

Customer Satisfaction Survey 2021

High Woods Country Park



Report Prepared by
Research and Change Team
COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report reviews the findings from the High Woods Customer Satisfaction Survey conducted across August and September 2021 at High Woods Country Park, Colchester. 143 participants were interviewed this year.

A survey is normally carried out every two years with the previous survey being conducted in 2019. However, this year's survey was conducted a year behind schedule due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The surveys provide a detailed measurement of satisfaction, with the results being used to identify areas requiring improvement.

OBJECTIVES

- Identify when visitors use the site and how long they visit for
- Identify where visitors come from and how they get to the site
- Examine what visitors like to do when they visit
- Identify areas of strengths and weaknesses as seen by the visitor regarding site management and services provided by the Visitor Centre
- Identify the top priorities of the park as seen by the visitor
- To profile visitors according to age, gender, ethnicity

METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLE

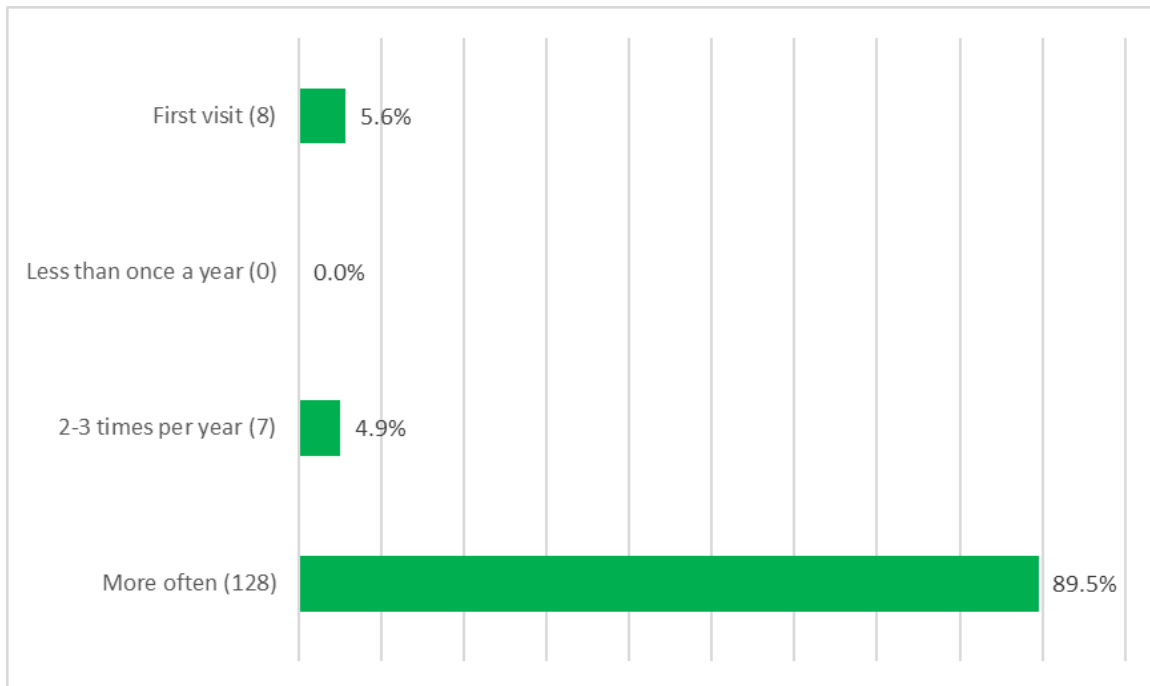
Face-to-face interviews were conducted on a sample of visitors to the Country Park across a 4-week period between August and September 2021 on both weekdays and weekends.

Respondents were also able to complete the survey via a mobile device through a QR code which was placed on posters throughout the park.

A total of 143 visitors were surveyed in 2021 compared to 328 visitors in 2019.

SURVEY RESULTS

1. How often do you visit the Country Park?

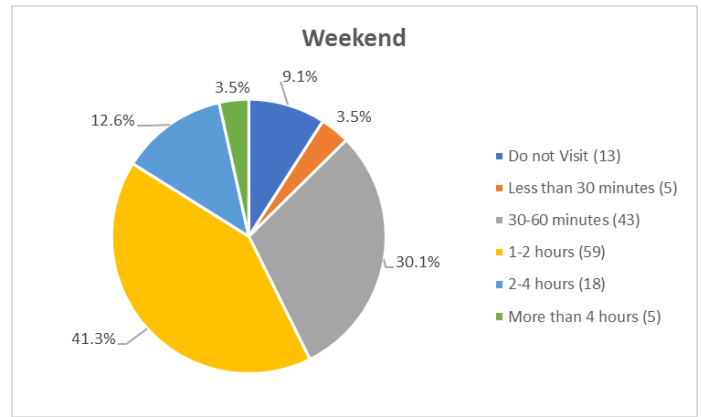
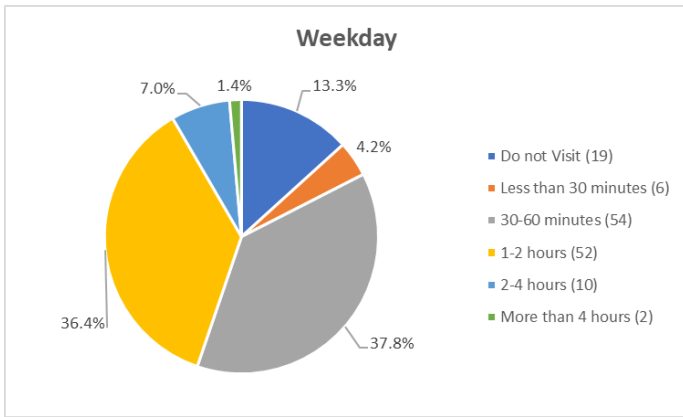


128 visitors (89.5%) said that they visited the park more than 3 times a year. In comparison, only 42% of respondents in 2019 visited the park this often.

There were 7 visitors (4.9%) who visited the park 2-3 times a year.

The remaining 8 visitors (5.6%) reported that this was their first time visiting the park.

1a. How long do you normally stay at the park?



| | Do not Visit | Less than 30 minutes | 30-60 minutes | 1-2 hours | 2-4 hours | More than 4 hours |
|---------|--------------|----------------------|---------------|-----------|-----------|-------------------|
| Weekday | 13.3% | 4.2% | 37.8% | 36.4% | 7.0% | 1.4% |
| Weekend | 9.1% | 3.5% | 30.1% | 41.3% | 12.6% | 3.5% |

All visitors (excluding first-time visitors) who stated that they visit the park were asked how long they normally stay during weekdays and weekends.

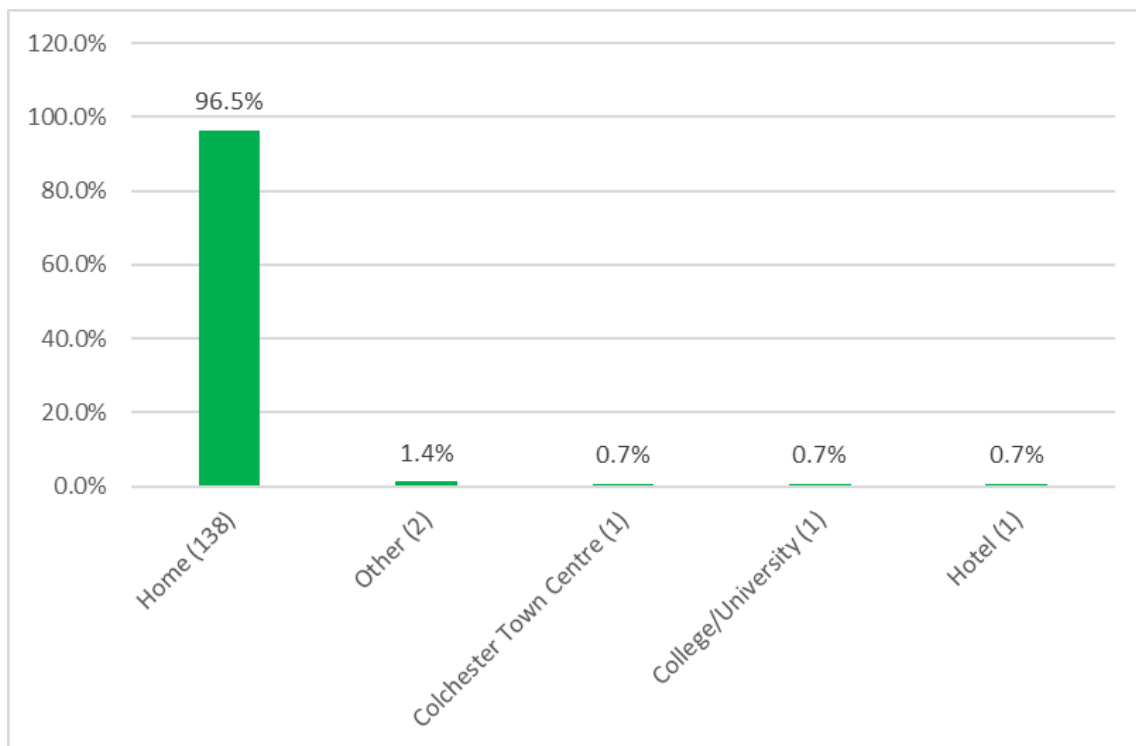
Those visitors who visit the park on weekdays are more likely to staying for 30-60 minutes (37.8%) or 1-2 hours (36.4%).

Only 7% of people stay for 2-4 hours on weekdays, and an even lower 1.4% stay for more than 4 hours.

The visitors who visit the park at weekends are again more likely to stay for between 30-60 minutes (30.1%) or 1-2 hours (41.3%).

12.6% of those who visit the park at weekends stay for 2-4 hours, and 3.5% stay for more than 4 hours.

2. Where have you travelled from today?



96.5% of visitors (138 people) said that they travelled from home to visit the park.

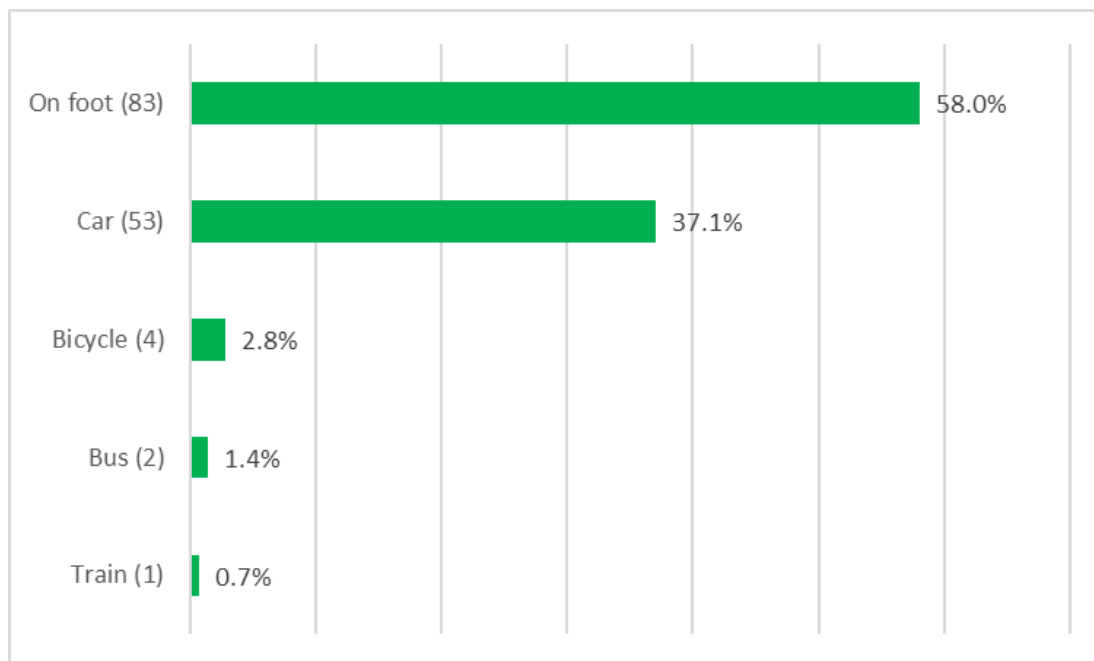
Only 1 person (0.7% of respondents) travelled from either Colchester town centre, college/university, or a hotel.

The remaining 2 people (1.4%) travelled from other locations.

Other Locations:

- *Travelled to the park after visiting the hospital*

3. How did you travel to the park today?



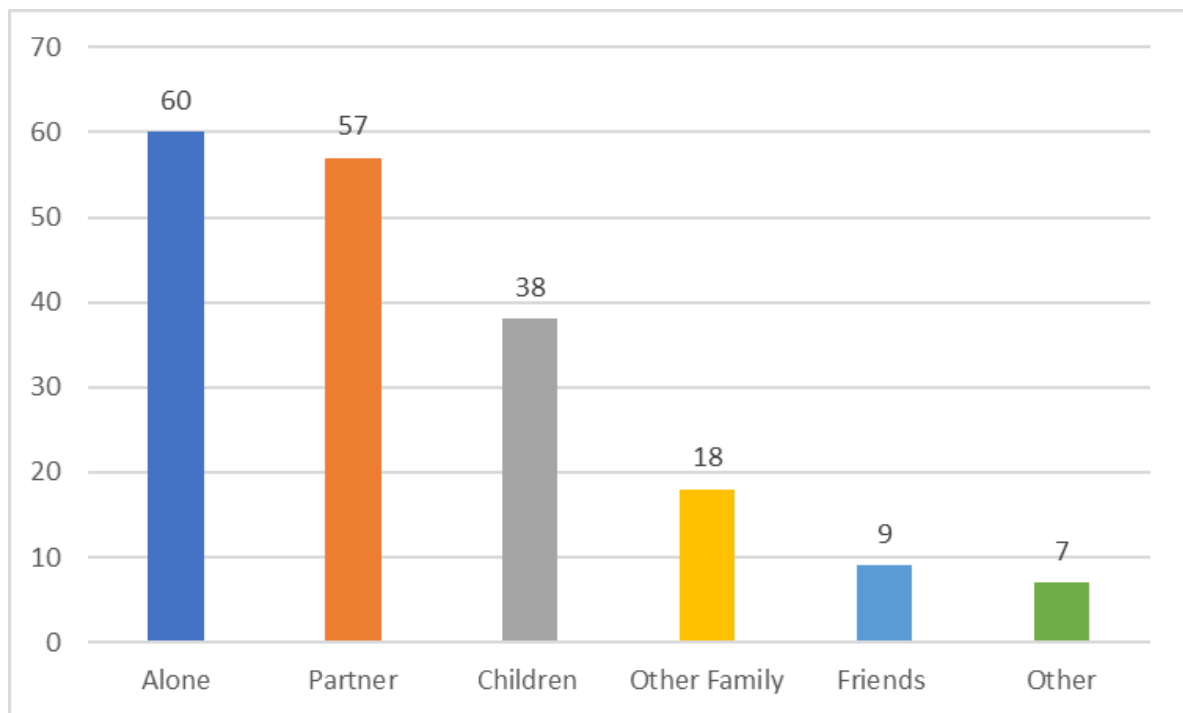
58% of respondents (83 people) stated that they travelled to the park on foot.

