

Bury Knowle Park facility improvements: Local consultation findings & FAQs

March 2023



In partnership with others, we ran an extensive local consultation in October 2022, collecting 798 responses from Headington residents, 91% of whom support proposed plans for a multi-activity hub.

Key findings

- 91% were positive about the overall hub proposal
- 80% would use the park more if the hub is built
- 70% would be encouraged to do more physical activity
- 83% said the hub would promote better physical health and 82% better mental health
- 73% said they would use the park more if there was a café
- 76% rated the toilet facilities negatively and 64% said they would use the park more if there were new ones
- 73% rated the current tennis courts negatively and 79% were positive about resurfacing
- 72% rated the current playground facilities positively
- 81% would like to see more biodiversity and 79% would like to see more flowers planted
- Yoga, pilates and health walks in the park were most mentioned as other activities people would like to see

Method

- Online survey live throughout October 2022
- Letters hand posted to residents of Chestnut Avenue, Locks Court, North Place and Emden House
- Notices in the park, library and street noticeboards
- Community stall at Headington Festival and Market
- Emails sent to members of Friends of Bury Knowle Park, Headington Action, Friends of Old Headington, local schools and tennis court bookers; posts on local social media such as Headington News

Demographics

- 798 responses, of which 64% female, 36% male
- Age range: u25: 4%, 25-34: 12%, 35-44: 35%, 45-54: 23%, 55-64: 12%, 65+: 14%
- Ethnicity: 84% white, 16% non-white
- Postcode: 88% OX3 (Headington), 12% other
- Disability: 4% with, 96% without

Activity



91% were positive about the overall proposal

Facilities



76% rated the current toilet facilities negatively

80%

would use the park more



70%

would be encouraged to do more physical activity

73%

would use the park more if there was a café



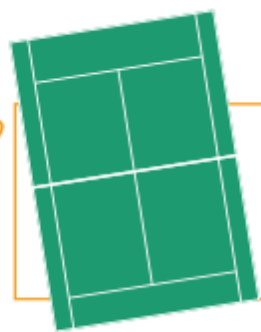
64% would use the park more if there were new toilets



83% said a multi activity hub would promote better physical health



82% said it would promote better mental health



73% rated the current tennis courts negatively

72%

rated the current playground facilities positively



Plus...

81% would like to see more biodiversity in the park



79% would like to see more flowers



Yoga, pliates and health walks were mentioned as popular group activities



74%

like the idea of a multi-use games area



79%

were positive about resurfaced tennis courts



42%

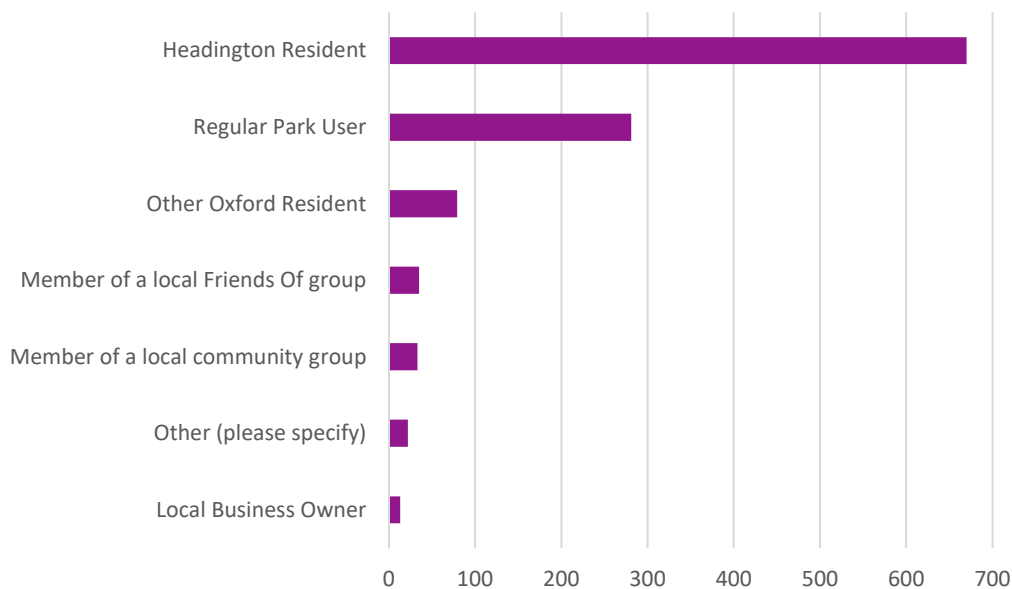


like the idea of a skatepark

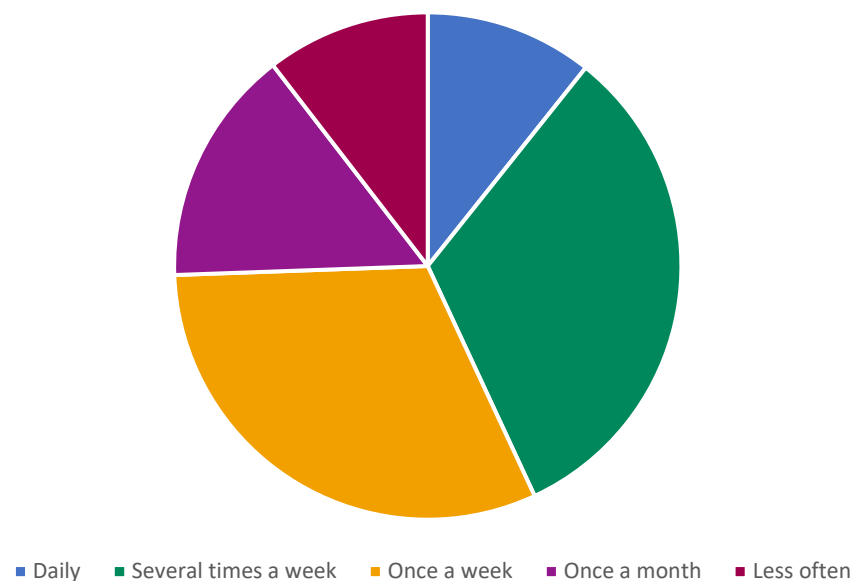
Goal: seek feedback from local people to help shape proposed park facility improvements

Consultation conducted 1st to 31st October 2022, 798 responses

Q1. What kind of stakeholder are you?



