



The Future of Greenwood Park (Condensed version)

A community survey carried out by Breakthrough Communications & Strategies Limited, on behalf of St Stephen Parish Council. Report date 20th October 2023.



BREAKTHROUGH
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SPECIALISTS IN CONNECTING COUNCILS WITH THEIR COMMUNITIES

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1 Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

St Stephen Parish Council ("The Council") commissioned Breakthrough Communications & Strategies Limited ("Breakthrough Communications") to carry out a community survey to ascertain how local residents currently utilise the open spaces and facilities located within Greenwood Park and to ascertain their views on potential future changes and improvements.

1.2 Survey Process

Breakthrough Communications met with Officers and Members of the Council to better understand what they wanted to achieve by carrying out a survey. This included exploring what the council wanted to understand from users and residents, as well as logistical options for promoting the survey to a wide a group of residents as possible.

Breakthrough Communications explored the specific questions the council wanted to ask, and refined these to ensure these contained both open and closed questions, as well as ensuring the language used was accessible, avoided jargon and did not contain any sense of bias. The Council also utilised the survey to ask some further open-ended questions about the future of other open space assets.

In order to be as open, inclusive and transparent as possible, the council agreed that the survey should be carried out in both printed and digital formats and promoted through as many communications channels as possible.

No questions - on either the printed survey or digital survey - were mandatory. Responses would also be anonymous, however it was agreed to ask for three classification questions, in order for the council to better understand which voices it was hearing from. It was therefore agreed to ask for a respondent's Post Code, age and number of years lived in the parish.

It was agreed that a printed copy of the survey should be distributed to local households, which was carried out by the council's contractor, with printed surveys also available from the council directly. The digital version of the survey was made available through a page on the council's website.

The survey was promoted heavily by the Council and by Breakthrough Communications:

- On the council's own social media (organic)
- Through geo-targeted paid-for social media (paid for)

- On the council's website
- Through the door drop of surveys that took place to local households
- Local councillors using their own networks to encourage residents to take part
- Use of a large, printed vinyl banner
- Use of posters in noticeboards and sent to local venues

The survey went live on Tuesday 5th September 2023 and concluded on Wednesday 4th October 2023.

1.3 Results

In total, there were 717 completed responses to the survey, which were broken down by the following methods of receipt:

- 408 responses completed using the digital survey, which would have been accessed by the council's own social media, its website, and from scanning QR codes on posters and on paper copies of the survey
- 89 responses completed from geo-targeted social media, where Breakthrough Communications utilised paid-for posts on both Instagram and Facebook platforms to target anyone active on those platforms and living within the near vicinity of the parish
- 220 responses completed using the paper survey

2. Results by Survey Question

Survey Section 1: How you currently use Greenwood Park

Q1 Survey Respondent Demographics

Q1a Post Code

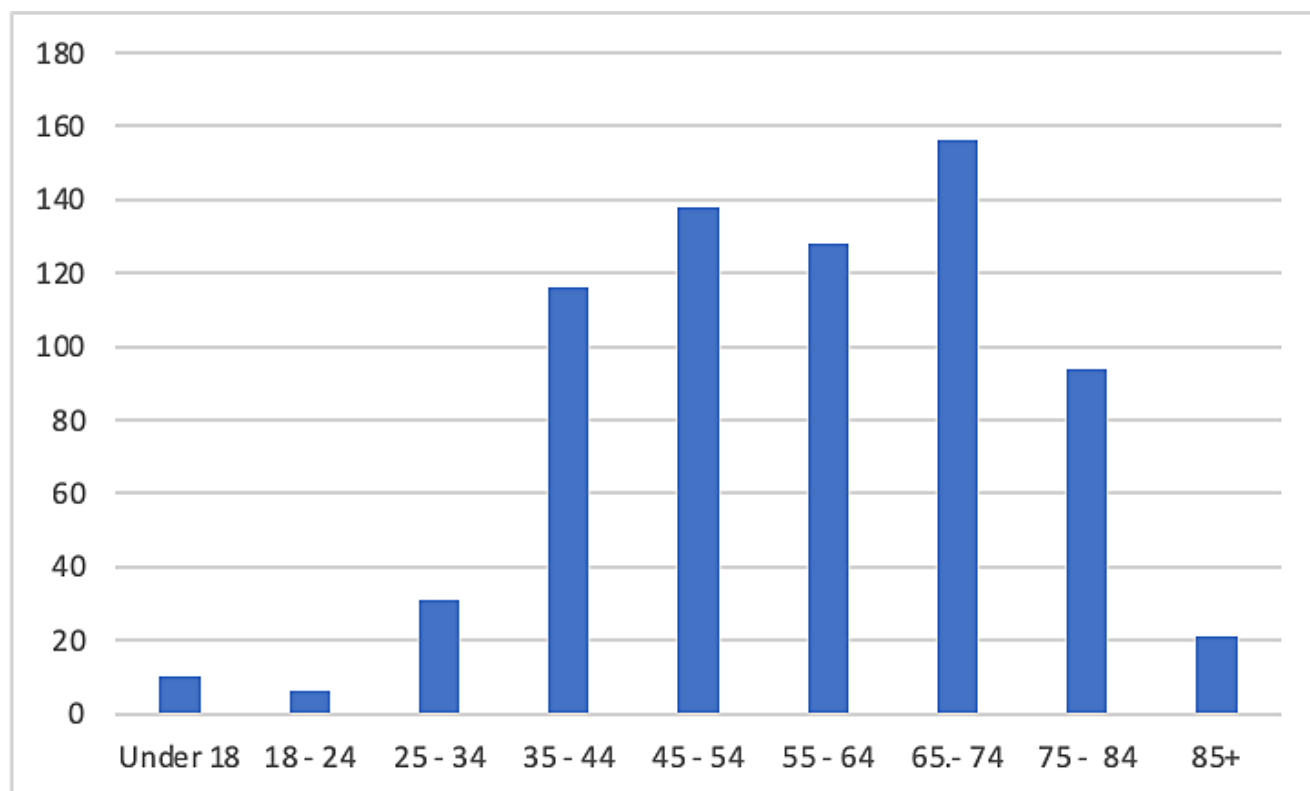
Of the 717 completed responses, **610** were identified as being wholly within the parish boundary, based on the completed Post Code they supplied when cross-matched against a list of Post Codes supplied by the council.