The second most common travel mode was by car which was reported by 37.1% of respondents (53 people).

Only 2.8% of respondents (4 people) travelled by bicycle, and 1.4% (2 people) came by bus.

The remaining 0.7% (1 person) stated that they travelled by train.

4. Who is visiting the Country Park with you?

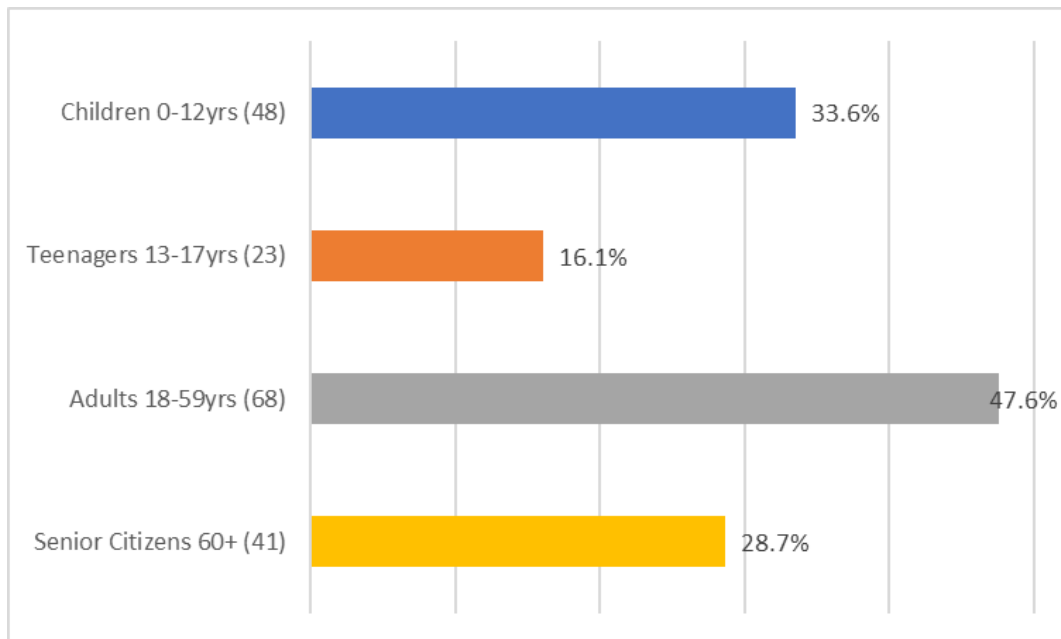


60 of the 143 people surveyed visited the park alone. It should be noted that the survey was conducted towards the end of August and beginning of September when the school holidays were coming to an end, therefore there will have been less groups visiting the park at this time.

57 respondents visited the park with a partner, whilst 38 came with children.

'Other' visitors included: visiting the park with a dog.

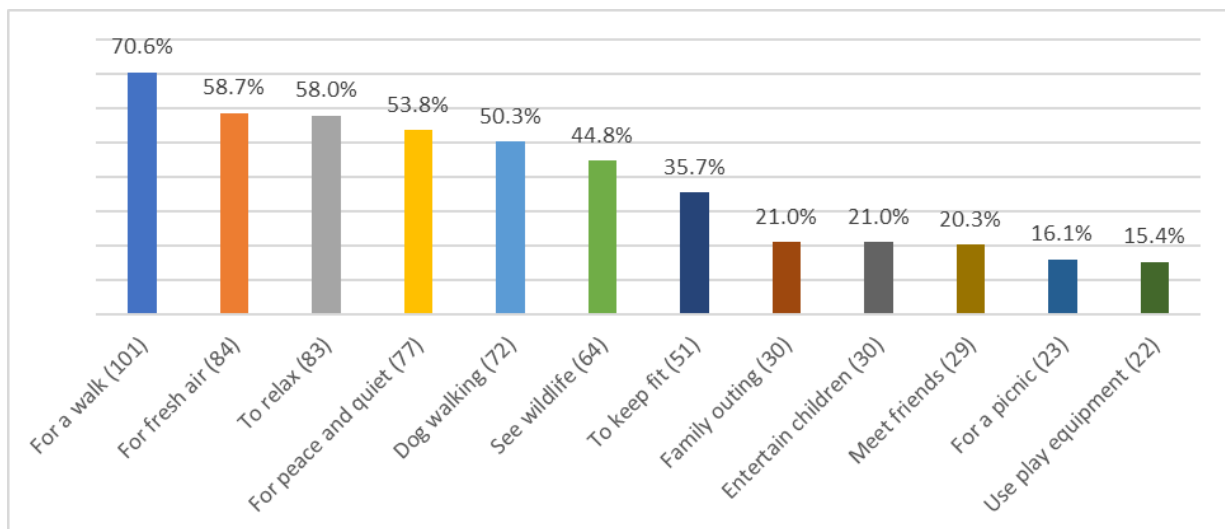
4a. Including yourself, how many are in your group today?



Of those respondents who visited the park with others, the most common age-group amongst accompanying visitors was adults aged 18 to 59 years with 47.6% (68 people).

The second biggest age group was children aged 0 to 12 years with 33.6% (48 people).

5. Why do you visit the Country Park?



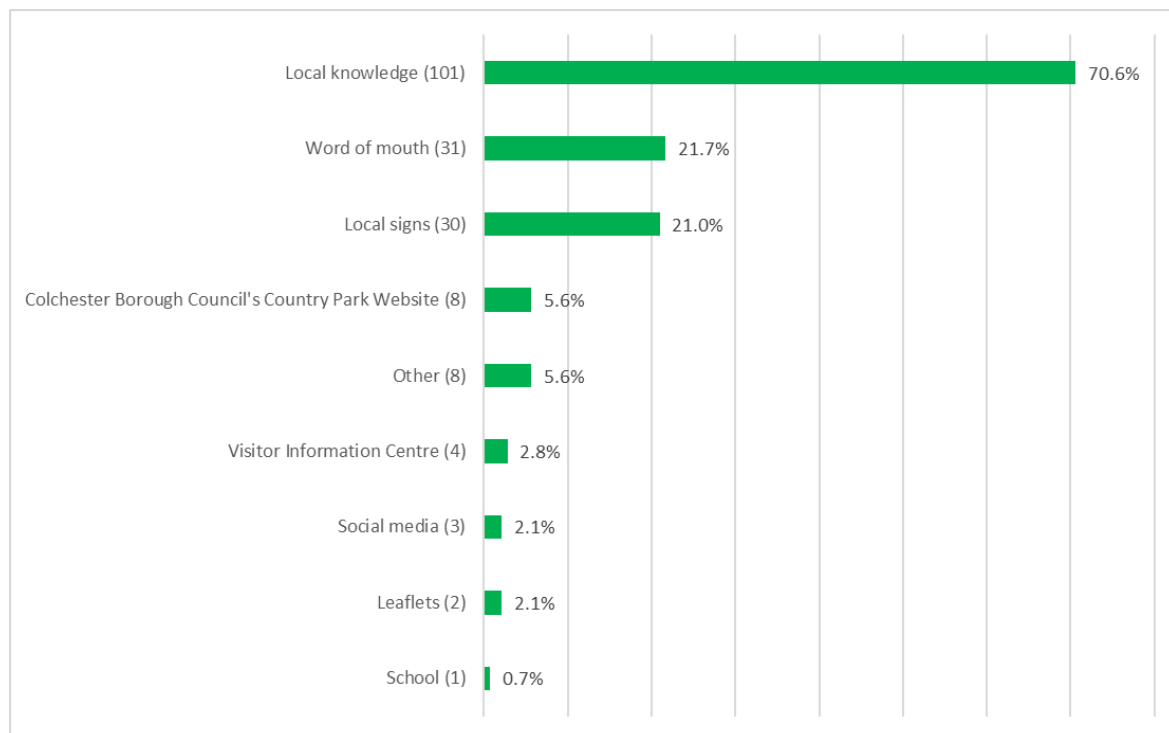
| Reason for Visit | Number | Percentage |
|--------------------------|--------|------------|
| For a walk (101) | 101 | 70.6% |
| For fresh air (84) | 84 | 58.7% |
| To relax (83) | 83 | 58.0% |
| For peace and quiet (77) | 77 | 53.8% |
| Dog walking (72) | 72 | 50.3% |
| See wildlife (64) | 64 | 44.8% |
| To keep fit (51) | 51 | 35.7% |
| Family outing (30) | 30 | 21.0% |
| Entertain children (30) | 30 | 21.0% |
| Meet friends (29) | 29 | 20.3% |
| For a picnic (23) | 23 | 16.1% |
| Use play equipment (22) | 22 | 15.4% |

Visitors were asked why they visit the country park. The most popular reason for visiting was 'For a Walk' with 70.6% of respondents (101 people) providing this answer.

Other popular reasons for visiting included, 'For Fresh Air' and 'To Relax' with 58.7% and 58.0% respectively.

The least popular reason for visiting the park was to 'Use Play Equipment' with only 15.4% (22 people) giving this reason.

6. How did you find out about the Country Park?



Respondents were asked how they found out about the Country Park.

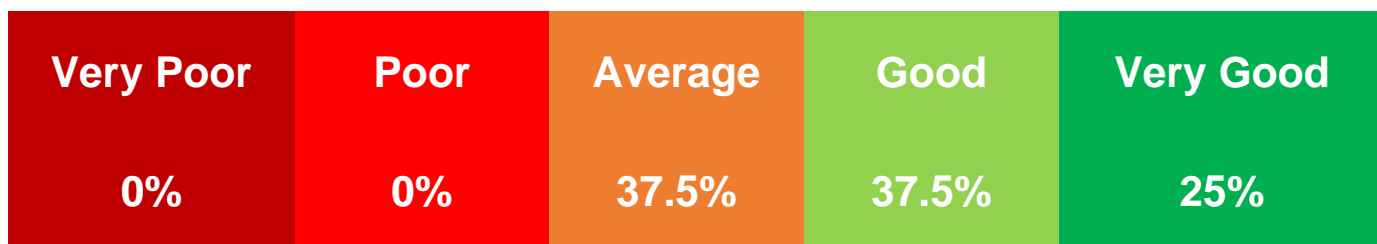
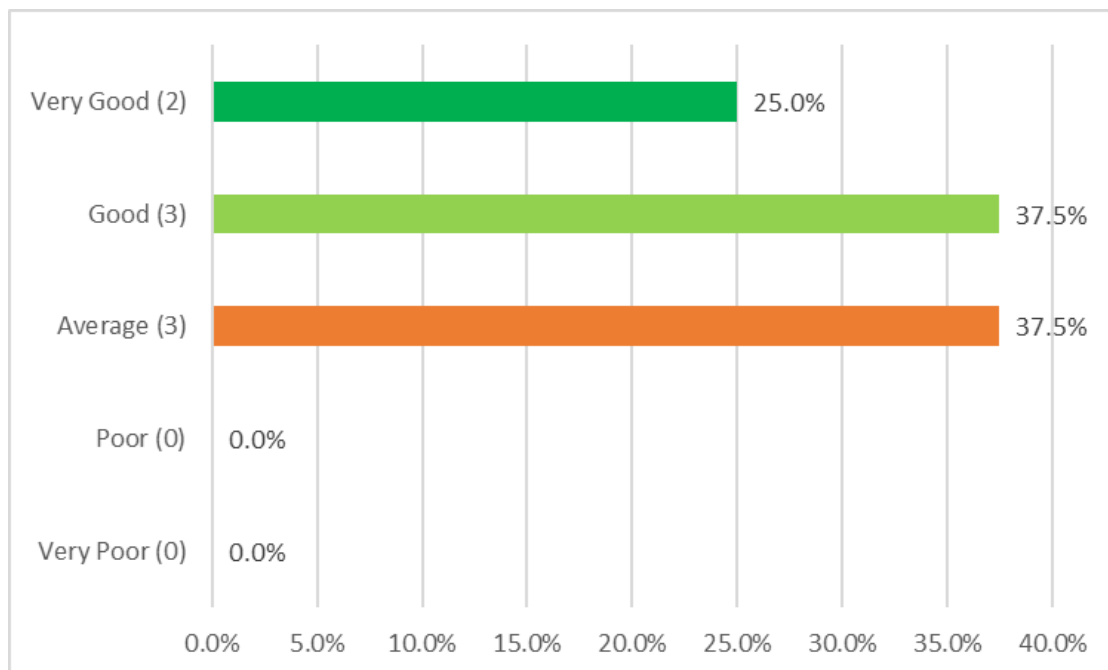
70.6% of respondents (101 people) knew about the park through 'Local Knowledge'; this trend remains unchanged since 2019.

21.7% of respondents (31 people) found out about the park via 'Word of Mouth'.

5.6% of respondents (8 people) said that they found out about the park via 'Other' methods, these include:

- *It's one minute walk from my house*
- *Live in the area*
- *Live next door*
- *Discovered it when I moved here*
- *Have been using visiting for years, live locally.*
- *5 minutes from our home*
- *Google search*
- *Exploring*

6a. How would you rate the Council's Country Park Website?



The 5.6% of respondents (8 people) who found out about the park through the Council's High Woods Country Park website, were asked to rate the website from 'Very Poor' to 'Very Good'.

37.5% of respondents (3 people) rated the website as 'Average', whilst a further 37.5% gave a rating of 'Good'.

25% of respondents (2 people) said the website was 'Very Good'.

No responses gave a rating of either 'Poor' or 'Very Poor'.

Additional Comments:

In addition, respondents were asked if they had any additional comments about the website. The following comments were left:

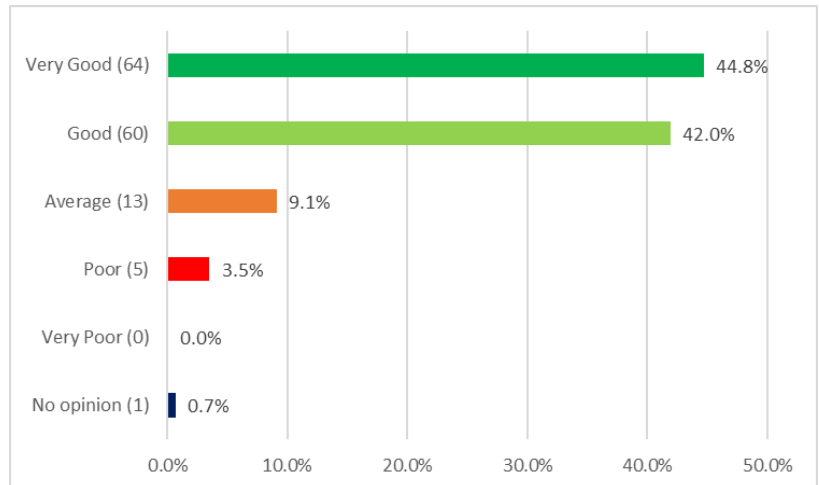
- *It needs updating*
- *A good green area in the heart of city*

7. How would you rate the following within the Country Park?

Visitors were asked to rate the park management (cleanliness, bins, ease of access, facilities and services etc.) from 'Very Poor' to 'Very Good'.