Q3. How often do you visit the park?



- 84% of stakeholders are residents in Headington
- 74% visit the park at least once a week
- Other included: 5 local workers, 10 who specified they use the parks for tennis and 1 member of Norham Gardens LTC

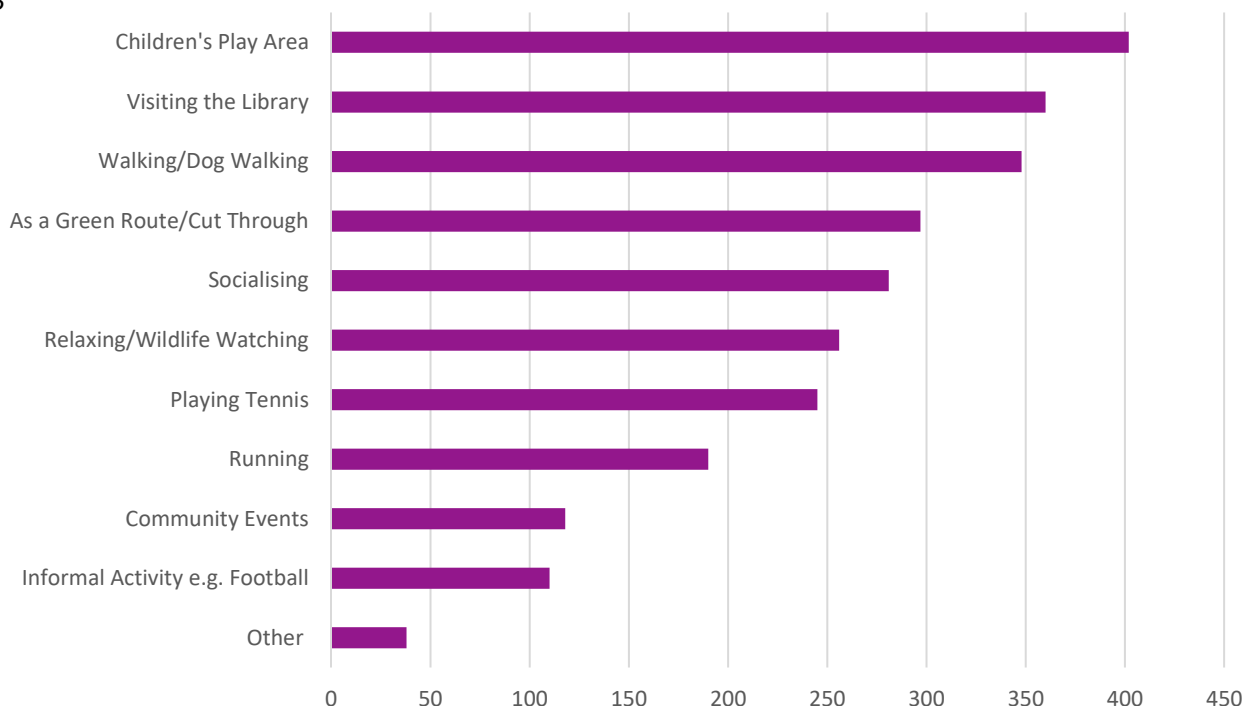
Q4. What are your main reasons for visiting the park? Please tick all that apply.

The children’s play area (402 people) and the library (360 people) were the most popular reasons for visiting the park.

Other included:

- Picnic/Lunch
- Table tennis
- Cycling
- Health walk group
- Sensory garden
- Ice cream
- Fitness

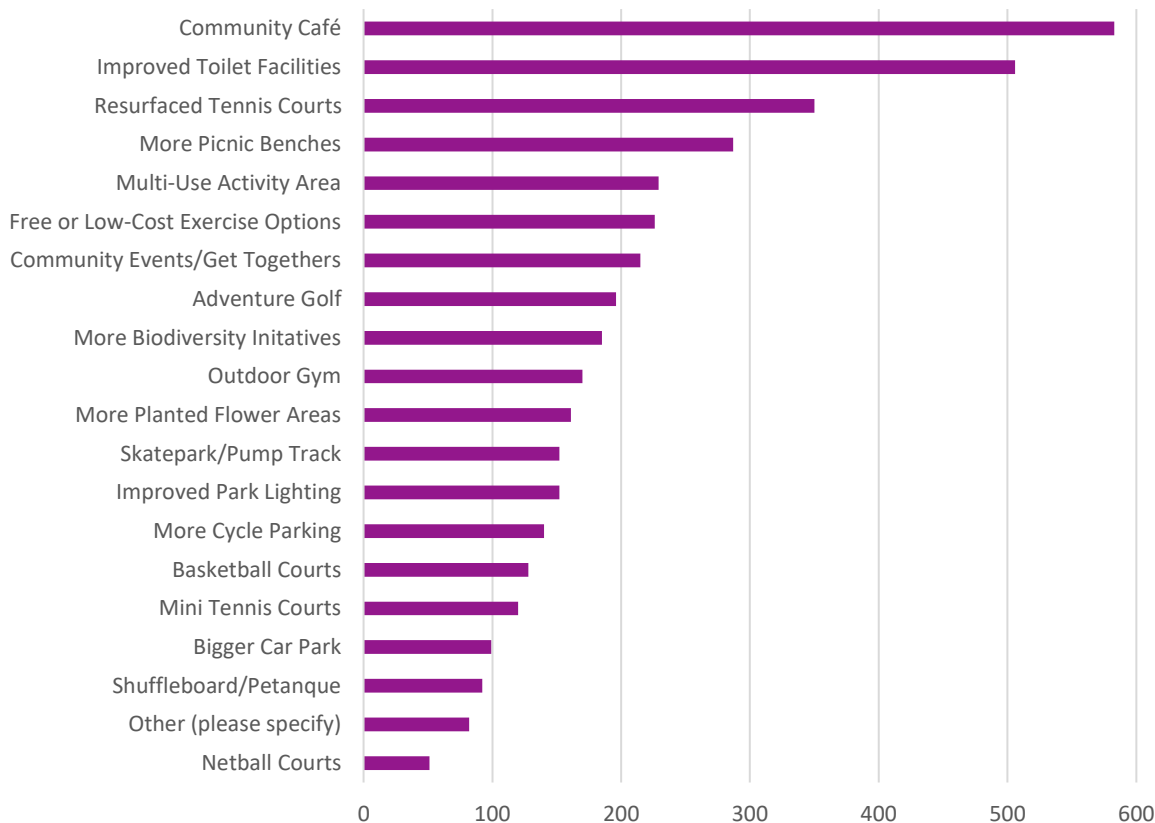
What are your reasons for visiting the park? Please tick all that apply.