Of the remaining **107** responses that were not in the parish boundary area, **14** entries did not supply their Post Code at all.

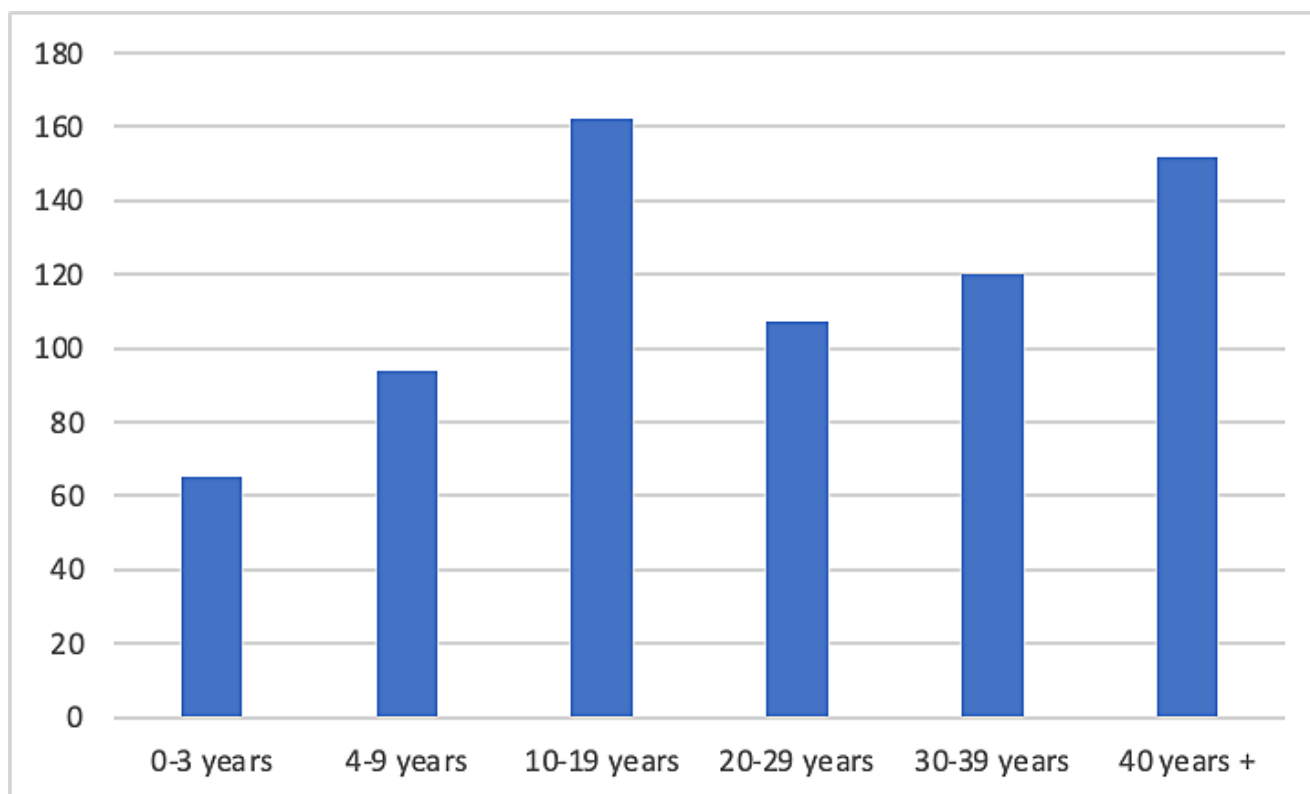
Of the remainder **93** entries:

- **27** Post Codes were only partially entered, and so we cannot verify their exact location, although **25** of these did contain either AL/1/2/3 or WD25 Post Codes;
- Of the remaining **66** responses, one entry contained an invalid Post Code and three were located within the Hemel Hempstead area (within the HP1 and HP2 areas);
- Of the remaining **62** responses, all were Post Codes that contained AL1, AL2, AL3, AL4 or WD25.

Q1b: Age



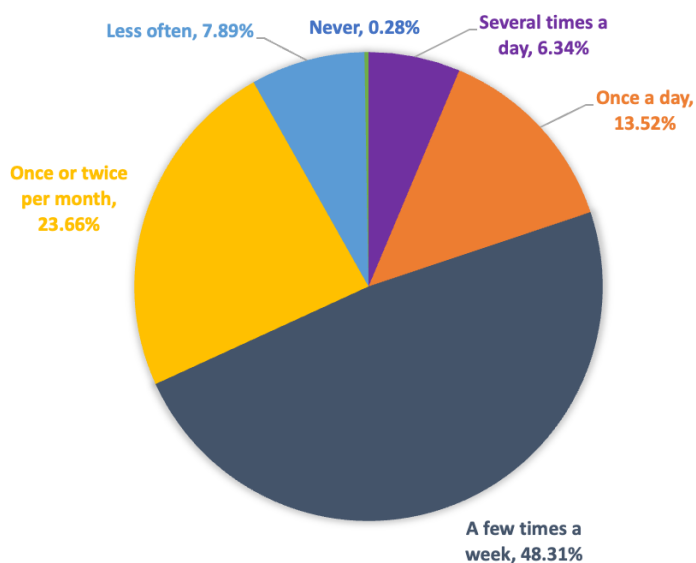
Q1c: How many years have you lived in the parish?



Q2: How often do you currently visit Greenwood Park?