Cleanliness of the Park

- 44.8% said VERY GOOD
- 42.0% said GOOD
- 9.1% said AVERAGE
- 3.5% said POOR
- 0.0% said VERY POOR
- 0.7% said NO OPINION

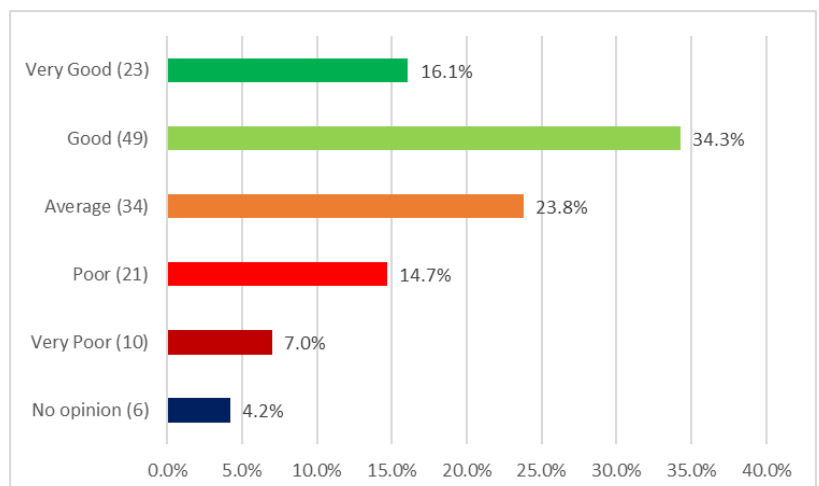


Overall, 90% of respondents rated Cleanliness of the Park as either 'Good' or 'Very Good'.

Only 3.5% of respondents gave a rating of 'Poor', whilst no respondents rated cleanliness as 'Very Poor'.

Waste Bins

- 16.1% said VERY GOOD
- 34.3% said GOOD
- 23.8% said AVERAGE
- 14.7% said POOR
- 7.0% said VERY POOR
- 4.2% said NO OPINION

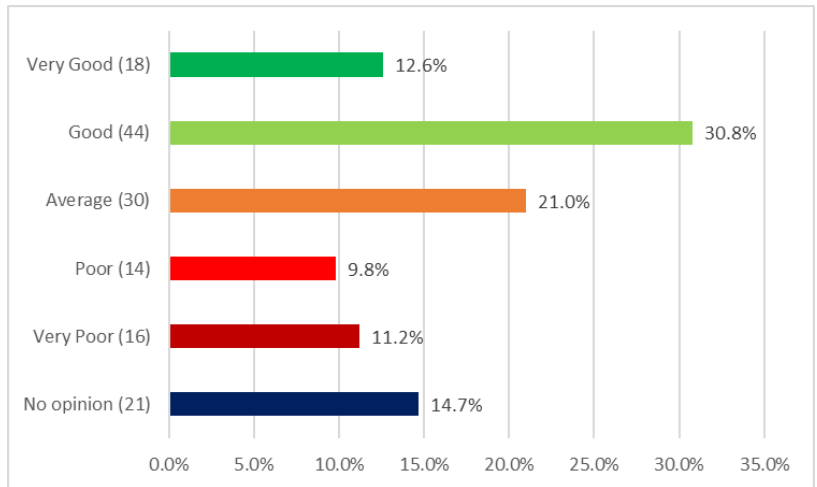


50.3% of respondents said that the Waste Bins were either 'Good' or 'Very Good'.

23.8% of respondents rated Waste Bins as 'Average', whilst a combined 21.7% gave a rating of 'Poor' or 'Very Poor'.

Dog Waste Bins

- 12.6% said VERY GOOD
- 30.8% said GOOD
- 21.0% said AVERAGE
- 9.8% said POOR
- 11.2% said VERY POOR
- 14.7% said NO OPINION



43.4% of respondents thought the Dog Waste Bins were either ‘Good’ or ‘Very Good’.

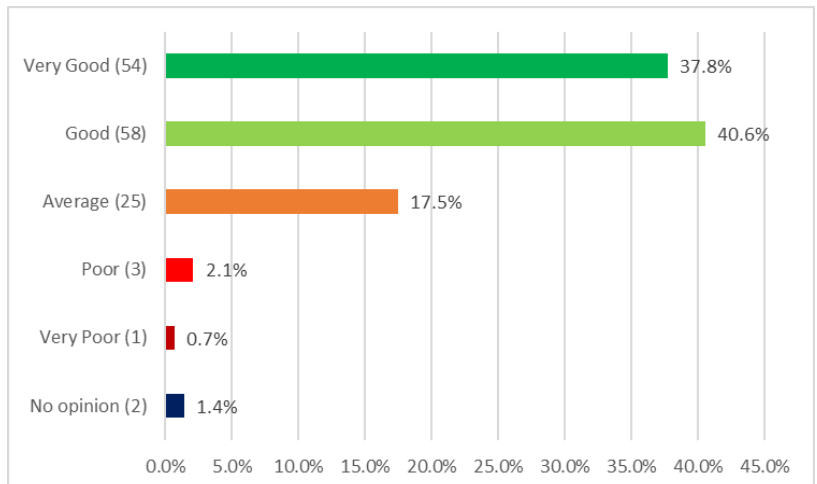
21.0% rated Dog Waste Bins as ‘Average’.

Meanwhile, a further 21.0% rated Dog Waste Bins as ‘Poor’ or ‘Very Poor’.

14.7% of respondents had ‘No Opinion’.

Maintenance Around the Park

- 37.8% said VERY GOOD
- 40.6% said GOOD
- 17.5% said AVERAGE
- 2.1% said POOR
- 0.7% said VERY POOR
- 1.4% said NO OPINION



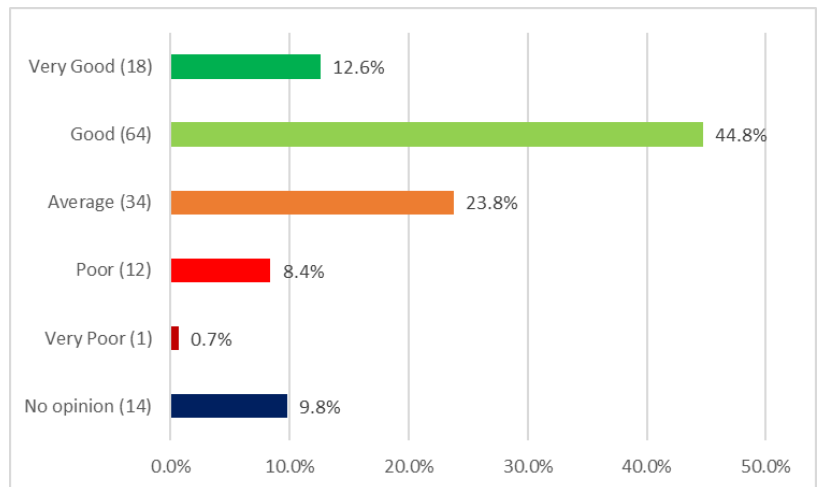
78.3% of visitors said that they considered the Maintenance Around the Park as either ‘Good’ or ‘Very Good’.

17.5% of respondents felt Maintenance was ‘Average’.

Only 2.8% visitors considered Maintenance to be ‘Poor’ or ‘Very Poor’.

Range of Facilities/Services for Adults

- 12.6% said VERY GOOD
- 44.8% said GOOD
- 23.8% said AVERAGE
- 8.4% said POOR
- 0.7% said VERY POOR
- 9.8% said NO OPINION



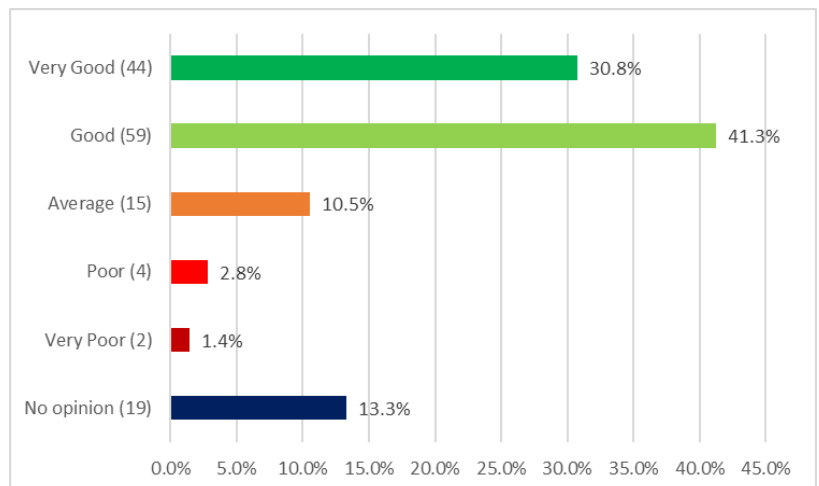
57.3% of respondents said the Range of Facilities and Services Offered for Adults were either 'Good' or 'Very Good'.

23.8% visitors rated this as 'Average', whilst a combined 9.1% gave ratings of 'Poor' or 'Very Poor'.

The remaining 9.8% of respondents had 'No Opinion'

Range of Facilities/Services for Children

- 30.8% said VERY GOOD
- 41.3% said GOOD
- 10.5% said AVERAGE
- 2.8% said POOR
- 1.4% said VERY POOR
- 13.3% said NO OPINION



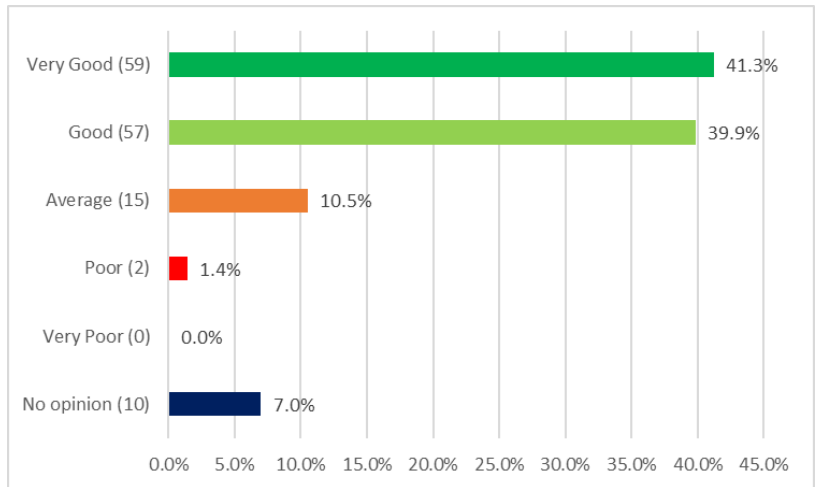
72.0% of respondents said the Range of Facilities and Services Provided for Children were either 'Good' or 'Very Good'.

10.3% of visitors rated this as 'Average', whilst a combined 4.2% gave a rating of 'Poor' or 'Very Poor'.

The remaining 13.3% of respondents had 'No Opinion'.

Ease of Finding the Visitor Centre

- 41.3% said VERY GOOD
- 39.9% said GOOD
- 10.5% said AVERAGE
- 1.4% said POOR
- 0.0% said VERY POOR
- 7.0% said NO OPINION



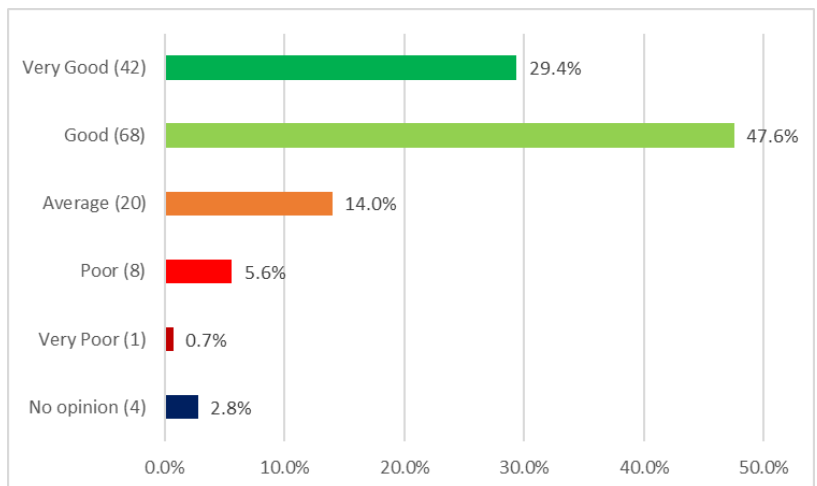
81.1% of visitors rated Ease of Finding the Visitor Centre as either 'Good' or 'Very Good'.

10.5% of respondents rated this as 'Average', whilst 1.4% gave a rating of 'Poor'. No respondents rate this as 'Very Poor'.

The remaining 7.0% had 'No Opinion'.

Ease of Finding your Way Around the Park

- 29.4% said VERY GOOD
- 47.6% said GOOD
- 14.0% said AVERAGE
- 5.6% said POOR
- 0.7% said VERY POOR
- 2.8% said NO OPINION



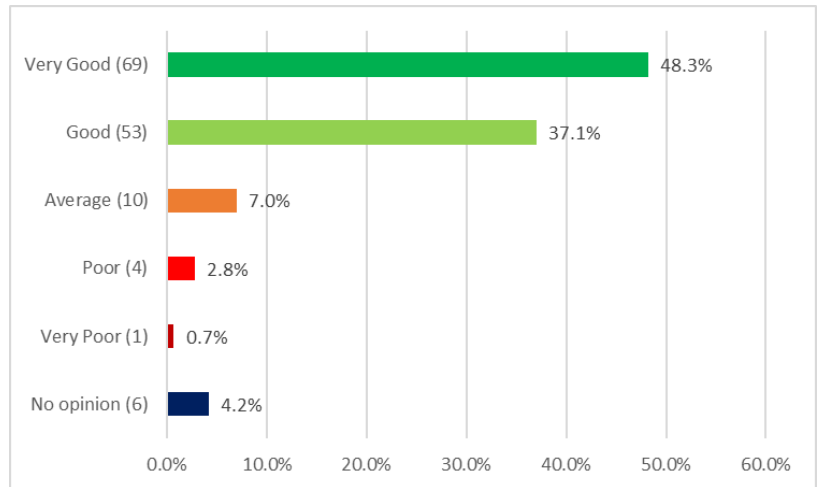
76.9% of visitors rated Ease of Finding your Way Around the Park as 'Good' or 'Very Good'.

