each site and the time of day that were visited as part of the survey:*

### **Sites Timetable**

	<b>Date</b>	<b>AM (before 12pm)</b>	<b>PM (after 12pm)</b>
<b>October</b>	Monday 26 <sup>th</sup>	Westerly Ware	The Kings Field
	Tuesday 27 <sup>th</sup>	Heathfield Rec	Murray Park
	Wednesday 28 <sup>th</sup>	Kneller Gardens	Crane Park
	Thursday 29 <sup>th</sup>	Radnor Gardens	Moormead Rec N.B. Met by Cllr Acton
	Friday 30 <sup>th</sup>	Carlisle Park	Diamond Jubilee
<b>November</b>	Monday 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Sheen Common	Palewell Common and Fields
	Tuesday 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Castelnau Rec	Barnes Green
	Wednesday 4 <sup>th</sup>	Terrace Gardens	Ham Village Green N.B. Met by Cllr Frost
	Thursday 5 <sup>th</sup>	Kew Green	North Sheen Rec N.B. Cancelled due to rain, moved to Wednesday 11 <sup>th</sup> AM
	Friday 6 <sup>th</sup>	Hampton Common N.B. Cancelled due to rain, moved to Wednesday 11 <sup>th</sup> PM	Hatherop Park N.B. Cancelled due to rain, moved to Wednesday 11 <sup>th</sup> PM
	Wednesday 11 <sup>th</sup>	North Sheen Rec	Hampton Common & Hatherop Park