(Choose one answer)

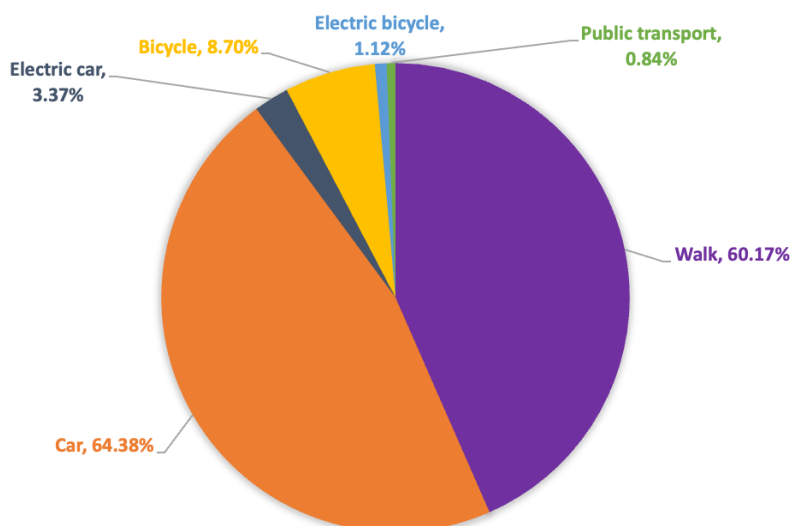
Answered: 710 Skipped: 7



Q3: If you do visit Greenwood Park, how do you generally get there?

(Choose as many as you wish)

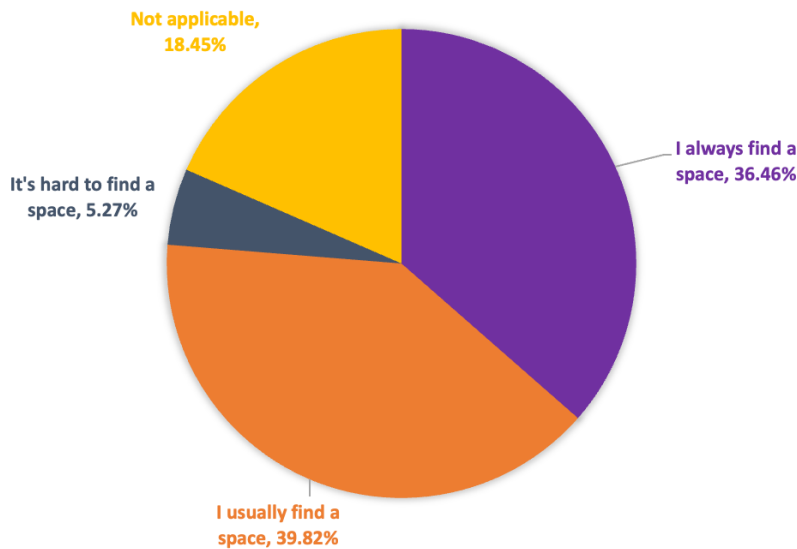
Answered (unique respondents): 713 Skipped: 4



Q4: If you drive to Greenwood Park, how easy is it to find a car parking space?

Choose one answer.

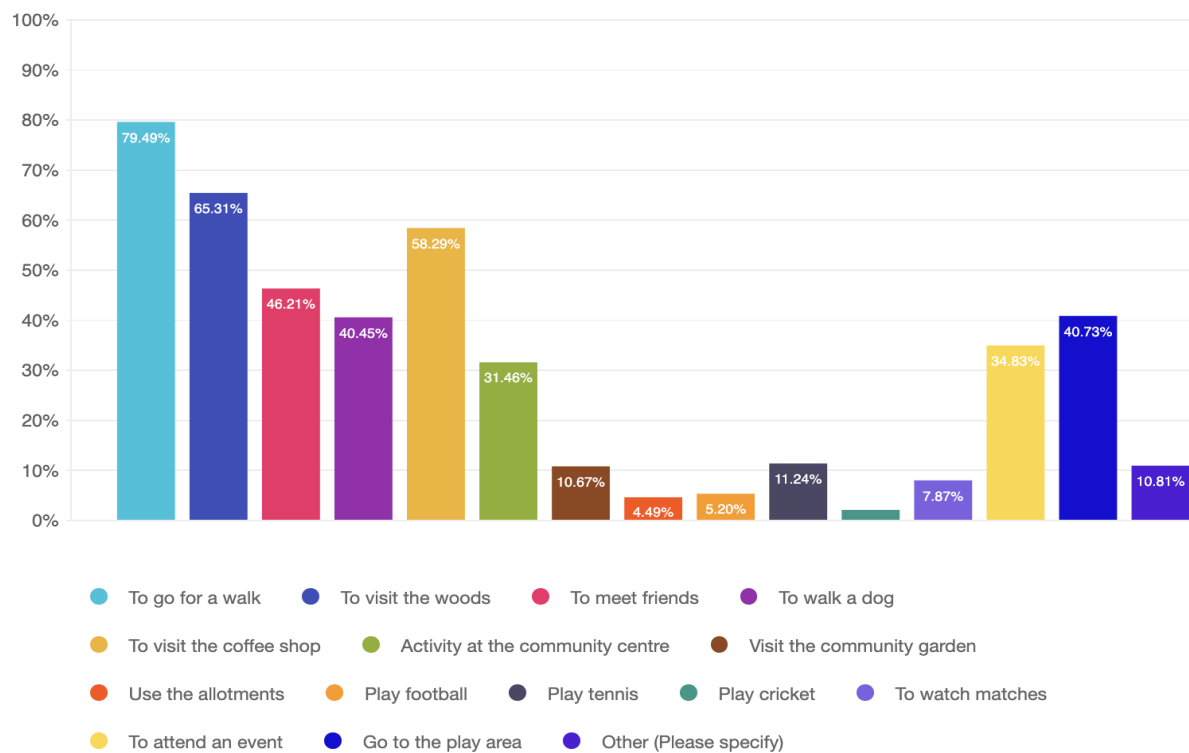
Answered: 683 Skipped: 34



Q5: There are currently a range of facilities at Greenwood Park. Which facilities do you generally make use of?

Choose as many as you wish.