14.0% rated this as 'Average'. Meanwhile, a combined 6.3% gave a rating of 'Poor' or 'Very Poor'.

The remaining 2.8% of respondents had 'No Opinion'.

Access Around the Park

- 48.3% said VERY GOOD
- 37.1% said GOOD
- 7.0% said AVERAGE
- 2.8% said POOR
- 0.7% said VERY POOR
- 4.2% said NO OPINION



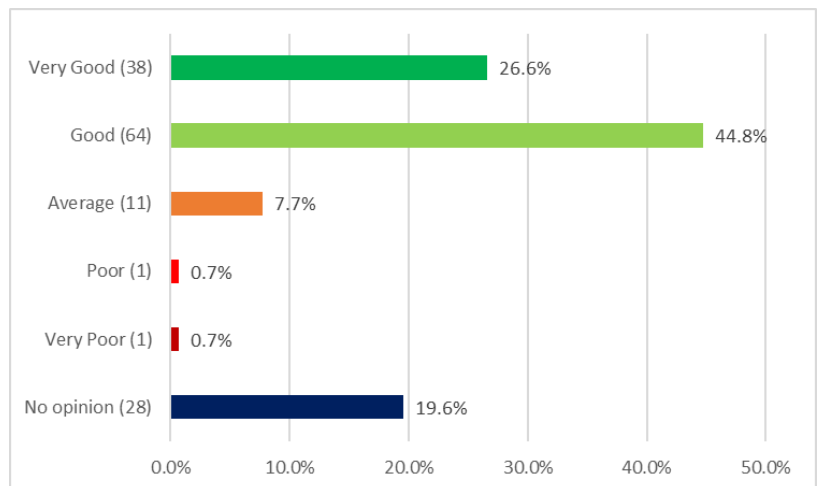
85.3% of respondents answered with either ‘Good’ or ‘Very Good’ and felt there was good ease of access around the park.

7.0% of visitors rated this ‘average’, whilst a combined 3.5% said ‘Poor’ or ‘Very Poor’.

The remaining 4.2% of respondents had ‘No Opinion’.

Parking

- 26.6% said VERY GOOD
- 44.8% said GOOD
- 7.7% said AVERAGE
- 0.7% said POOR
- 0.7% said VERY POOR
- 19.6% said NO OPINION



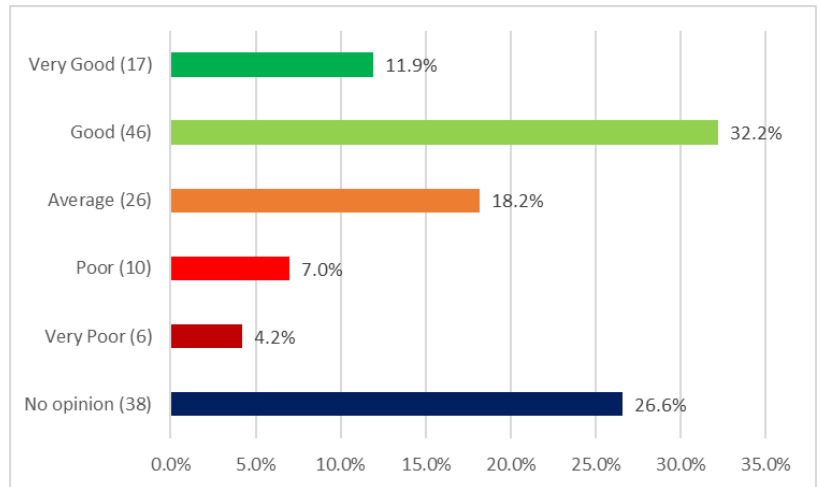
71.3% of respondents thought that the Parking at the park was either ‘Good’ or ‘Very Good’.

7.7% of visitors rated this as ‘Average’, whilst a combined 1.4% gave a rating of ‘Poor’ or ‘Very Poor’.

The remaining 19.6% of respondents had ‘No Opinion’.

Security

- 11.9% said VERY GOOD
- 32.2% said GOOD
- 18.2% said AVERAGE
- 7.0% said POOR
- 4.2% said VERY POOR
- 26.6% said NO OPINION



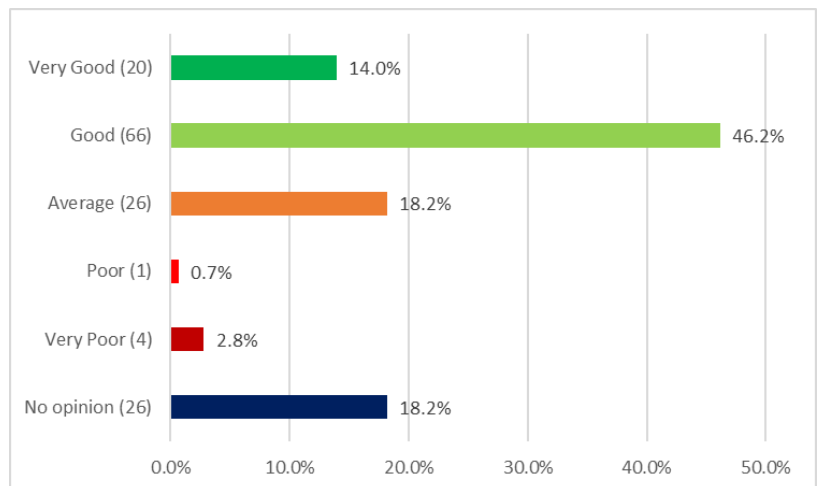
44.1% of visitors rated Security within the park as either 'Good' or 'Very Good'.

18.2% of respondents rated this as 'Average', whilst a combined 11.2% gave a rating of 'Poor' or 'Very Poor'.

The remaining 26.6% of visitors had 'No Opinion'.

Safety

- 14.0% said VERY GOOD
- 46.2% said GOOD
- 18.2% said AVERAGE
- 0.7% said POOR
- 2.8% said VERY POOR
- 18.2% said NO OPINION



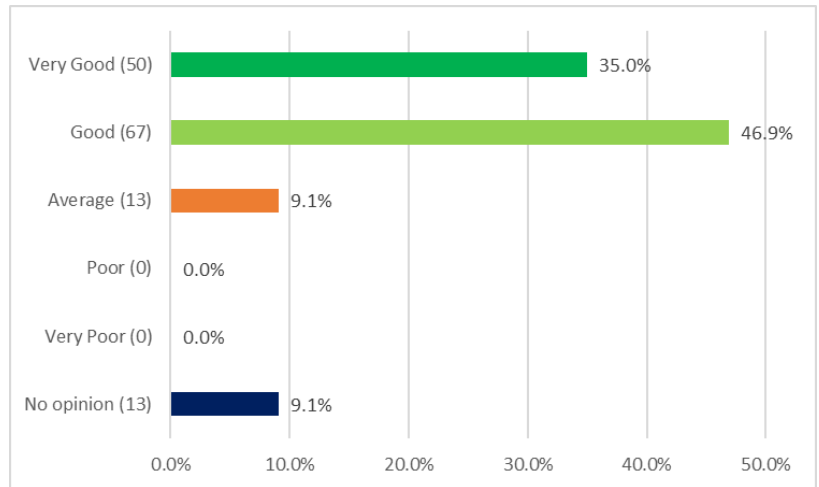
60.1% of respondents rated Safety within the park as either 'Good' or 'Very Good'.

18.2% of visitors rated this as 'Average', whilst a combined 3.5% said 'Poor' or 'Very Poor'.

The remaining 18.2% of respondents had 'No Opinion'.

Care and Protection of Wildlife

- 35.0% said VERY GOOD
- 46.9% said GOOD
- 9.1% said AVERAGE
- 0.0% said POOR
- 0.0% said VERY POOR
- 9.1% said NO OPINION



81.8% of visitors thought that the Care and Protection of Wildlife within park was either 'Good' or 'Very Good'.

9.1% of respondents felt that this was 'Average', whilst no respondents said 'Poor' or 'Very Poor'.

The remaining 9.1% of visitors had 'No Opinion'.

Additional Comments:

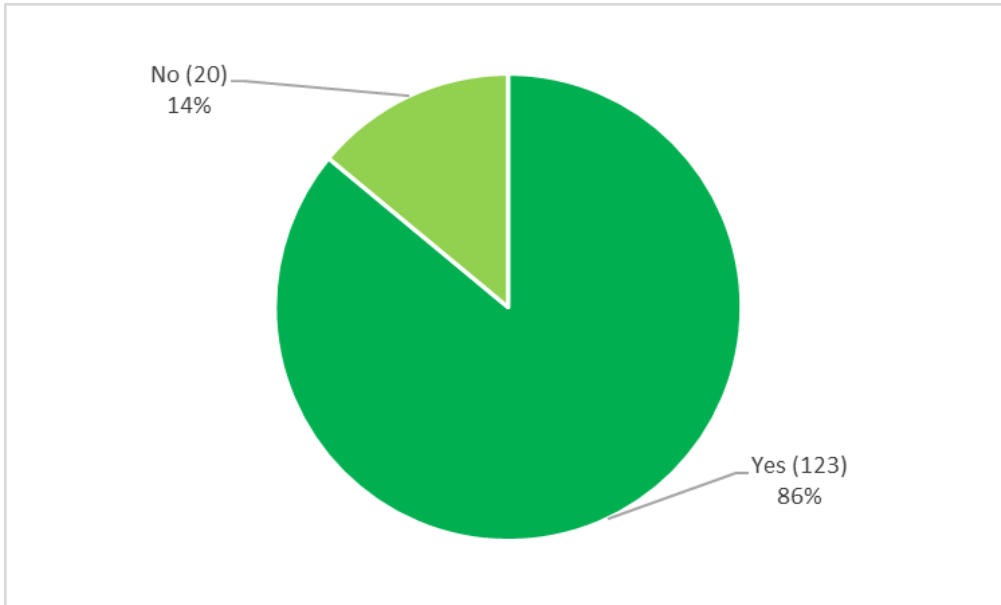
Respondents were invited to make additional comments on any of the above topics.

The comments received have been categorised into the following groups to show common themes:

| Comments | Count |
|---|-------|
| Requests for more general waste, recycling, and dog bins | 15 |
| Maintenance of paths, and conditions during wet weather | 8 |
| Comments about drug related activities | 3 |
| Comments about dog fouling | 3 |
| More/better signage | 3 |
| The car park is in poor condition | 1 |
| Need an enclosed space for dogs | 1 |
| A café would be good | 1 |
| More trees around some of the main paths (southern parts) | 1 |

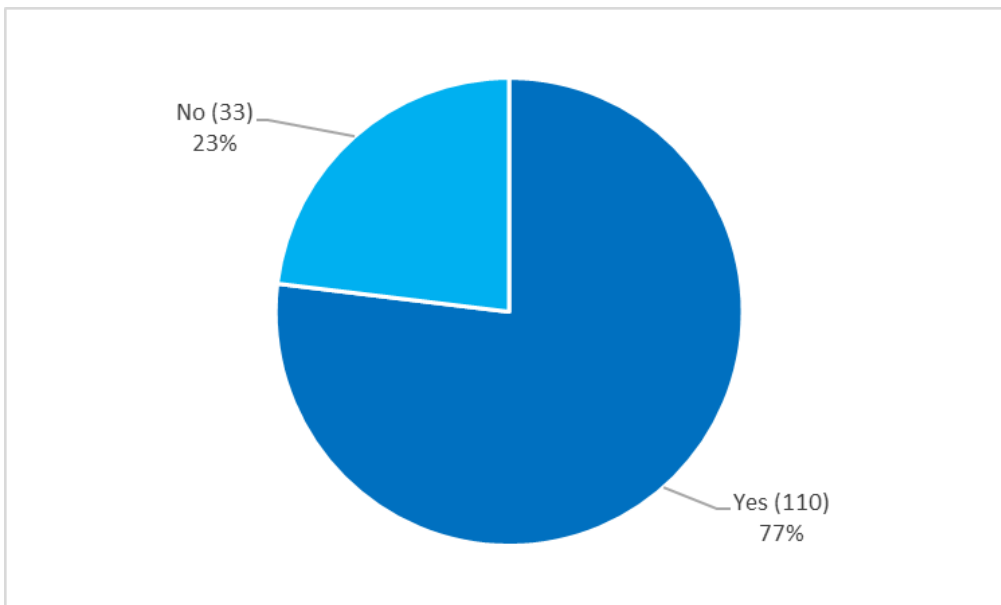
| | |
|--|---|
| It is the most wonderful amenity | 1 |
| It's a safe place for me to wait while my father attends hospital | 1 |
| Abandoned scooters and trolleys | 1 |
| Lots of dog waste bins don't have the foot peddle to open | 1 |
| Needs a proper path connecting lake field and west area | 1 |
| It can be difficult to walk dogs off lead with children's clubs going on | 1 |
| Overgrown fields, which could have been turned into meadows | 1 |
| Playground facilities lacking for 3-5 years either too young or too old | 1 |
| Safety is comprised mainly because of maniacs on bikes | 1 |
| More playgrounds for children around the park are needed | 1 |
| More benches are needed | 1 |
| Swing gates broken catches | 1 |
| The option to park for free at Chanterelle is brilliant | 1 |
| The park has been a lifeline for me during lockdown | 1 |
| Lack of seating in denser wooded areas, making it less accessible | 1 |
| Toilets do not smell very pleasant | 1 |
| Travellers being allowed to camp in the park over the last few years | 1 |
| Visitor Centre hours poor | 1 |
| Would be good to have free basketball / tennis / squash places to play | 1 |
| Park is getting over used due to expansion of housing estates | 1 |

8. Are you aware that the park is staffed and run by Colchester Borough Council?



86% of visitors reported that they Knew the Park is Looked after by Colchester Borough Council staff. This is a similar figure to 2019 where 88% of respondents were aware that the park is looked after by council staff.

9. Are you aware that volunteers help look after the Country Park?



77% of respondents said they Were Aware that Volunteers Help take care of the Park. This figure is higher than that recorded in 2019, where only 67% were aware of the volunteers.