Q5. What would make you use the park more?

Please tick all that apply.

What would make you use the park more?



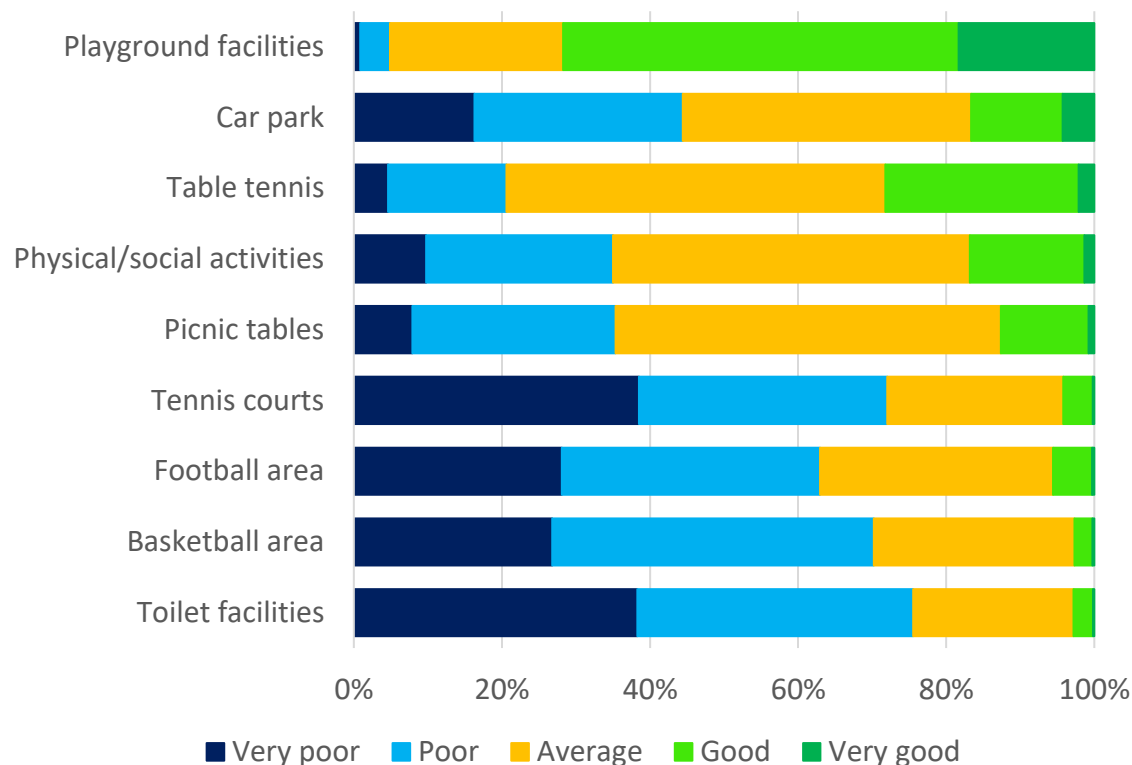
- Most popular responses were the café, toilets and tennis courts
- 44% would use the park more if the tennis courts were resurfaced
- 229 people would use the MUGA and 196 would like to play adventure golf

‘Other’ included:

- 18 people said they wanted a splash park
- Lockers for joggers and those on the courts
- 4 people want to see more plants and bushes
- 3 people expressed that they do not want the car park to be bigger

Q6. How do you rate the following in Bury Knowle Park today?