Answered (individual respondents): 712 Skipped: 5

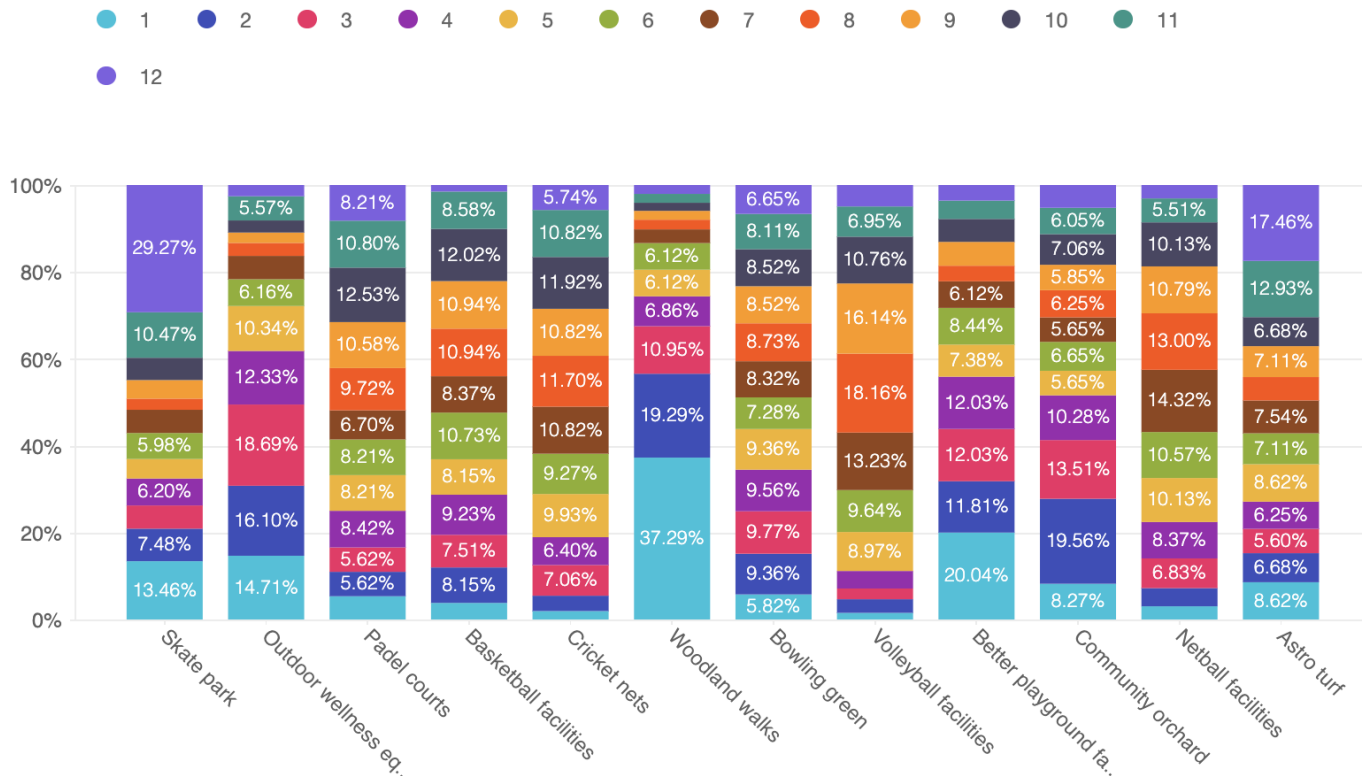


Section 2: Additional facilities at Greenwood Park

Q6: Which additional outdoor facilities would you most like to see at the park, that would encourage you or your children to visit more often?

Please rank in order of personal importance, where '1' = most important, '12' = least important. You can only use each number once when ranking.

Answered: 615 Skipped: 102



Of the results above, the first preferences were distributed as follows:

- Woodland walks: 201 (37.3%)
- Better playground equipment: 95 (20%)
- Outdoor wellness equipment: 74 (14.7%)
- Skate park 63 (13.5%)
- Community orchard 41 (8.3%)
- Astro turf 40 (8.6%)
- Bowling green 28 (5.8%)
- Padel courts 25 (5.4%)
- Basketball facilities 18 (3.9%)
- Netball facilities 14 (3.1%)
- Cricket nets 9 (2%)
- Volleyball facilities 7 (1.6%)

Q7: Do you have any additional ideas for outdoor facilities? If so, please tell us in the box below:

256 respondents provided feedback.

Summary of responses as follows:

Park Improvements:

1. Better fencing, especially near roads for dog safety.
2. More seating areas, shaded areas, and picnic tables.
3. Improve paths and lighting for safety.
4. Maintain natural grass and woodland areas; resist over-development.
5. More waste and recycling bins, especially for dog waste.
6. Environmental considerations like avoiding AstroTurf and promoting wildlife habitats.

Play & Sports Facilities:

1. Splash parks or water play areas.
2. Outdoor gym equipment or fitness areas.
3. Facilities for older children (skate park, basketball hoops, bouldering wall).
4. Jogging/running tracks with distance markers.
5. Multi-purpose sports areas (for basketball, netball, lacrosse, etc.)

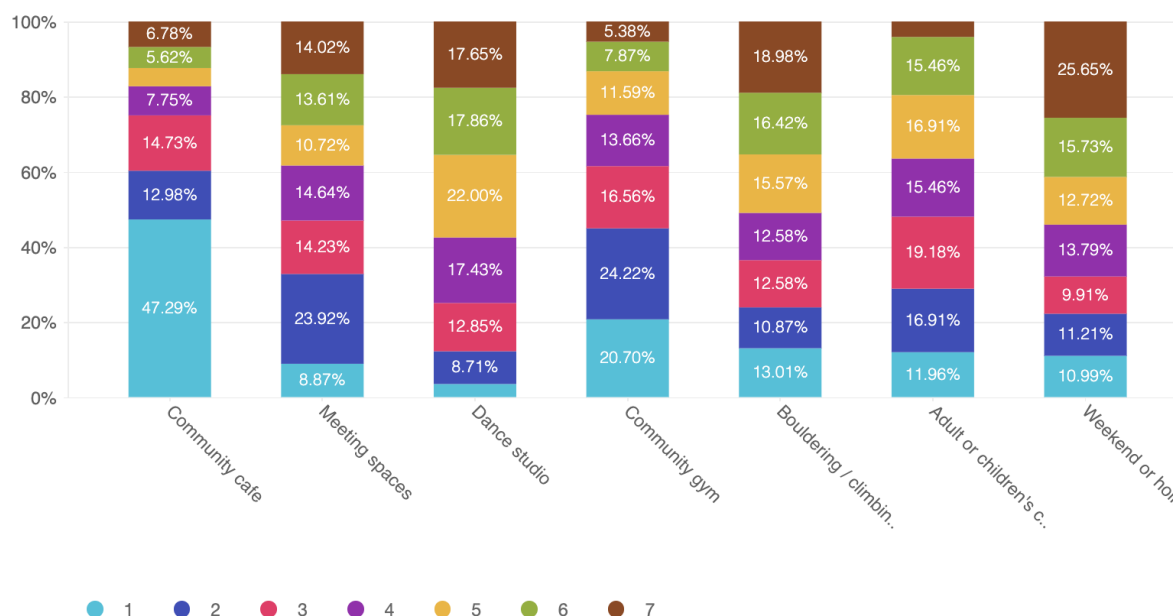
Community & Social Areas:

1. Community gardens or vegetable gardens.
2. Shelters or covered areas, especially near the café.
3. Designated dog areas, possibly including a dog agility course.
4. Areas that promote interaction like "chat benches" or social seating.
5. Youth-centric facilities or youth clubs.

Q8: Which additional indoor facilities would you most like to see at the park, that would encourage you or your children to visit more often?

Please rank in order of personal importance, where '1' = most important, '7' = least important. You can only use each number once when ranking.

Answered: 573 Skipped: 144



Of the results above, the first preferences were distributed as follows:

- Community cafe 244 (47.3%)
- Community gym 100 (20.7%)
- Bouldering / climbing wall 61 (13%)
- Adult or children's community groups or facilities 58 (11.96%)
- Weekend or holiday pay-per-play children's facilities or activities 51 (10.99%)
- Meeting spaces 43 (8.87%)
- Dance studio 16 (3.49%)

Q9: Do you have any additional ideas for indoor facilities? If so, please tell us in the box below:

184 respondents provided feedback.

Summary of responses as follows:

Community and Family Services:

- Year-round puppy classes and child doggy etiquette education.
- Stay and play facilities for toddlers and caregivers to enhance community ties.
- A cafe providing work experience for disabled individuals and a sensory room for SEN children.
- Indoor activity centre for children, history wall, local trade stalls, and subsidised café offerings for retirees.

Sports and Fitness Facilities:

- Covered tennis and badminton courts, indoor netball, and basketball facilities for all-year use.
- Fitness activities including classes (yoga, Pilates, dance, indoor cricket), fitness shops, and equipment rental.
- Establishment of new sports like paddle courts, golfing facilities, and pickleball.

Infrastructure and Facility Improvements:

- Air conditioning in halls and fitness areas, shower facilities, room storage, and better kitchen facilities.
- Expanded cafe with indoor seating, accessible toilets with better maintenance, and a dog-friendly environment.
- Car workshop, office space with internet, printing hub, and charging stations for electronics.

Environmental and Outdoor Considerations:

- Emphasis on wildlife, ecology centres, and the extension of community gardens and shared greenhouses.
- Retention of outdoor spaces and opposing additional buildings in park areas to preserve natural settings.
- Improvement of air quality by adding woodlands and enforcing boundaries for pet safety near traffic.

Community and Social Engagement:

- Various clubs and social groups for all ages, including mothers and babies, teens, and pensioners.
- Facilities for exhibitions, crafts, book swaps, therapy sessions, and music rehearsals.
- Spaces for recovery meetings, community pubs/bars, and social events to foster community interaction.

Education and Arts:

- Study and library spaces, technology support, and artistic activities like exhibitions and music.
- Space for educational workshops and environmental teaching, especially relating to local history and arts.

Accessibility and Inclusion:

- Inclusive activities for individuals with disabilities, visual impairments, and additional support for older residents.
- Accessible event spaces and facilities for a broad range of community functions and activities.

Recreation and Entertainment:

- Indoor options for soft play, trampolines, and sports like table tennis and squash.
- Entertainment areas with stages for comedy, bands, and social gatherings, including areas for relaxation and reading.

Cafes and Concessions:

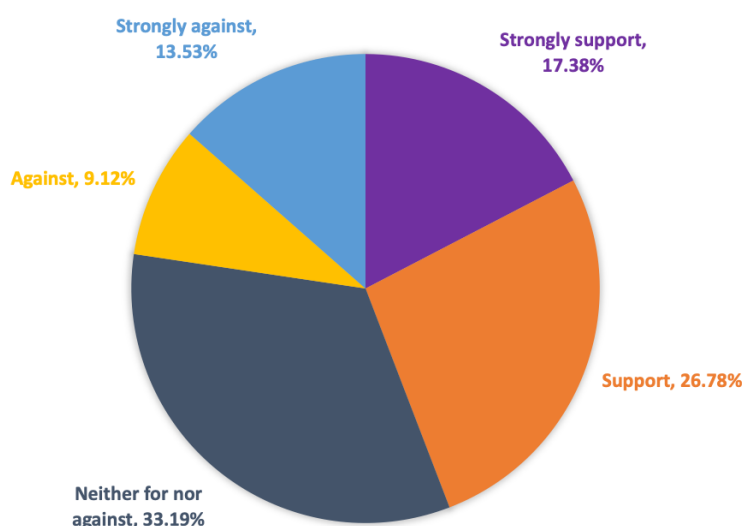
- Community-run cafes, possibly dog-friendly, with options for rentable space.
- Consideration of current external catering facilities to support local businesses.

Miscellaneous:

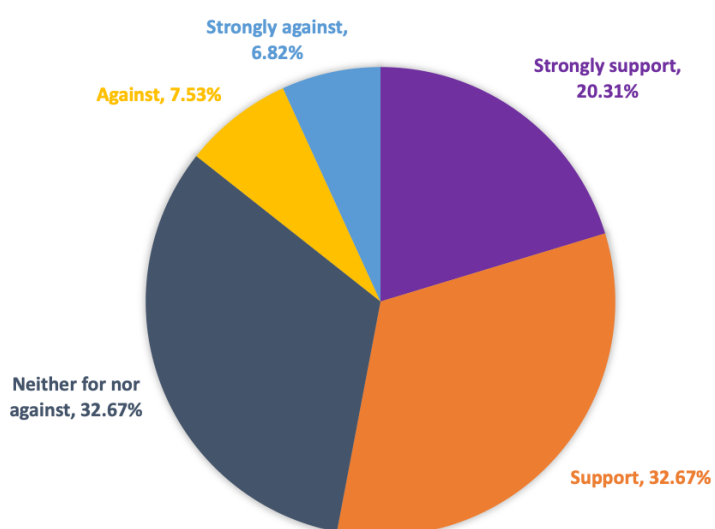
- Enhanced lighting, soundproofing in meeting rooms, and air conditioning for comfort during events.
- Emphasis on not expanding to preserve park serenity and focus on nature, wildlife, and community well-being.