10. Please give us your top 3 priorities for the future of the Country Park:

Priority 1

| Priorities | Count |
|--|-------|
| Improved paths | 14 |
| More bins throughout the park | 12 |
| More dog waste bins | 12 |
| Better signs | 7 |
| Less litter | 5 |
| Help wildlife | 4 |
| More benches throughout park | 4 |
| Better activities for kids | 3 |
| More/better toilets | 3 |
| Better/dedicated cycle paths | 3 |
| Improve playground area | 3 |
| Keep it natural, open and safe | 3 |
| Better access | 2 |
| Café | 2 |
| Car park repairs | 2 |
| Enclosed areas for dogs | 2 |
| More car parking spaces | 2 |
| Better food choices in visitor centre | 2 |
| More bird feeders | 2 |
| A warden to fine people for littering | 1 |
| Adult gym equipment. | 1 |
| An adventure trail for children, like in Great Notley or Thetford forest | 1 |
| Crackdown on anti-social behaviour | 1 |
| Better security to stop travellers using the park | 1 |
| Children stop doing drugs | 1 |

| | |
|--|---|
| Conserving the balance of habitats | 1 |
| Continued free parking | 1 |
| Continued upkeep and management of park | 1 |
| Demonstrate crafts | 1 |
| Do more to protect the bluebells and anatomies. | 1 |
| Drug users moved on from benches near Hillridge | 1 |
| Ensure it stays as a country park and doesn't get built on | 1 |
| Fitness facilities for adults | 1 |
| Increase biodiversity | 1 |
| Inspiring environmental action (education / experiences / resources around the park) | 1 |
| More accessible routes | 1 |
| More education signs about the environment for people to learn from | 1 |
| More events or activities for both adults and children | 1 |
| More greenery | 1 |
| More protection for ground nesting birds | 1 |
| More sculptures/art/statues. Nice stuff to look at. | 1 |
| More set events/activity | 1 |
| More trees / foliage | 1 |
| More trees, along paths and groups dotted around | 1 |
| Protection of this open space from developers | 1 |
| Public right of way | 1 |
| Drug dealers need to be arrested. They attract people from far away. I have seen them park | 1 |
| Squirrels field to be mowed completely more often rather than overgrown | 1 |
| To remain a green space - no land used for development | 1 |
| More visitor centre open hours | 1 |
| Safety | 1 |

Priority 2

| Priorities | Count |
|--|-------|
| More dog waste bins | 16 |
| More bins throughout the park | 8 |
| Better signs | 7 |
| Improved paths | 5 |
| Wildlife | 5 |
| Less litter | 4 |
| More rangers and visibility of staff around the park | 4 |
| Safer cyclists / speed limits | 3 |
| Cleanliness | 2 |
| More benches throughout park | 2 |
| Outdoor gym or gym trail | 1 |
| Another cafe at the Chanterelle end of the park | 1 |
| Anti-social behaviour in car park at night | 1 |
| Better access into the woods from Thornton Drive | 1 |
| colour coded walks should be signposted in both directions | 1 |
| Community lead litter picks so people appreciate the woods | 1 |
| Continued support of health, education and nature groups | 1 |
| Cycling | 1 |
| Do not build houses | 1 |
| Dog centred play area/sensory area for anyone (touch, see, smell) | 1 |
| Dog walkers prosecuted for dog fouling and MUST be on a lead around lake | 1 |
| Dogs on lead | 1 |
| Enclosed areas for dogs | 1 |
| Enhanced cafe facilities (sandwiches, vegan options etc.) | 1 |
| Fewer artificial facilities - like play area. It's a country park with grass and trees | 1 |
| Fishing lake monitored for licences better | 1 |
| Fix the gates on chanterelle car park | 1 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Improved buggy/disabled access to/around lake | 1 |
| Increase the education / activities for children | 1 |
| Keep a balance between nature and the parks use. | 1 |
| Keep it 'free' | 1 |
| Lake | 1 |
| Larger, more robust and secure bird feeding station | 1 |
| Less kids taking drugs | 1 |
| Making sure it's not over used and ruined | 1 |
| Maybe a provision for disabled | 1 |
| Maybe paint the inside of the visitor centre and have tables and chairs inside | 1 |
| More bird feeders in trees | 1 |
| More dog/waste bins in outer areas | 1 |
| More kids activities during the half terms, especially Christmas | 1 |
| More maintenance, moreover, of the furthest areas. | 1 |
| More patrol to catch/fine dogs owners who leaves dog waste behind | 1 |
| More promotion at the hospital for staff and patients. | 1 |
| Muddy puddles in walkways to be filled to allow for safe walking | 1 |
| Never let it be developed | 1 |
| Parking is with card only would like to pay with change | 1 |
| Persuade dog walkers not to hang poo bags on trees | 1 |
| Police patrolling in respect of drug use | 1 |
| Remove parking charges | 1 |
| Resurfacing of "Blind Hill" leading to Pampass Close in Highwoods | 1 |
| Slide in the kids playground | 1 |
| Some security guys to look after them | 1 |
| Some sort of trail for young children to encourage them to want to play in the open air | 1 |
| The streams are sometimes blocked | 1 |
| Toilets | 1 |
| Trim trail for kids to go on throughout the park walk | 1 |
| Up keep of facilities | 1 |

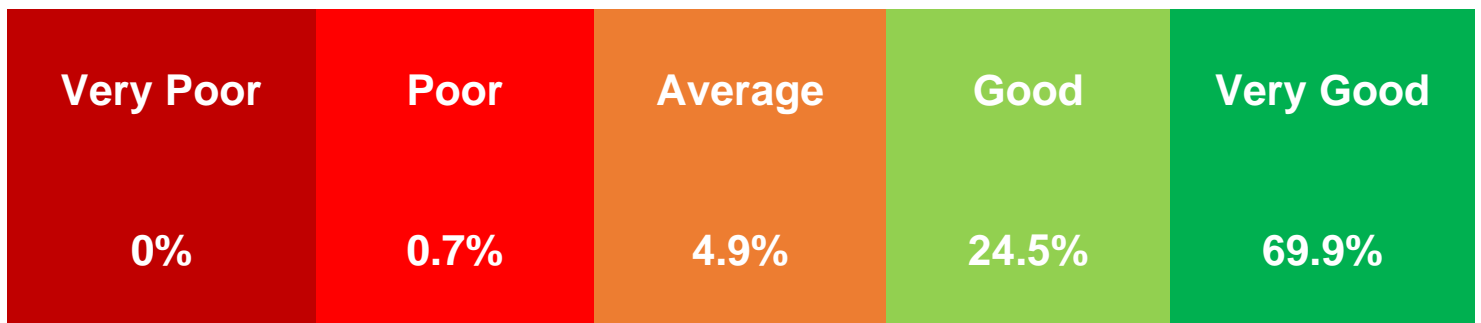
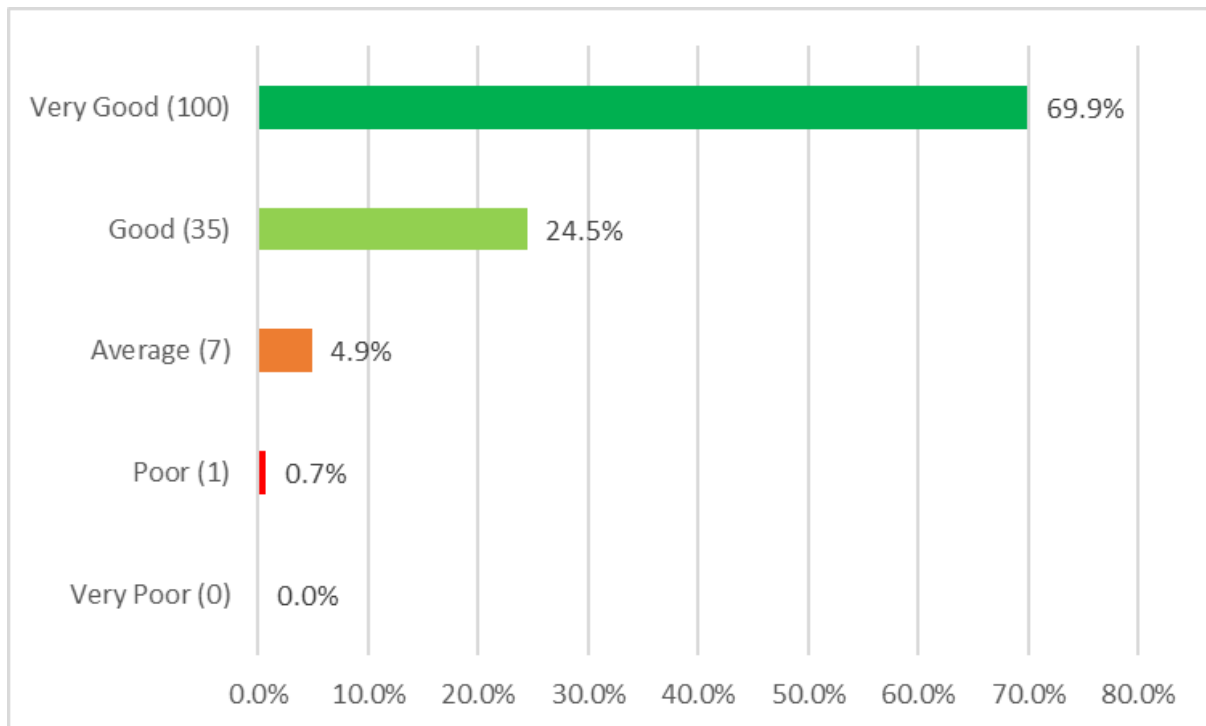
Priority 3

| Priorities | Count |
|--|-------|
| Longer visitors centre opening hours | 5 |
| Better quality cafe / food available at visitor centre | 4 |
| More bins throughout the park | 4 |
| Better signs | 3 |
| Bird boxes/hides | 2 |
| More dog waste bins | 2 |
| Free/cheap parking | 2 |
| Cleaning | 2 |
| More paths | 2 |
| Tackle littering | 2 |
| More parking spaces | 1 |
| A proper gravel path between Fieldview Close entrance and Bedford road. | 1 |
| Allow swimming in the lake! | 1 |
| Art events and natural art installations (I love the carved owl) | 1 |
| Better access in winter months with due to mud and weather creating problems | 1 |
| Better lighting on main cycle path | 1 |
| Better lighting, especially the tunnel by Broadlands | 1 |
| Chanterelle car park surface | 1 |
| Dogs being allowed free run in the summer as it's the only big open space | 1 |
| Few facilities for children | 1 |
| Fewer rats | 1 |
| Fishing to be stopped | 1 |
| Good upkeep of play areas | 1 |
| In winter it is so muddy, so any way to keep at least the main paths somehow mud free! | 1 |
| Keep it as it is in the rest of the park | 1 |
| Keep quiet atmosphere | 1 |
| Keep up the good work | 1 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Litter discarded in the woods off track needs monitoring better | 1 |
| Maintaining the path at the Bedford road entrance as it floods a lot in the winter | 1 |
| Modernised play park for kids | 1 |
| more activity areas for children | 1 |
| More and more fitness places to keep fit, boats rental on lake | 1 |
| More benches to sit on throughout the park. | 1 |
| More consideration for people in general. Nordic walkers walk 3 abreast | 1 |
| More control of bikes/scooters re irresponsible use | 1 |
| More information about the wildlife seen or to be seen each day. | 1 |
| More natural play areas | 1 |
| More play equipment on other areas of the park. Gym equipment!! | 1 |
| More publicity | 1 |
| More seating for taking a rest and taking in the sights | 1 |
| More swings in the play park for older children to enjoy | 1 |
| More things of interest along paths to encourage longer walks | 1 |
| More Waste bins and Dog bins further in could help? | 1 |
| More wildlife work, magpies have taken over the whole area. Over 100, I'd estimate. | 1 |
| Natural beauty | 1 |
| Picnics Benches around lake area | 1 |
| Play area in eastern area (Chantelle end) | 1 |
| Play area/coffee/loo near chanterelle carpark | 1 |
| Play area for kids | 1 |
| Potential for research areas | 1 |
| Promoting un-managed / re-wilded sections of the woodland to benefit biodiversity | 1 |
| Protect wildlife | 1 |
| Restriction of park run use of park, e.g., once a month | 1 |
| Resurface parking areas | 1 |
| Rustic Bad weather shelters | 1 |
| Secure entrances to stop travellers accessing it | 1 |
| Security | 1 |

| | |
|--|---|
| Some more publicity. Should be used more. | 1 |
| The forest school is in an area where dogs are off leads and could cause a problem | 1 |
| Trails | 1 |
| Trees and shrubs blocking walkways to be cut back | 1 |
| Try to retain the current character of the park. | 1 |
| Weather proof the paths for winter | 1 |
| Wildlife safety | 1 |
| Continue to keep the diversity for different types of wildlife. | 1 |

11. What is your overall impression of the Country Park?

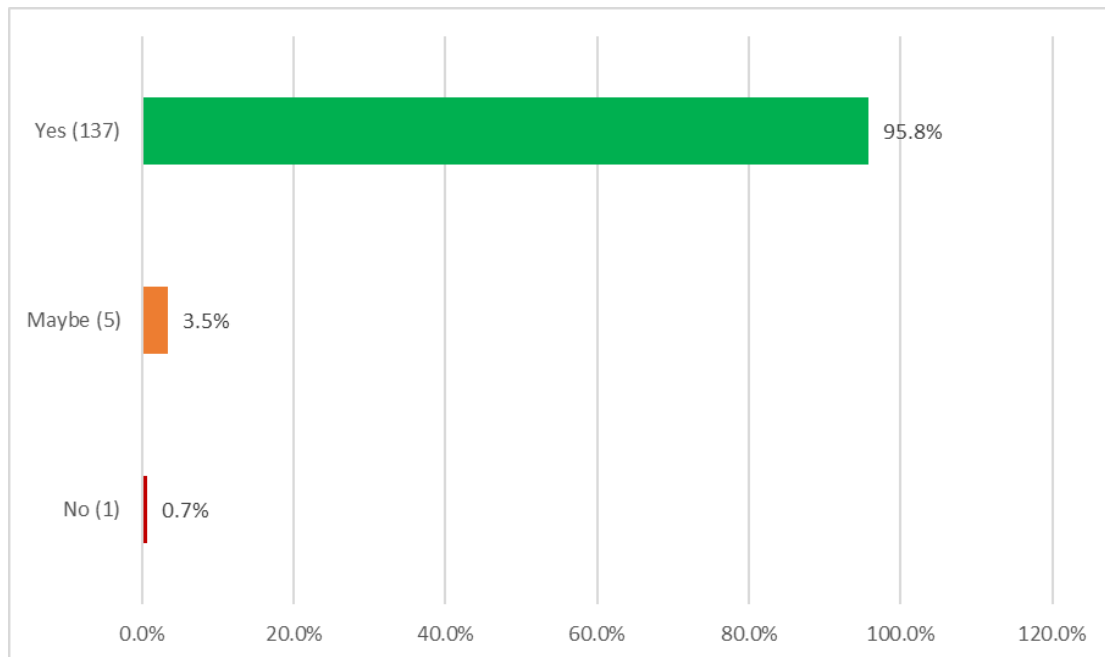


94.4% of respondents rated their overall impression of the Country Park 'Good' or 'Very Good'.

4.9% of visitors rated the park as 'Average', whilst 0.7% gave a rating of 'Poor'.

No respondents rated the park as 'Very Poor'.

12. Would you recommend visiting the Country Park to friends / relatives?



95.8% of respondents said 'Yes' they would recommend' visiting the park to friends or relatives.

In contrast, only 0.7% of visitors said 'No' they would not recommend the park.

The remaining 3.5% of respondents said 'Maybe' in answer to this question.