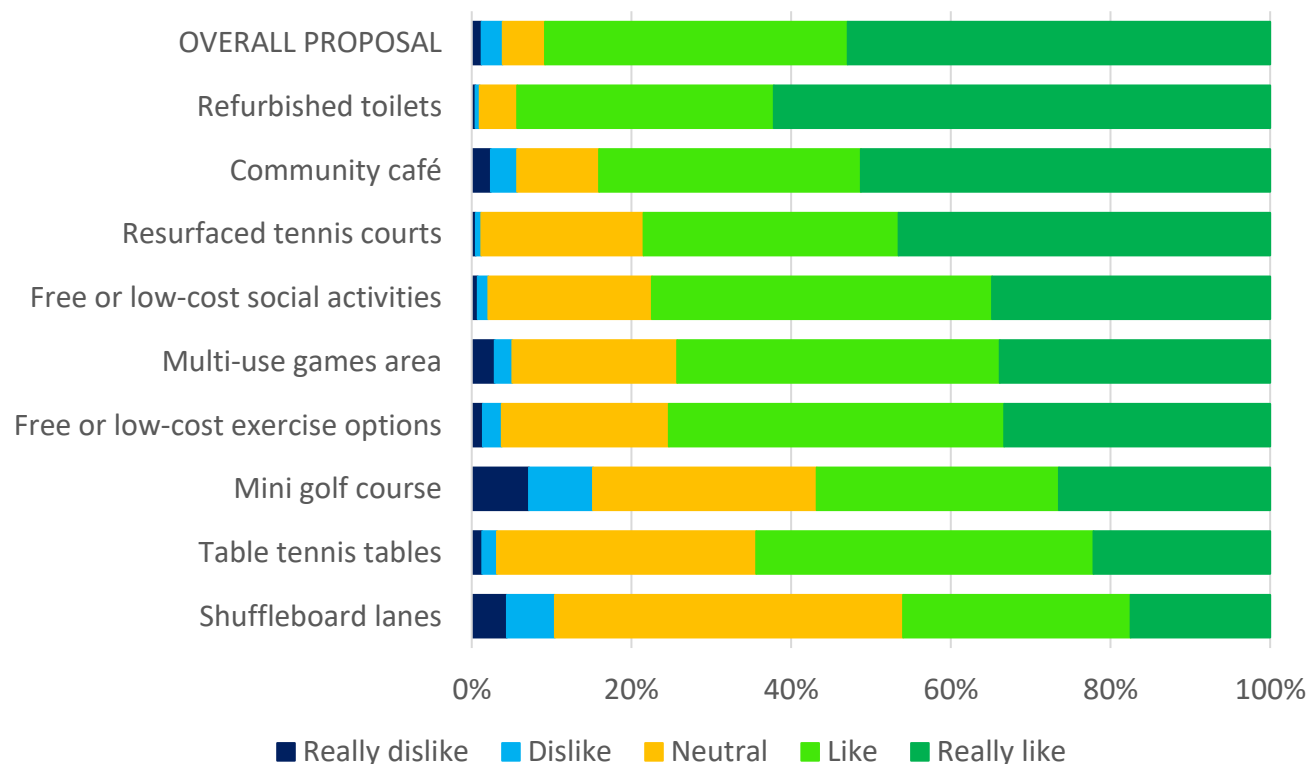
- Toilets are the most negatively viewed, with **less than 4%** of respondents rating them 'Good' or above
- Fewer than 5%** of respondents rated the tennis court surfaces as 'Good' or above
- The most positive ratings were for the playground. **72%** rated it 'Good' or better.
- The playground was also listed as the most common reason to visit the park (402 respondents, slide 6)
- Football and basketball both received **60-70%** ratings of 'Poor' or 'Very poor'



NB: responses which did not express an opinion have not been included

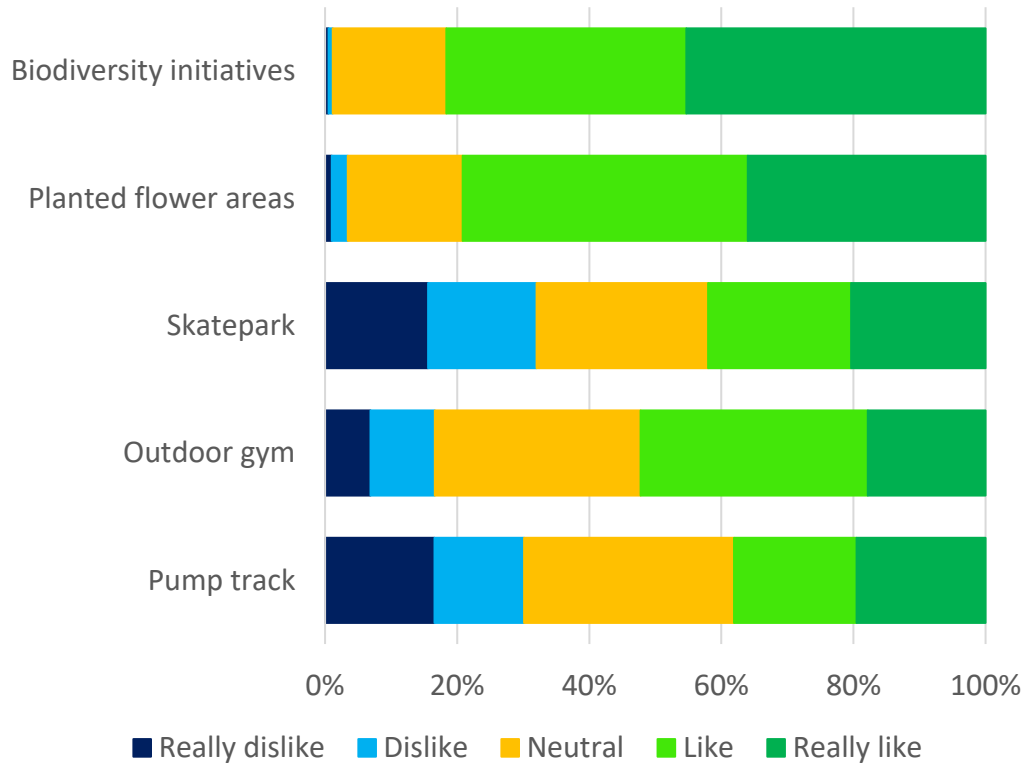
Q7. What do you think of these possible new facilities?