Q10: The Council has to consider how best to pay for and maintain free-of-charge facilities and services. Please consider to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements.

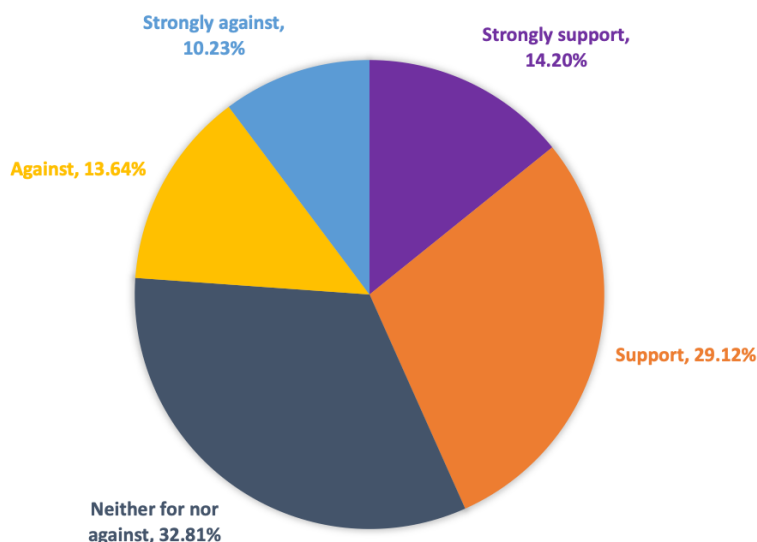
Q10a: We are seeing there are a lack of multi-use pitches locally and demand is high. How would you feel about a floodlit pay-per-play multipurpose Astroturf pitch, expected to initially be 2/3rd funded by 3rd parties?



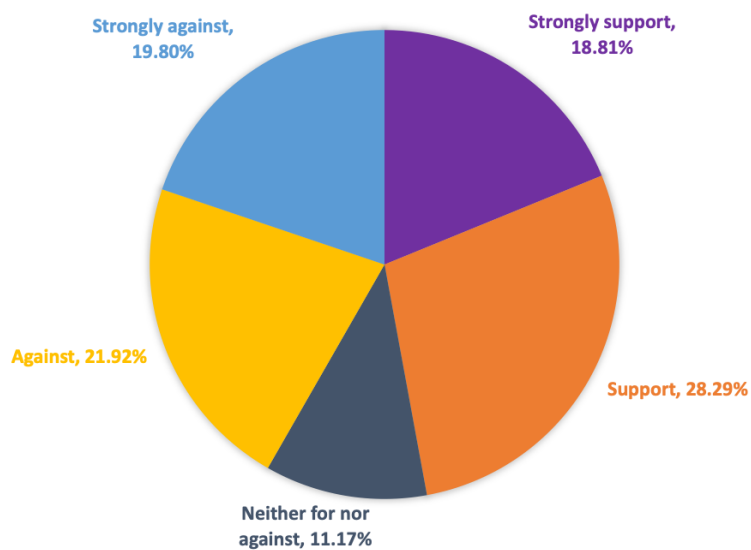
Q10b: How would you feel about a full-sized indoor sports court to run co-current activities or a full court for basketball / netball / volleyball etc?



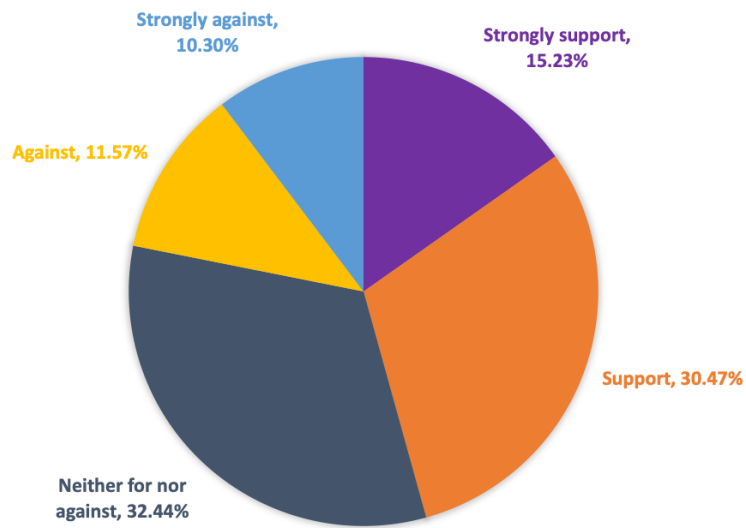
Q10c: How would you feel about the current buildings being extended or moved?



Q10d: How would you feel if we had a car park that was free or reduced fees for registered residents of the Parish, but visitors coming from outside the parish had to pay?

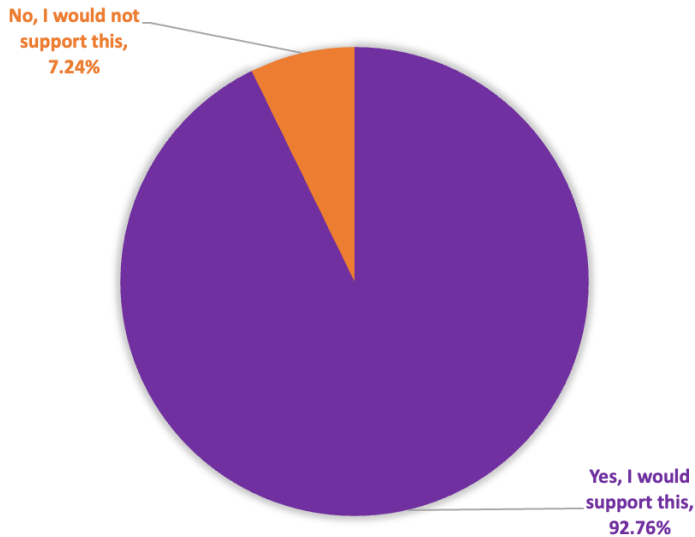


Q10e: How would you feel about electric car chargers being installed at the park?