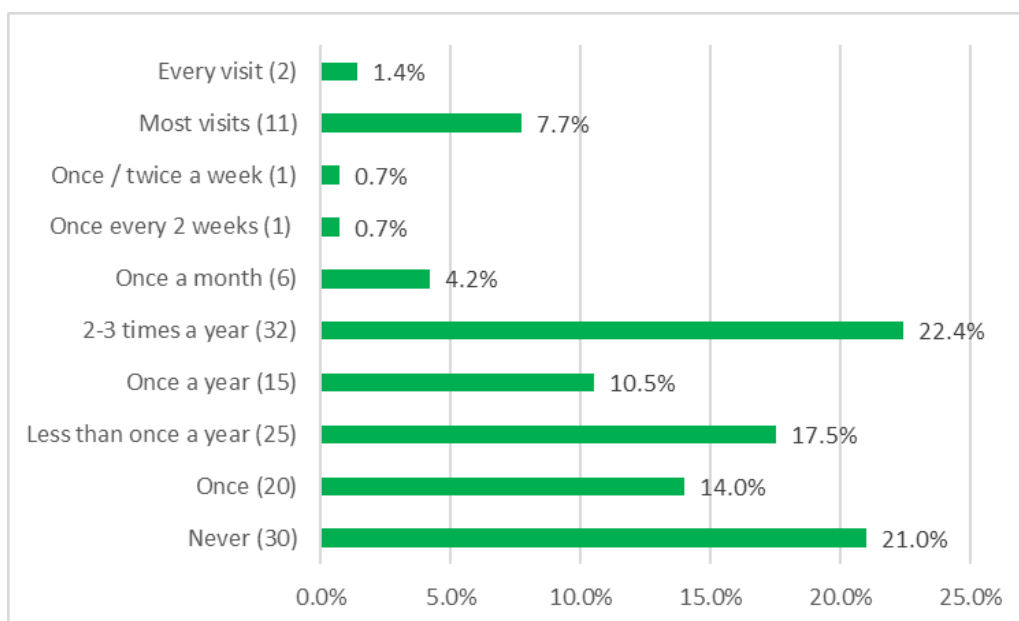
13. Do you have any further comments to make about the park and how it is managed?

The following comments were left in response to this question:

| |
|--|
| <i>A very nice place to be. Definitely under used by locals and visitors.</i> |
| <i>Always impressed that we have maintained this amenity so well. During lockdown it has become very busy with some folk appearing not to care so much about the environment and what they leave behind.</i> |
| <i>As I previously put in the priority comment, it would be great to have a dedicated off-road cycle route through the park. There is potential for upwards of 6 miles of cycle tracks that could potentially open up the park to more visitors, and maybe even a membership scheme to help support the tracks.</i> |
| <i>Best place in Colchester. Lucky to have a country park like this. Thank you.</i> |
| <i>Better visitor centre and café.</i> |
| <i>Can I help as a park ranger from next year?</i> |
| <i>Colchester's best asset in my view. Keep up the good work. Vital space for mental and physical wellbeing for all.</i> |
| <i>Could you offer park memberships that give discounts at the shop classes and maybe exclusive events to help support volunteers and park running costs. I use the park daily a decoupled love to contribute to its upkeep.</i> |
| <i>Couldn't survive without it.</i> |
| <i>Fewer nettles and brambles would be good.</i> |
| <i>Fine offenders leaving litter and/or dog poo.</i> |
| <i>Highwoods is one of the best parks in Essex, but it is not known as it deserves. Often people are unaware of the path network. Something to encourage people to walk around, moreover children, is needed.</i> |
| <i>I have never seen police patrol it.</i> |
| <i>I love Highwoods Country Park and go most days either very early or late afternoon with my puppy. She loves it too. It was very busy today which makes me happy.</i> |
| <i>I think it is good, clear walks but feels wild.</i> |
| <i>It is a gift to the local community. Surprised I see so few people in the park on a daily basis.</i> |
| <i>It is a wonderful place and a brilliant community facility and is generally really well managed.</i> |
| <i>It is very necessary to keep it accessible, highly used, good asset.</i> |
| <i>It's a great resource, and more should be made of it. I'm pleased to see the council taking an interest in it.</i> |
| <i>It's so amazing, varied flora and fauna and pockets of activity. So much bigger and better than I had previously imagined. Saved me in lockdown when my partner was having weekly chemo and SO wish I had discovered it earlier. Not sure how I missed it really but I only looked in to it when a friend posted bluebell pictures on Facebook in 2020. The bluebells are fantastic by the way! Even the car park is restful. I'm sitting in the car now.</i> |
| <i>It's a very important green space near to the town centre so should be cherished and maintained as it is.</i> |
| <i>Just one other thing, at the end of the path that comes in from Thornton Drive, there always seems to be a rubbish/bonfire pile, with hazard tape around it, it would be nice if this could be tidied up.</i> |
| <i>Keep it as a wildlife area.</i> |
| <i>Keep it natural.</i> |
| <i>Keep up the good work!</i> |

| |
|---|
| <i>Living in Highwoods I feel very privileged that I have such a beautiful place to walk my dog. You do an amazing job - just a shame there are youths who spoil it at times, especially in the summer. Think more patrol/presence of staff required at these times with authority to fine people who litter/make too much noise etc.</i> |
| <i>Location of forest schools is on dogs off lead zones. This makes it awkward for dog walkers.</i> |
| <i>Love high woods, one of our favourite places to go to in Colchester 😊</i> |
| <i>Lovely park and staff.</i> |
| <i>More bins please.</i> |
| <i>More dog waste bins required - none between entrance at Barncroft Close until you're at the visitor centre right over the other side!</i> |
| <i>I think it's well managed.</i> |
| <i>Need to look at maintenance of areas used for walking/running.</i> |
| <i>Needs a slide and also more stuff in the park for toddlers.</i> |
| <i>Park size should be maintained and protected from future development. With so many houses being built in Colchester green space is even more important.</i> |
| <i>Perhaps a post on website or somewhere clear about events going on.</i> |
| <i>Please provide more waste bins and dog waste bins. This is the single thing that spoils the beauty and safety of the park alone. I'm fed up with picking up carrier bags of litter that are left behind and picking up other dog's waste either off the ground or dog waste bags left in bushes. It's absolutely disgusting at times and so sad! I worry to walk my dog on occasions as I see broken glass on the paths and meadows. Please seriously consider this point, thank you.</i> |
| <i>Roads to car park to be improved resurfaced. Lot of pooling of water and muddy when it rains.</i> |
| <i>The main footpaths need to be assessed as to their suitability for able and less able people to use as some are in poor condition and have remained muddy even during drier parts of the summer.</i> |
| <i>This needs to be managed properly it's not how it used to be such a shame being taken over by kids alcohol and drugs!!!!</i> |
| <i>We are very lucky to have this facility - it has kept me going during lockdown and is a valuable public open space. May it always remain so.</i> |
| <i>We have lived here for 9 years, and the park has deteriorated a lot in that time, it is dirty, the grass is not cut, generally looking unkempt. Presumably you are doing your best, but it is obviously too overwhelming to cope with the resources that you have.</i> |
| <i>We live nearby and visit Highwoods frequently. Our children love to explore the woods and visit the wildlife, especially the cows. The only thing we feel really lets it down are the play facilities for young children. The limited equipment in the small play area isn't interesting or appropriately challenging and only engages our children for a few minutes (aged 1 and 3 years old). They prefer the equipment in the larger play area, however most of it is too big or too challenging for them at this age. It feels like a hugely missed opportunity and we'd certainly visit more often if the play facilities were improved. We'd love to have a decent playground nearby, we really enjoy the one at castle park but it's quite a long walk from Mile End for small children (our nearest is Wordsell way and that's poor, too).</i> |
| <i>We love coming here with a picnic. It's a nice place to have a walk away from the traffic. We visit every other week, even in the winter.</i> |
| <i>We visit every day and view the park as a brilliant amenity. We consider ourselves very fortunate to have it on our doorstep. The Council and Rangers should be congratulated for maintaining it so well in these difficult times.</i> |
| <i>We'll done to staff and volunteers for helping somewhere I love and need for my mental health stay so well kept, thank you.</i> |

14. How often do you / have you visited the Visitor Centre when in the park?



| Frequency of Visit | Count | Percentage |
|-----------------------|-------|------------|
| 2-3 times a year | 32 | 22.4% |
| Never | 30 | 21.0% |
| Less than once a year | 25 | 17.5% |
| Once | 20 | 14.0% |
| Once a year | 15 | 10.5% |
| Most visits | 11 | 7.7% |
| Once a month | 6 | 4.2% |
| Every visit | 2 | 1.4% |
| Once every 2 weeks | 1 | 0.7% |
| Once / twice a week | 1 | 0.7% |

22.4% of respondents (32 people) said that they visit the Visitor Centre '2-3 times a year'.

21.0% (30 people) stated that they have 'Never' visited the Visitor Centre.

17.5% (25 people) visit the Visitor Centre 'Less than once a year'.

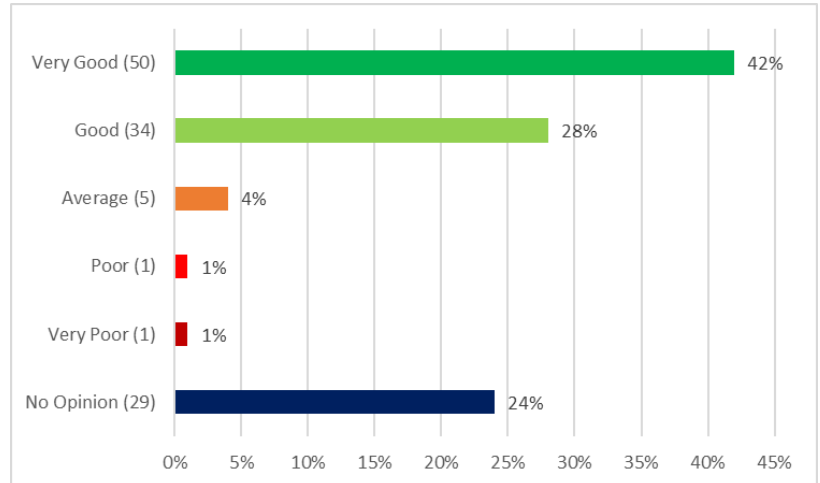
14.0% (20) people have visited the Visitor Centre 'Once'.

Only 2.8% (4 people) visit the Visitor Centre 'Every visit', 'Once every 2 weeks' or 'Once/twice a week'.

15. What do you think about the facilities and services offered by the Visitor Centre?

Staff and Volunteers

- 42% said VERY GOOD
- 28% said GOOD
- 4% said AVERAGE
- 1% said POOR
- 1% said VERY POOR
- 24% said NO OPINION



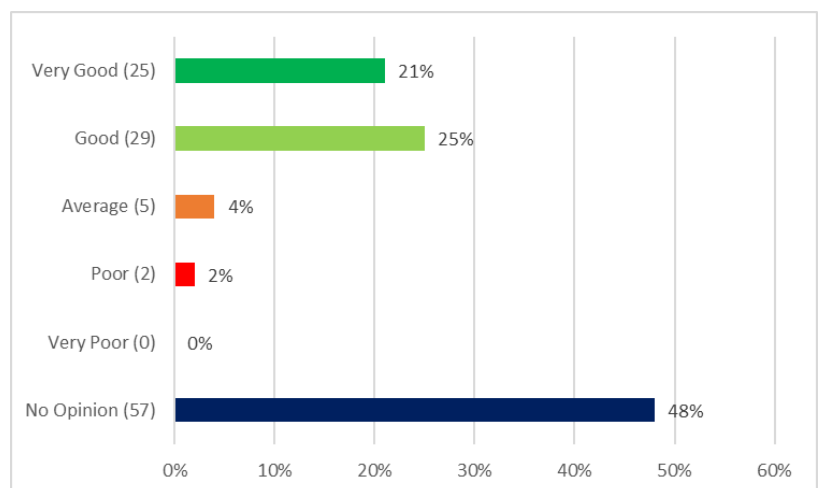
70% of respondents rated Staff and Volunteers as 'Good' or 'Very Good'.

4% rated them as 'Average', whilst only 2% gave a rating 'Poor' or 'Very Poor'.

The remaining 24% had 'No Opinion'.

Card Payments

- 21% said VERY GOOD
- 25% said GOOD
- 4% said AVERAGE
- 2% said POOR
- 0% said VERY POOR
- 48% said NO OPINION

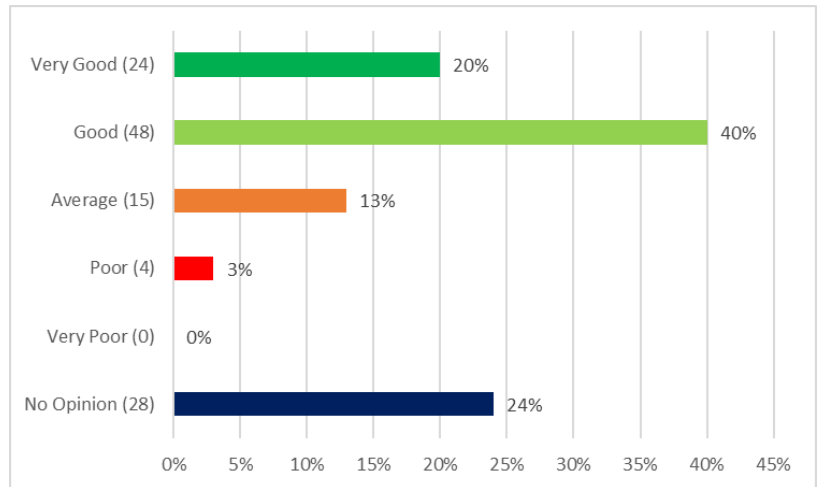


46% of respondents rated Card Payments as 'Good' or 'Very Good'.

4% rated this as 'Average', whilst 2% gave a rating of 'Poor'. No respondents rated this as 'Very Poor'. The remaining 48% had 'No Opinion'.

Toilet Facilities

- 20% said VERY GOOD
- 40% said GOOD
- 13% said AVERAGE
- 3% said POOR
- 0% said VERY POOR
- 24% said NO OPINION



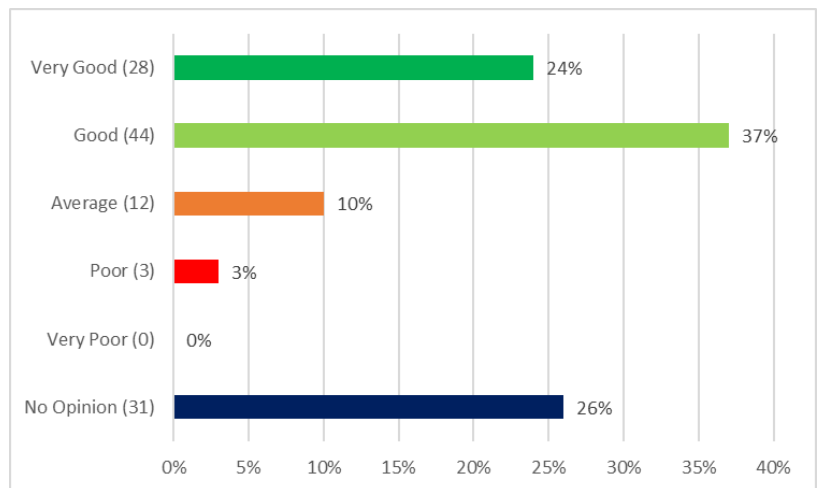
60% of respondents rated Toilet Facilities as ‘Good’ or ‘Very Good’.