- 91% said they either 'Like' or 'Really like' the proposal
- Refurbished toilets are the most popular with 93% approval
- Adventure golf received the most negative ratings, with 15% saying they disliked it
- 79% were positive about resurfacing the tennis courts



NB: responses which did not express an opinion have not been included

Q8. While these are not included in our current designs, do you think any of the following would be a valuable addition to the park elsewhere?



- Biodiversity is the most popular with only 2% negative responses
- Skatepark received the most negative responses, with 31% saying they 'Dislike' or 'Really dislike' the idea
- 53% are in favour of an outdoor gym

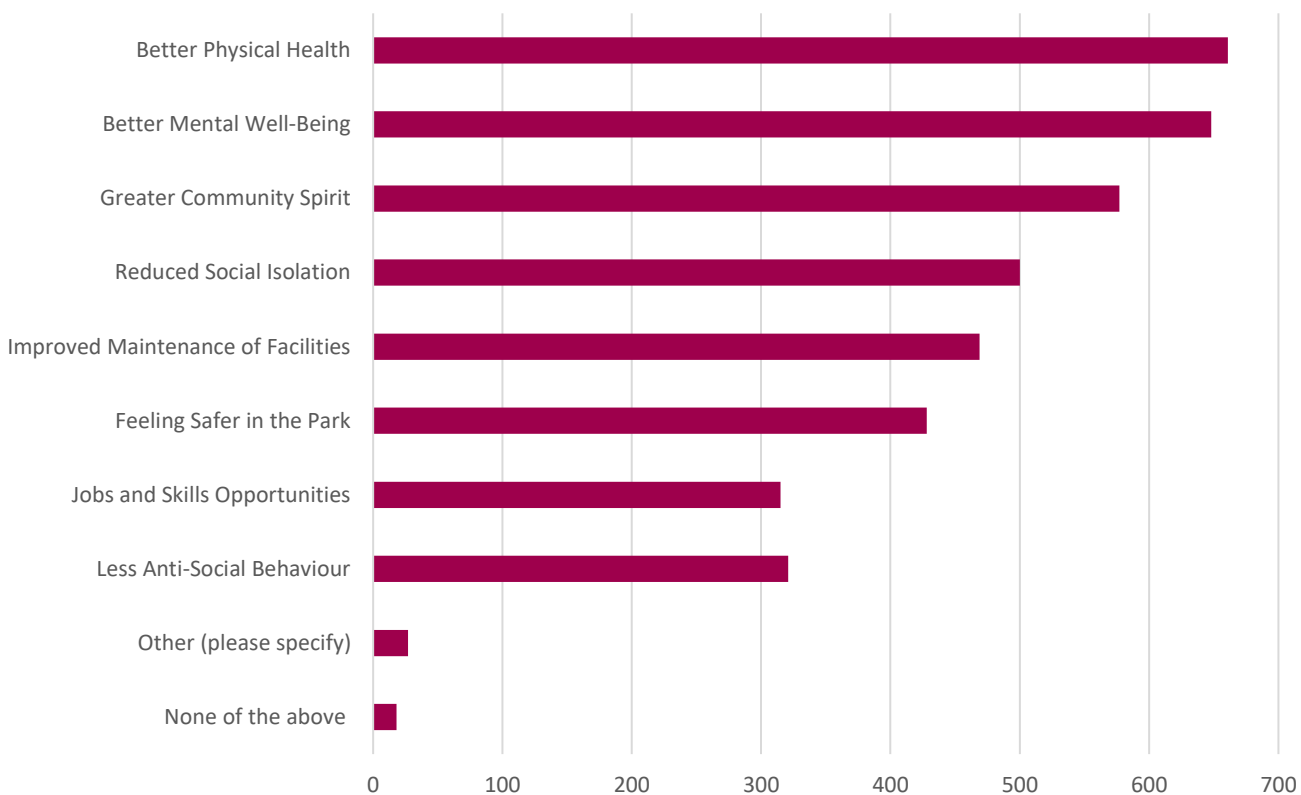
NB: responses which did not express an opinion have not been included

Q9. Do you have any ideas for specific physical and/or social activities you would like to see (e.g. health walks, yoga, pre-school storytelling etc.)?



NB: a word cloud is a visual representation (image) of word data

Q10. How do you think a multi-activity hub would benefit the local community? Please tick all that apply.



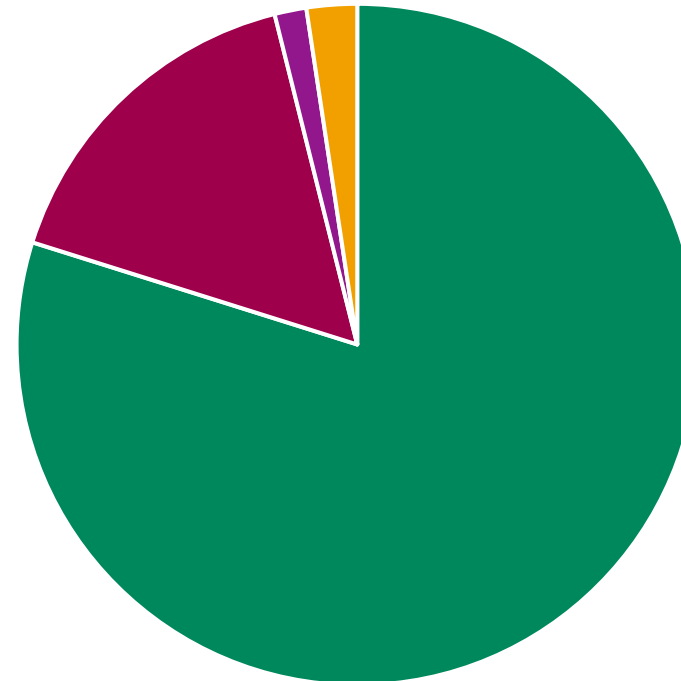
- Over 82% said that the multi-activity hub would benefit better physical health and better mental well being
- Over 50% said that the multi-activity hub would make them feel safer