Survey Section 3: Events at Greenwood Park

Q11: Spaces at Greenwood Park Community Centre are hired out for a variety of activities and events. Would you be in favour of St Stephen Parish Council organising community support activities and groups, for example a lunch club, dementia social group, youth drop in, IT workshops, etc?



(Follow-up question)

Please share any specific ideas you have for council-organised events.

Responses can be summarised as:

Community and Social Support:

- Establish support groups for mental health, dementia, parents, caregivers, special educational needs (SEN), autism, LGBTQ+, youth.
- Organize social activities for the elderly, such as lunch clubs, IT workshops, and dementia cafes.
- Facilitate support for families with young children through playgroups and family centres.
- Offer socialisation opportunities for isolated elderly residents and provide support for families dealing with dementia.

Youth Engagement:

- Develop a youth club for social and educational activities, including those for home-schooled and disabled/intellectually disabled children.
- Arrange teen-focused activities such as boot camps, discos, and gardening clubs.
- Create safe spaces for toddlers to teenagers to interact and learn in a supervised

environment.

- Provide real-life work experience opportunities and hands-on groups for youth.

Health and Wellness:

- Offer yoga therapy sessions for various groups, including SEN and mental health sessions.
- Conduct outdoor well-being events, fitness classes tailored to specific demographics (e.g., new parents, the elderly), and nature courses.
- Partner with local healthcare providers for on-site physiotherapy, occupational therapy, and health surgeries.
- Hold mental health awareness and wellness activities, possibly with health and well-being related classes.

Educational and Skill Development:

- Facilitate workshops on practical skills, from electrical repairs to building birdhouses and gardening.
- Host educational support sessions such as tutoring for children who have fallen behind, first aid courses, and computer literacy classes for seniors.
- Provide platforms for life coaching and foreign language meetups.

Recreation and Leisure:

- Organize various clubs such as bridge, book clubs, chess, and singles meetups.
- Arrange regular events like quiz nights, bridge club meetings, and board game evenings.
- Offer themed music nights/disco, arts and craft workshops, and environmental awareness activities.
- Set up a community garden for allotments and outdoor activities.

Cultural and Community Events:

- Host small social festivals with food and music, possibly incorporating a carol service.
- Plan market stalls, car boot sales, and clothes swap events.
- Propose community singing groups and band concerts for local entertainment.
- Conduct litter clear-ups and beautification projects like planting shrubberies and creating flowered areas.

Sustainable and Accessible Infrastructure:

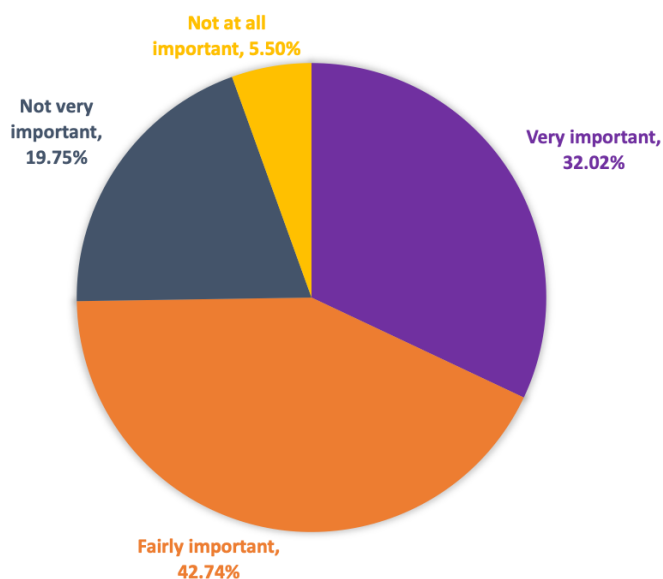
- Address the need for sufficient parking while considering environmental impact and promoting non-car travel.
- Ensure essential facilities like toilets are in place for larger events.
- Consider the integration of safe, fenced areas in parks for pets and children.
- Discuss the potential for a parish council to provide venues for events, rather than organizing them directly.

Community Integration and Funding:

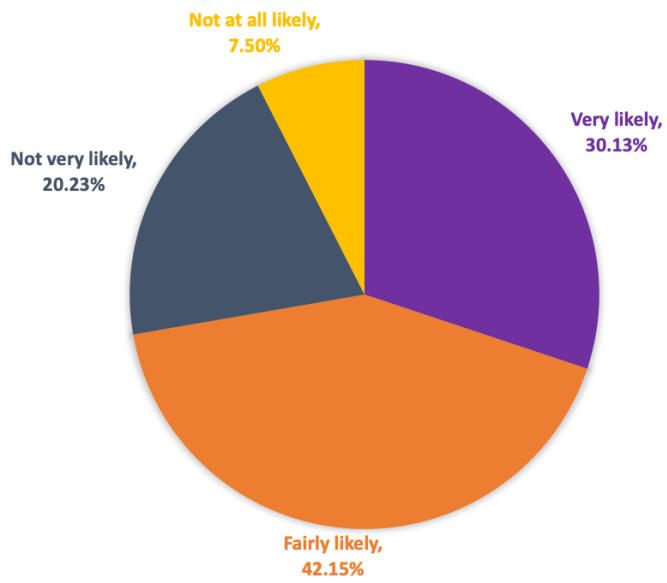
- Collaborate with local councils for funding and support.
- Partner with existing community groups and charities to leverage resources and prevent duplication of services.
- Explore financial support sessions for community members.

Q12: St Stephen Parish Council has organised a variety of events at Greenwood Park, which are free for the community to enjoy, such as the Jubilee and Coronation festival style celebrations, and the Christmas Market. However, these events have caused some disruption for regular users. How important are such large, community events to you, and how likely are you to attend them?

Q12a: How important are such large, community events to you? Please choose one answer.