13% rated the facilities as ‘Average’, whilst 3% rated these as ‘Poor’. No respondents gave a ‘Very Poor’ rating.

The remaining 24% of respondents had ‘No Opinion’.

Information about the Park

- 24% said VERY GOOD
- 37% said GOOD
- 10% said AVERAGE
- 3% said POOR
- 0% said VERY POOR
- 26% said NO OPINION



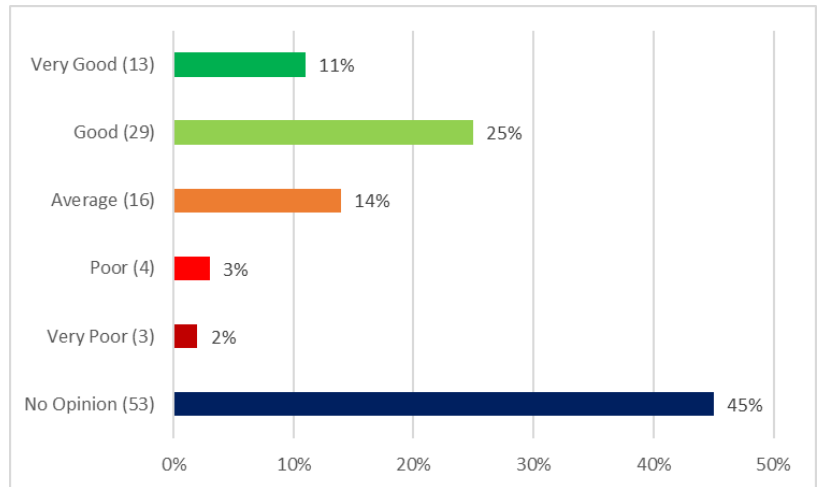
61% of respondents rated Information about the Park as ‘Good’ or ‘Very Good’.

10% rated this as ‘Average’, whilst 3% gave a rating of ‘Poor’. No respondents rated this as ‘Very Poor’.

The remaining 26% had ‘No Opinion’.

Information about other Local Attractions

- 11% said VERY GOOD
- 25% said GOOD
- 14% said AVERAGE
- 3% said POOR
- 2% said VERY POOR
- 45% said NO OPINION



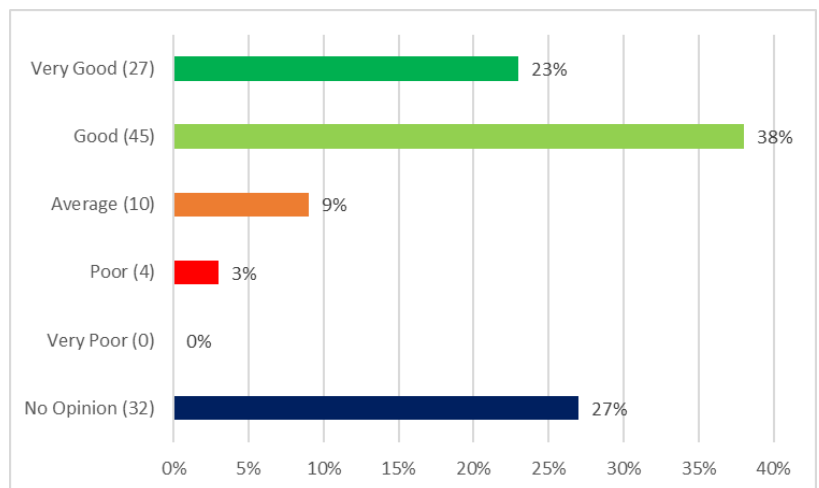
36% of respondents rated Information about other Local Attractions as ‘Good’ or ‘Very Good’.

14% rated this as ‘Average’, whilst 5% gave a rating of ‘Poor’ or ‘Very Poor’.

The remaining 45% had ‘No Opinion’.

Recycling and Waste Facilities

- 23% said VERY GOOD
- 38% said GOOD
- 9% said AVERAGE
- 3% said POOR
- 0% said VERY POOR
- 27% said NO OPINION



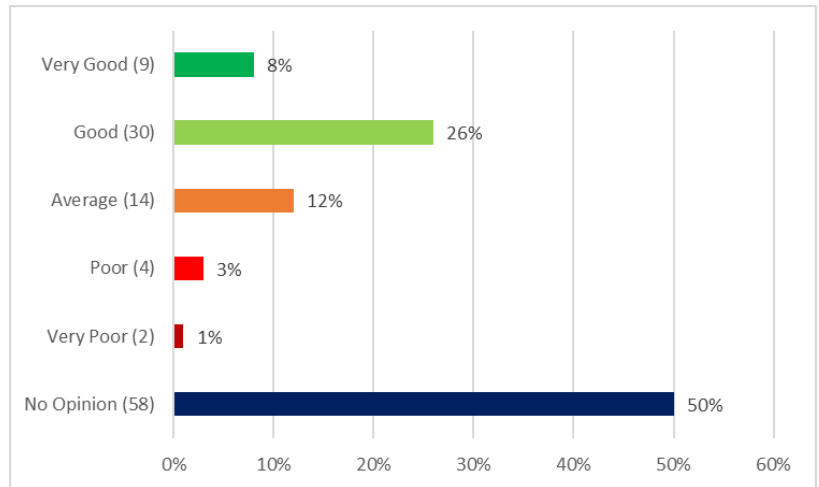
61% of respondents rated Recycling and Waste Facilities as ‘Good’ or ‘Very Good’.

9% rated this as ‘Average’, whilst 3% gave a rating of ‘Poor’. No respondents rated this as ‘Very Poor’.

The remaining 27% of respondents had ‘No Opinion’.

Range of Souvenirs

- 8% said VERY GOOD
- 26% said GOOD
- 12% said AVERAGE
- 3% said POOR
- 1% said VERY POOR
- 50% said NO OPINION



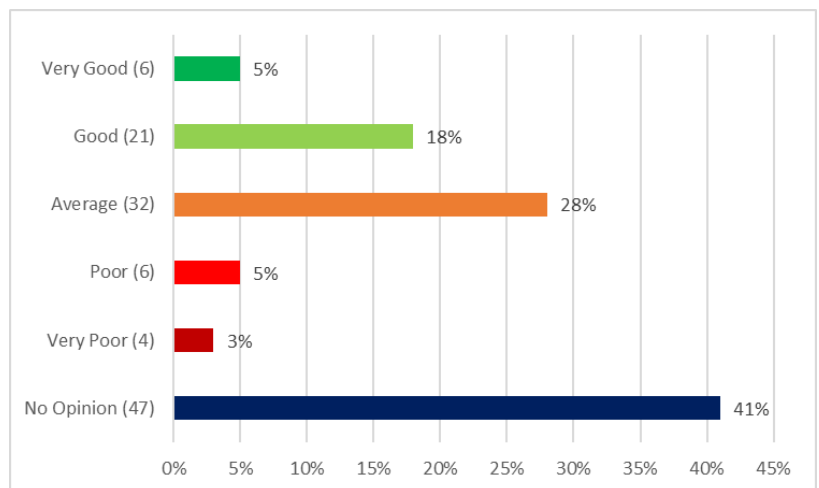
34% of respondents rated Range of Souvenirs as 'Good' or 'Very Good'.

12% rated this as 'Average', whilst 4% gave a rating of 'Poor' or 'Very Poor'.

The remaining 50% of respondents had 'No Opinion'.

Food Provision

- 5% said VERY GOOD
- 18% said GOOD
- 28% said AVERAGE
- 5% said POOR
- 3% said VERY POOR
- 41% said NO OPINION



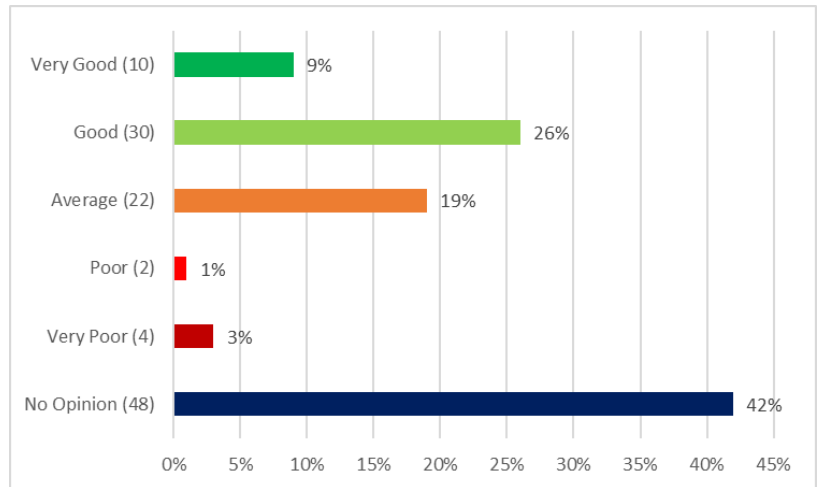
23% of respondents rated Food Provision as 'Good' or 'Very Good'.

28% rated this as 'Average', whilst 8% gave a rating of 'Poor' or 'Very Poor'.

The remaining 41% had 'No Opinion'.

Drink Provision

- 9% said VERY GOOD
- 26% said GOOD
- 19% said AVERAGE
- 1% said POOR
- 3% said VERY POOR
- 42% said NO OPINION



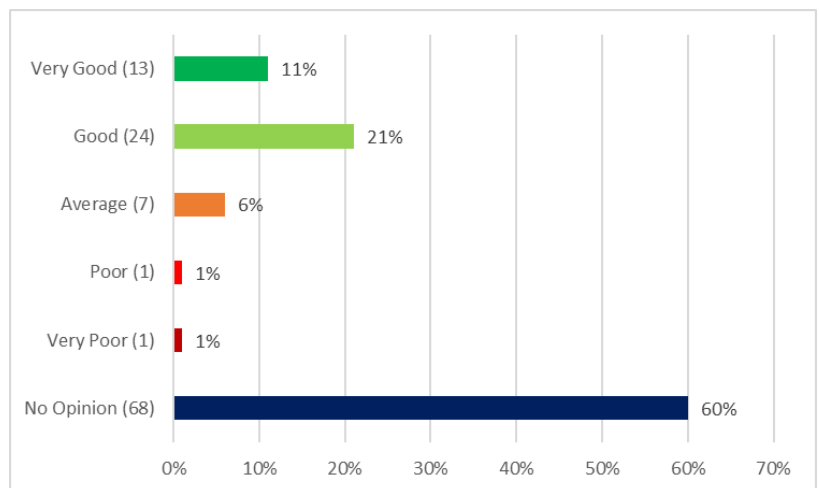
35% of respondents rate Drink Provision at 'Good' or 'Very Good'.

19% rate this as 'Average', whilst 4% gave a rating of 'Poor' or 'Very Poor'.

The remaining 42% of respondents had 'No Opinion'.

Dr Maclean's Study Area

- 11% said VERY GOOD
- 21% said GOOD
- 6% said AVERAGE
- 1% said POOR
- 1% said VERY POOR
- 60% said NO OPINION



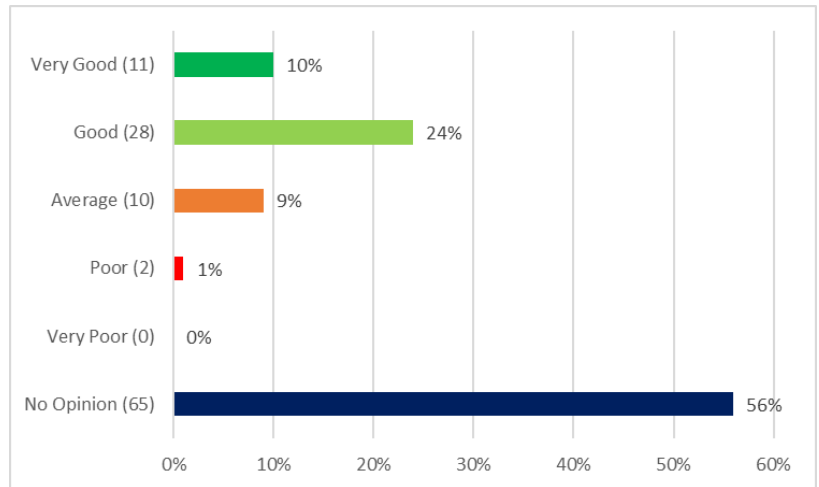
32% of respondents rated Dr Maclean's Study Area as 'Good' or 'Very Good'.

6% rated this as 'Average', whilst 2% gave a rating of 'Poor' or 'Very Poor'.

The remaining 60% of respondents had 'No Opinion'.

Displays about Other Sites the Rangers Look After

- 10% said VERY GOOD
- 24% said GOOD
- 9% said AVERAGE
- 1% said POOR
- 0% said VERY POOR
- 56% said NO OPINION



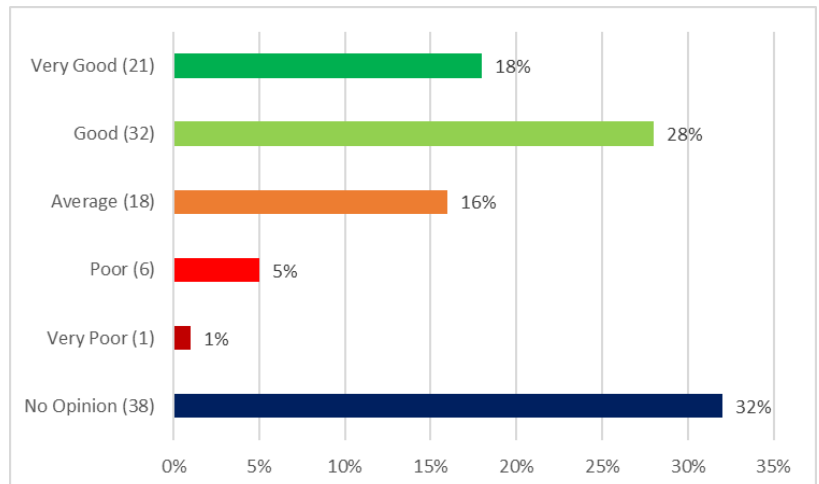
34% of respondents rated Displays about Other Sites the Rangers Look After as 'Good' or 'Very Good'.

9% rated this 'Average', whilst 1% gave a rating of 'Poor'. No respondents rated this as 'Very Poor'.

The remaining 56% of respondents had 'No Opinion'.