‘Other’ included:

- Better community atmosphere and unity
- Good for socialisation and relationships
- Potential local business links

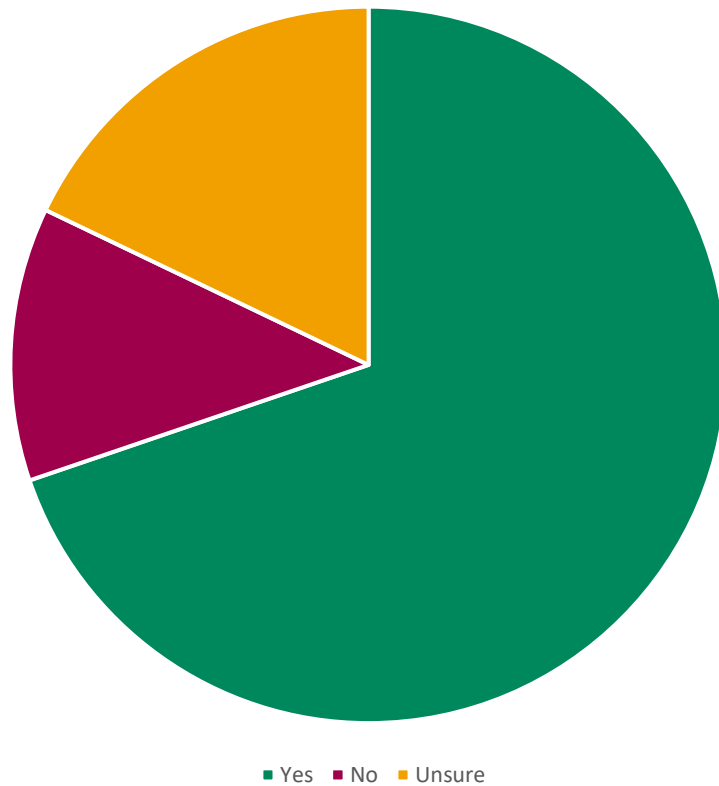
Q11. How would these facility improvements change your frequency of visiting Bury Knowle Park?

- 80% said that they would visit Bury Knowle Park **more**
- 16% said that they would visit Bury Knowle Park about the **same amount**



■ I would go to the park more ■ I would go to the park about the same amount ■ I would go to the park less ■ Unsure

Q12. Would these facility improvements encourage you to do more physical activity?



- Over 70% of respondents said that the multi-hub improvements would encourage them to do **more physical activity**, with more proposed options for exercise and sport

Q14 – “Do you have any final comments?”

- 12 people expressed positive views about the café as a place to gather and socialise
- 7 people had concerns that the café would be competing with other locally run cafés and might affect their business *[there could also be spill-over to the Headington shops arising from more activities in the park]*
- 56 people requested floodlights *[these would be subject to planning permission]*
- 20 people were positive about the resurfacing of the courts, with several urging that this be prioritised over the rest of the development *[phasing is being considered]*
- 24 people were concerned about the loss of a tennis court, as this would increase demand and may prevent some from playing at peak times *[maybe, though the data does not support this, and 4 new mini courts would be added]*
- 24 people were concerned that the development would result in a loss of green space and grassy areas in the park, which might drive away those who use the park for walking and socialising *[we do not feel this will be the case]*
- This includes 4 people who were against expansion of any car parking and 5 who were explicitly concerned about hard surfaces disrupting biodiversity *[there are no plans for either]*
- 57 people made additional specific positive comments about the overall proposal
- Some respondents questioned whether the proposal was ‘necessary’ and how the facilities would be maintained *[both of which can be addressed]*

*“Thank you for taking such an interest in our Bury Knowle Park, it’s great.
The park has so much potential.”*

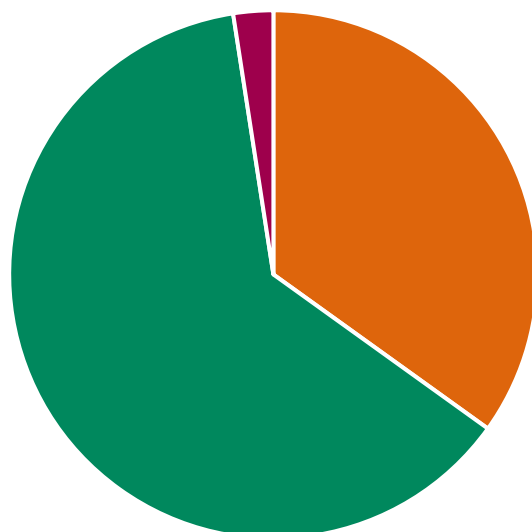
- *“The tennis courts are in an atrocious state. They desperately need to be resurfaced. But they should not ideally be reduced in number.”*
- *“I am concerned this will bring urban creep into the park and erode green space so this needs to be done very sympathetically with minimum impact on views and green space, also investment will need to paid for which may impact on accessibility. I can see the benefits if well done.”*
- *“I am concerned that too much development may be crammed into a small part of the park.”*
- *“I hope the improvements finally adopted will balance the needs of all age groups and abilities. The existing sports facilities are certainly in need of an upgrade, so this project is good news.”*
- *“Parking for Bicycles is very important as there isn’t any in the park.”*
- *“I am very keen to see far more picnic tables throughout the park, including some with a design which is easier for disabled people to use.”*
- *“The tennis courts should have floodlights! Many Headington folk now drive to Florence Park.”*
- *“Focus on teens please, otherwise how can people complain when they're hanging around other areas of Headington with nothing to do.”*
- *“Please make this happen as the park has potential but has sorely been overlooked for years.”*
- *“I would like to see current areas redeveloped only. The rest of the park is beautiful and should remain as it is. The current public toilets should be redeveloped, they are awful.”*
- *“Development needs to be sensitive to ensure a balance between better community facilities and maintaining the park as a pocket of nature.”*