Q12B: How likely are you to attend or take part in such events? Please choose one answer.



Q13: Do you have suggestions for any other community events you would like to see at Greenwood Park?

177 responses.

These can be summarised as:

Event Suggestions:

1. **Music-Related:** Annual music festivals, outdoor concerts, choir performances, local bands, Britain's Got Talent-type event, open mic nights, and silent discos.
2. **Seasonal and Cultural:** Firework displays (with a preference for silent ones), Christmas markets and carol services, Easter egg hunts, Halloween parties, Diwali celebrations, Eid prayers, seasonal fairs, and Jubilee-like celebrations.
3. **Sports and Fitness:** Charity sports events, family-friendly sports tournaments, inflatable runs, colour runs, community sports matches, yoga/meditation sessions, fitness classes for seniors, and "open" days for trying out different sports.
4. **Family and Children's Events:** Summer fetes, family festivals, toddler festivals, kids' discos, nature-based events, crafts fairs, and outdoor cinema events.
5. **Food and Drink:** Food festivals, beer festivals, community BBQs, picnic in the park events, and farmers' markets.
6. **Educational and Environmental:** Wildlife festivals, environmental awareness events, rewilding areas, talks on local history/culture/nature, and workshops on various skills like IT or gardening.
7. **Social and Community Building:** Social evenings with auctions and quizzes, coffee mornings, community fete, community dance events, volunteer recruitment events, and events for the elderly or isolated community members.
8. **Market and Sales:** Car boot sales, jumble sales, craft markets, book swaps, and vintage fairs.
9. **Special Interest:** Dog shows, pet shows, cat shows, classic car shows, and art exhibitions.

Improvements and Considerations:

1. **Facilities and Amenities:** Increasing allotment sizes, ensuring sufficient parking without fees, maintaining green spaces, enhancing wildlife habitats, improving event organization, and adding more activities besides food stalls.
2. **Communication:** Better promotion of events, possibly a community newsletter or updated bulletin boards, to ensure residents are aware of activities.

3. **Accessibility:** Consideration for silent fireworks to accommodate pets and sensitive individuals, additional disabled parking spaces, and ensuring that events cater to all age groups, including younger people.
4. **Environmental Impact:** Caution against over-development, maintaining green space, and holding events that promote environmental responsibility.
5. **Inclusivity:** Hosting culturally diverse events and ensuring events cater to different interests and demographics within the community.
6. **Engagement:** A desire for more interactive events that encourage community engagement, with suggestions for activities that involve local talent and businesses.
7. **Funding:** Ideas for ticketed events that can help pay for community improvements, and a consideration that free entry to parks and facilities may encourage more community spending within.

Q14: Thinking about the future of Greenwood Park specifically, do you have any other ideas or suggestions that you would like to share with the Council?

273 responses.

Responses can be summarised as:

Car Parking

- Tarmac the main and top car park and paint spaces especially disabled spaces
- Currently no parking when events are held, need to increase size
- Congestion in residential side roads
- Free parking
- Provide sufficient cycle racks

Boundary/Facilities

- Paths around the park and forest
- Do not bring council offices to greenwood park with council machinery and vehicles.
- Resistance to building on greenbelt land
- Improving toilet and kitchen facilities, better disabled and baby facilities
- More use of green energy such as ground source heat pumps under the field, wind turbine, rain water harvesting to use as grey water in flushing toilets within the buildings and watering the park grounds
- Secure fencing around the boundary of the park for the safety of dogs
- Install wind breaks around perimeter fencing to provide shelter/ enhance playing conditions for Tennis Courts
- Provide better lighting as the road from the top car park and from the tennis pavilion is not good enough

Leisure

- Valued and much used space widely used by dog walkers, families and sports people
- More noise and over-development with activities eg skateboards/climbing and football would change the park too much
- The park is the flagship of the parish. It needs to be extended for future use.
- Allotments are a key community space
- Roller skating area / bike safety lessons
- Skate Park

Play Park/Equipment

- An outside gym would be very beneficial
- The main children's area is good and any additional equipment would be welcome
- Equipment for older teens and young adults
- More benches

Wildlife/Animals

- Greenwood Park is a well maintained, beautiful park and much valued community asset
- Pond for schoolchildren to access to do pond dipping
- More wildlife friendly, More trees, shrubs and wildflower meadows
- More Litter and Dog poo bins
- Preserve the green spaces (meadows and woods) as much as possible for the enjoyment of local residences
- Additional planting to further screen the park from traffic noise along the A414, especially the stretch up to the Park Street roundabout.

Parish Centre

- Keep the parish centre open
- Do not sell off the parish centre to developers/housing
- Air conditioning for the centre

Events

- More Community events
- Board game clubs
- Earlier closing times for Salsa etc

Hospitality

- More food and drink offers
- Keep existing Cafe
- Inside area for the long winter months.

Q15: The council manages other sites including Woodbury Field play area, Blackgreen Wood, Park Street Recreation Ground and play area, allotments at Park Street Lane and Greenwood Park, Mayflower Road play area and Cherry Hill Park. If you have any feedback on any of these sites or facilities, please let us know.

189 responses received.

Responses can be summarised as:

All

- Planting more trees, planting bee and pollinator plants, building wildlife pond, adding more bird nest boxes, preserving wildlife. Are there areas round the edges that could be left uncut to let wildflowers grow?
- Improving/updating, more play equipment including for older children
- Toilets needed/improved
- Additional benches
- Install outdoor gym/exercise equipment
- Additional Litter/Dog Poo bins
- Signage to keep dogs under control and clear up their mess

Blackgreed Wood

- Gets flooded and muddy in Winter, could bark chippings be introduced?

Park Street Recreation Ground

- Tarmac and paint spaces
- Cafe needed

Cherry Hill Park

- Basketball Court, Cricket nets and a proper football pitches

Mayflower Road Play area

- Signage to keep dogs under control and clear up their mess, respect residents

- Pitch Lines painted and fenced off as part of the play area to prevent dogs walking across/fouling on the pitch
- Perfect for young children, wonderful little park
- Basketball/netball hoop and bouldering wall

Woodbury Field

- So much better now and is used by many local families
- Better access for wheelchairs/mob scooters