Provision for Dogs

- 18% said VERY GOOD
- 28% said GOOD
- 16% said AVERAGE
- 5% said POOR
- 1% said VERY POOR
- 32% said NO OPINION



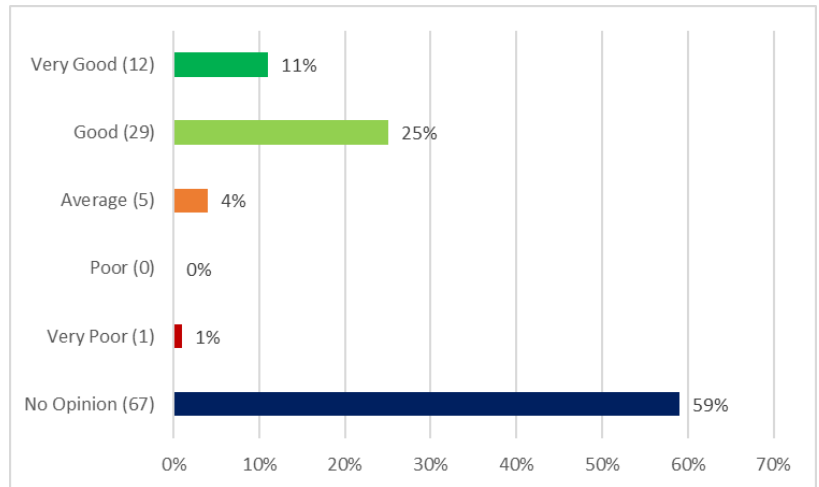
46% of respondents rated Provision for Dogs at 'Good' or 'Very Good'.

16% rate this as 'Average', whilst 6% gave a rating of 'Poor' or 'Very Poor'.

The remaining 32% of respondents had 'No Opinion'.

Wildlife Camera

- 11% said VERY GOOD
- 25% said GOOD
- 4% said AVERAGE
- 0% said POOR
- 1% said VERY POOR
- 59% said NO OPINION



36% of respondents rate the Wildlife Camera as 'Good' or 'Very Good'.

4% rated this as 'Average', whilst 1% gave a rating of 'Very Poor'. No one rated this 'Poor'.

The remaining 59% of respondents had 'No Opinion'.

Additional Comments:

| |
|--|
| <i>Cafe opens too late for a lot of walkers.</i> |
| <i>Difficult to access shop and drinks if you have a dog. Perhaps a kiosk would be better accessible from outside.</i> |
| <i>Dog water bowls are often soiled. Might it better to have a fountain style water stop?</i> |
| <i>Dogs on leads areas not enforced!</i> |
| <i>I think overall the Visitor Centre is very good.</i> |
| <i>It's a long time since I visited the visitor centre, so my scores are from memories of a couple of years ago.</i> |
| <i>Like the reduction in plastic bottles.</i> |
| <i>More recycling bins, limited snacks and drinks.</i> |
| <i>Need more toilets.</i> |
| <i>Possibly give a better score if Visitor Centre opened more often.</i> |
| <i>Toilets could be open longer hours in summer.</i> |
| <i>Unaware of the vast majority of things mentioned. Is it advertised?</i> |
| <i>Visitors centre closed today. Have not visited for a long time.</i> |
| <i>Would be nice if it could be open a little more in winter season. Always excellent for a drink or snack for children.</i> |

16. Please rank your top 3 priorities for the future of the Visitor Centre:

Respondents were asked to rank their top 3 priorities for the Visitor Centre from a list of provided options.

| Priority 1 | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|-------|
| Rank | Priorities | Count |
| 1 st | More Hot Drink Choices | 43% |
| 2 nd | Improved Catering Provision | 41% |
| 3 rd | Information Displays | 41% |
| 4 th | Improved Children's Facilities | 37% |
| 5 th | Improved Accessibility | 33% |
| 6 th | Indoor Seating Area | 32% |
| 7 th | Wider Range of Retail Items | 29% |
| 8 th | Interactive Displays | 27% |

| Priority 2 | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|-------|
| Rank | Priorities | Count |
| 1 st | Interactive Displays | 41% |
| 2 nd | Improved Children's Facilities | 37% |
| 3 rd | Improved Catering Provision | 34% |
| 4 th | Information Displays | 32% |
| 5 th | More Hot Drink Choices | 27% |
| 6 th | Indoor Seating Area | 26% |
| 7 th | Wider Range of Retail Items | 14% |
| 8 th | Improved Accessibility | 12% |

| Priority 3 | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|-------|
| Rank | Priorities | Count |
| 1 st | Interactive Displays | 32% |
| 2 nd | Improved Children's Facilities | 26% |
| 3 rd | Improved Catering Provision | 25% |
| 4 th | Information Displays | 27% |
| 5 th | More Hot Drink Choices | 30% |
| 6 th | Indoor Seating Area | 42% |
| 7 th | Wider Range of Retail Items | 57% |
| 8 th | Improved Accessibility | 55% |

'More hot drink choices' was the top priority amongst the respondent group, with 43% of visitors selecting this as their first priority.

'Improved catering provision' received the second highest selections as a first priority choice (41%), and the third highest selection for a second and third priority choice (34% and 25% respectively).

Other notable priorities included 'Information displays' and 'Improved children's facilities, both of which appeared in the top 4 for first, second and third preference priorities.

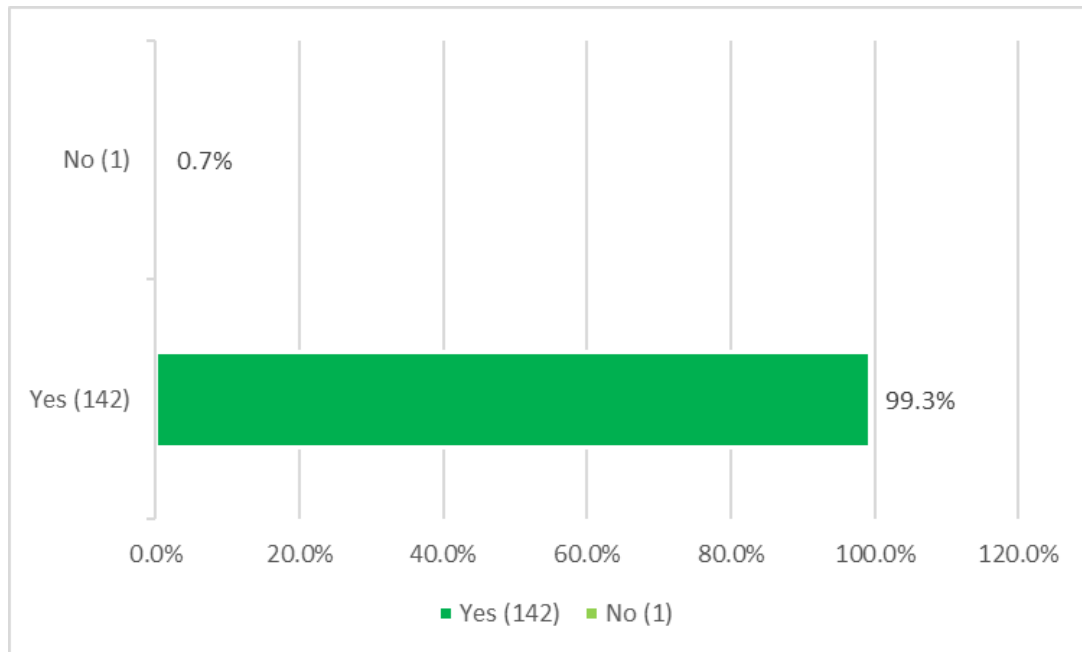
17. Do you have any further comments to make about the Visitor Centre?

Respondents provided the following comments:

| |
|---|
| <p><i>I will make a must do next time and I will be able to comment.</i></p> |
| <p><i>It could've such a social hub after a lovely walk if there was better seating and the option of more inside space and good food facilities.</i></p> |
| <p><i>It's a good place to visit but it needs an update. It needs to be painted with new tables and chairs with a wider range of food and gifts.</i></p> |
| <p><i>Larger areas for schools and outside visitors.</i></p> |
| <p><i>Leaving dogs outside to head in can sometimes be tricky. Wonder if there could be an outdoor kiosk with a window of sorts.</i></p> |
| <p><i>Not really familiar with it.</i></p> |
| <p><i>Open more often please.</i></p> |
| <p><i>Other than occasionally using the toilets we do not use the visitor centre.</i></p> |
| <p><i>Overall, I find the Visitor Centre good.</i></p> |

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

A. Are you a UK Resident?



B. Where do you live?

| | Postcode Area | Count | % | | Postcode Area | Count | % |
|-----------------|-------------------|-------|-------|------------------|---------------|-------|------|
| 1 st | CO4 | 88 | 61.5% | 7 th | Other | 3 | 2.1% |
| 2 nd | Prefer not to say | 17 | 11.9% | 8 th | CO6 | 2 | 1.4% |
| 3 rd | CO1 | 11 | 7.7% | 9 th | CO9 | 2 | 1.4% |
| 4 th | CO3 | 8 | 5.6% | 10 th | CO10 | 1 | 0.7% |
| 5 th | CO2 | 6 | 4.2% | 11 th | CO11 | 1 | 0.7% |
| 6 th | CO7 | 3 | 2.1% | 12 th | CO15 | 1 | 0.7% |

61.5% of respondents (88 people) travelled from the local area (CO4) to the park. This was the most popular area this year as well as in 2019.

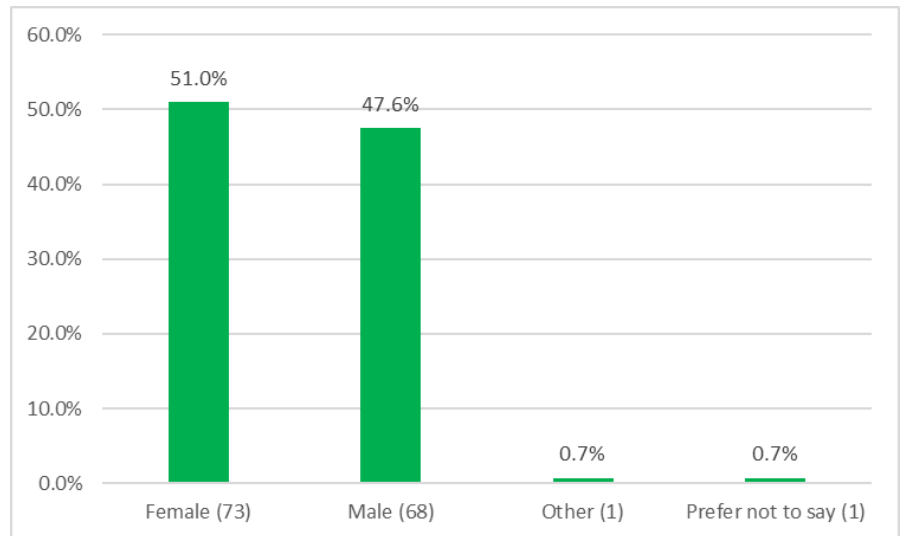
CO1 was the second most common area with 7.7% (11 people) from this area.

Other Postcode Areas:

Respondents came from two other postcode areas in addition to those shown above, these were CM2 and CM0.

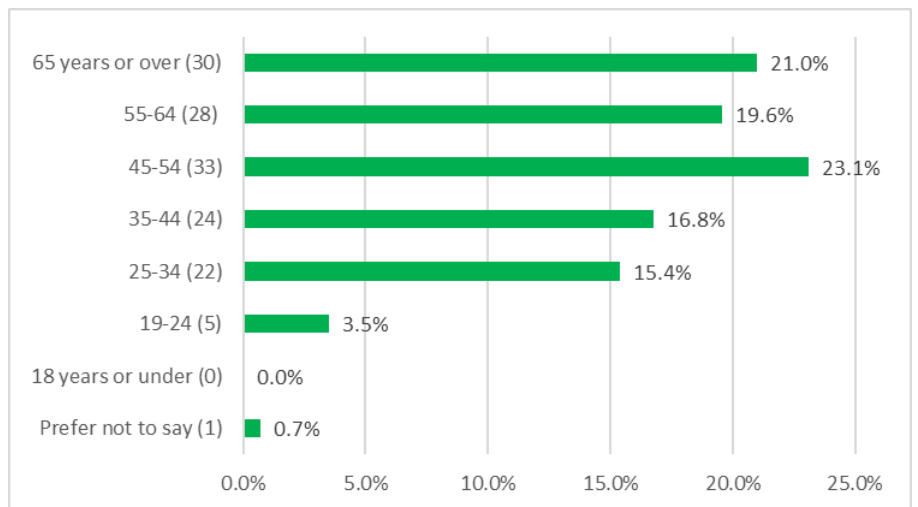
C. Gender

- Female = 51.0%
- Male = 47.6%
- Other = 0.7%
- Prefer not to say = 0.7%



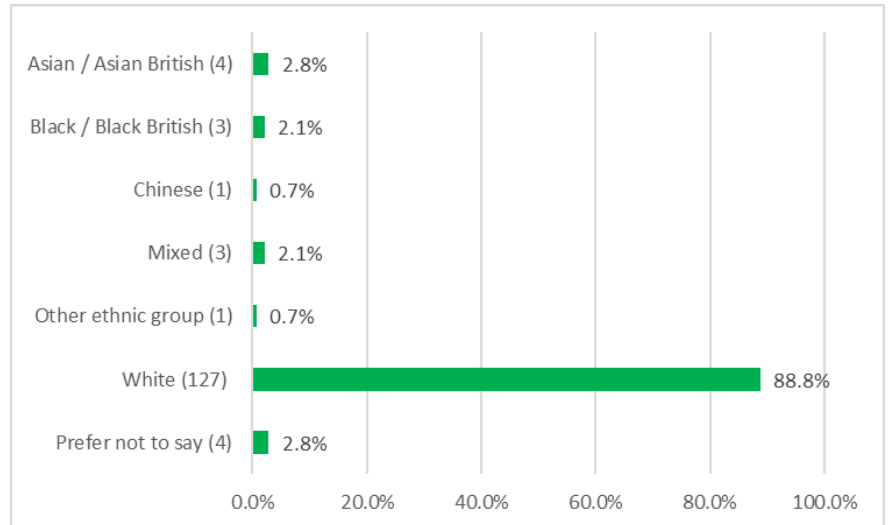
D. Age Group

- 65 years and over = 21.0%
- 55–64 years = 19.6%
- 45-54 years = 23.1%
- 35-44 years = 16.8%
- 25-34 years = 15.4%
- 19-24 years = 3.5%
- 18 years and under = 0%
- Prefer not to say = 0.7%



E. Ethnicity

- Asian / Asian British = 2.8%
- Black / Black British = 2.1%
- Chinese = 0.7%
- Mixed = 2.1%
- Other ethnic group = 0.7%
- White = 88.8%
- Prefer not to say = 2.8%



F. Do you have a Disability

- Yes = 11.9%
- No = 86.0%
- Prefer not to say = 2.1%