Qs 16-21 Funding data questions

Answers from a diverse range of participants around Oxfordshire:

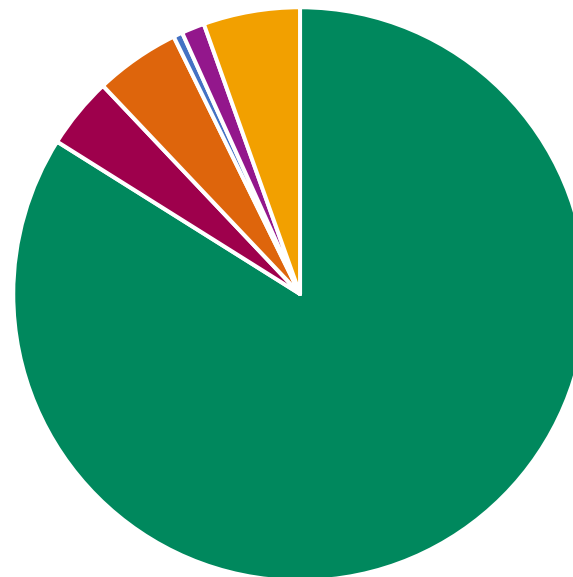
Respondents were mostly female (63%) and mostly of white backgrounds (84%).

What is your gender?



Male Female Prefer not to say

Ethnic background



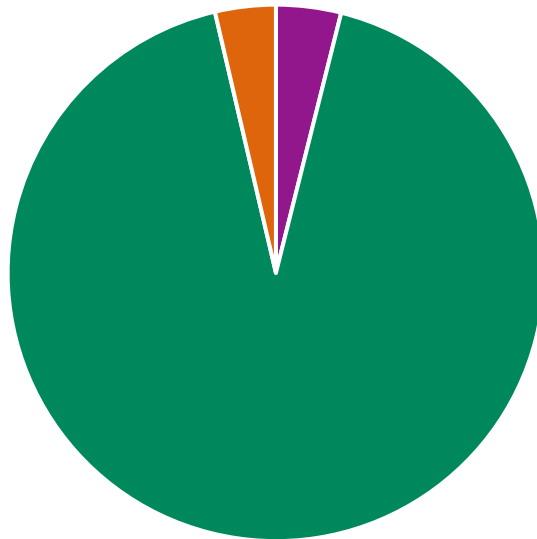
White Mixed Asian Black Other Prefer not to say

Qs 16-21 Funding data questions

Answers from a diverse range of participants around Oxfordshire:

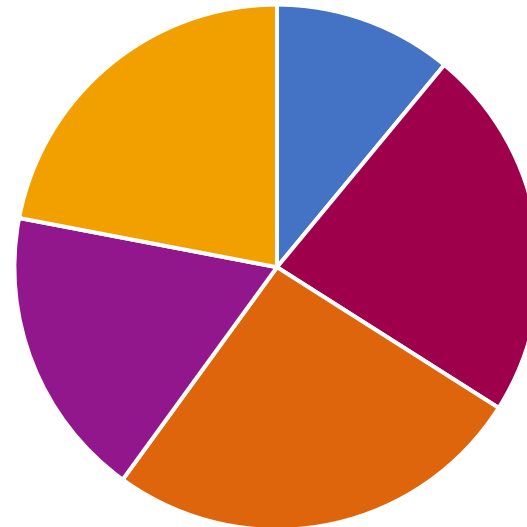
34% of respondents have household income of less than £50,000 a year.

Do you have a registered disability?



■ Yes ■ No ■ Prefer not so say

What is your annual household income?



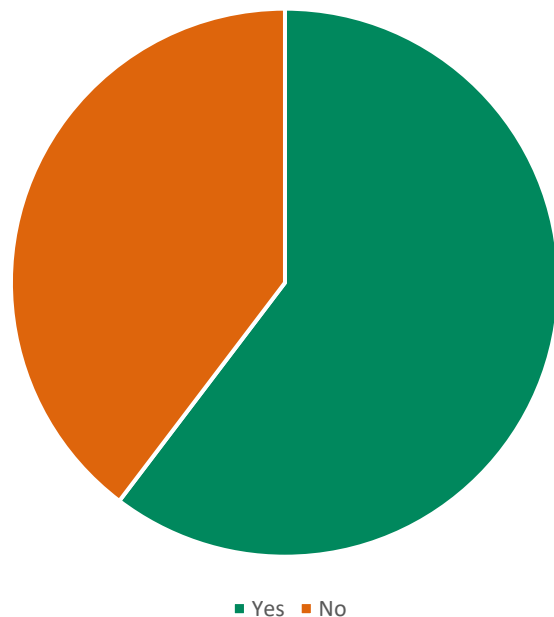
■ Less than £24,999 ■ £25,000 to £49,999 ■ £50,000 to £74,999
■ £75,000 to £99,999 ■ £100,000 or more

Qs 16-21 Funding data questions

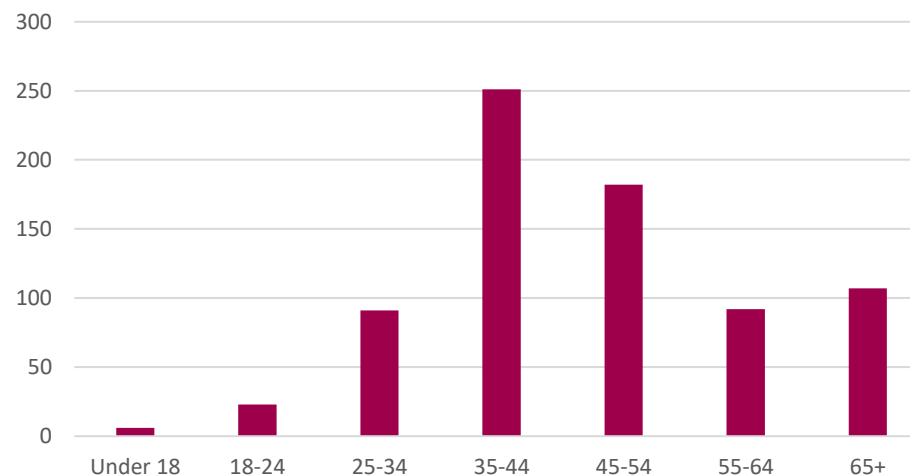
Answers from a diverse range of participants:

The largest age group is 35-44, with 33% of respondents. 51% of respondents are 45 or older, and 16% are 34 or younger.

Do you have any children under 18 in your household?



Under which age bracket do you fall?



Bury Knowle Park multi-activity hub: Survey and Consultation FAQs

We have put together a list of questions below that have appeared regularly within our consultation and survey feedback and we would like to share our responses with you. If you have any other questions or queries, please drop us an email at hello@courtside.uk.

How and when will this project happen?

The multi-activity hub is a project backed by Oxford City Council (OCC), FCC, Headington Action (HA), Friends of Bury Knowle Park (FBKP) and Courtside. It is a jointly financed venture with funding coming from the Government (DLUHC'S Community Ownership Fund), OCC, FCC, HA and Courtside, and OCC providing the land as part of a new strategic partnership. The funds that have been raised must be spent and the project delivered by March 2024 (final designs, Council approvals, planning permission, construction and launch). There is lots to do!

Why is the hub needed?

We know that there are many people, both nationally and locally, who are inactive or who face isolation, and often both. We hope that the hub will provide a place of community, rest and recreation within the park, offering a variety of free and affordable activity options for all ages. We want to link with GP referral schemes to get inactive people into entry level exercise. The existing tennis courts are dangerous and require resurfacing, the old mini golf area is defunct and the ageing pavilion is disused. This project will address all these issues and invigorate facilities for the community to enjoy.

Will the hub require Council subsidy year after year?

No, we hope the opposite: the mix of facilities will enable income to be generated and reinvested in ongoing maintenance and future lifecycle costs. Courtside will be responsible for on-going maintenance and all costs of running the hub, while the Council will be responsible for the facility sinking fund.

How can something like this fit within the park?

The current facilities in this tucked away part of the park are for sport and recreation, they are being upgraded and improved to cater to a broader range of users. Given the heritage of the area, careful consideration has been given to the design, aesthetics and materials (as needed for planning permission). The anticipated result will be far more attractive than the current tennis courts, mini golf and pavilion.

Parking is already an issue in the area. How will you manage this increased footfall?

All forms of active travel will be promoted (walk, cycle, scoot, etc) and new bike racks will help facilitate the safe storage of cycles. We are also looking at options to incorporate a buggy park. Headington has good bus links too. Parking misuse on neighbouring Chestnut Avenue or local streets will be enforced.

What will be the impact of the development on green space within the park?

There will be no loss of green space in that we are upgrading facilities that have been lost or are at risk, all within their original footprint. It will be necessary to remove part of the hedge line for the construction works and this will then allow good accessibility and visibility. This will be replanted or replaced, and attention will be paid to landscaping in the park as part of our 10% biodiversity gain obligation and commitment (we must do this by law, and we want to). We are liaising with FBKP to consolidate ideas on how we fulfil this commitment and enhance the park further. Safety, accessibility and aesthetics all need to balance carefully to ensure the final design is sympathetic to both the environment and future users.

How will you control any anti-social behaviour?

We will have an onsite presence from morning to dusk which we believe will help build relationships and reinforce respect for the park and facilities. We will install CCTV and our hub staff will act as additional 'eyes and ears'.

Why have you picked the proposed activities/amenities at the hub?

The open, flat, flexible design allows for 20+ activities to be offered, many facilities can be multi-purpose. We are consciously avoiding facilities offered by others locally. We are adding popular recreational activities rather than exclusively 'traditional sport', to allow groups to get together and for individuals to choose between moderate or more vigorous options. A new MUGA (Multi-Use Games Area) will offer additional free activity which is especially important for kids and teens.

Do we need another café?

The redevelopment of the pavilion into a café is essential for the effective running of the hub and will serve as a welcoming community space, with new publicly accessible toilets. The café will offer indoor and outdoor seating and a menu of hot food and drinks in a beautiful park setting. A take-away hatch will provide 'grab and go' items for those enjoying a walk in the park. The café will be the heart of the hub where people can sit and view activities going on around them whether they are there as individuals or part of a group.

Won't the hub compete with other local providers?

The hub is not a leisure centre, nor a specialist sports club/facility. It will be a source of information (via display materials and staff presence) for activities taking place within the park and beyond. It will complement - rather than compete with - existing provision.

Will the hub be accessible/wheelchair friendly?

Yes, one of the specific benefits of the site is its open, flat design; all facilities will be as accessible as possible, and we want the hub to be known as a welcoming place offering variety and value for all ages and abilities.

Will there be more outdoor seating?

The disused pavilion will be repurposed into a café that will offer both indoor and outdoor seating. New picnic tables will be placed around the activity area to ensure parents can keep an eye on their children participating in activities and even non-active visitors can sit and feel part of the energy of the hub. Double-sided, tiered bleacher seating will also be installed to view the mini golf and shuffleboard lanes on one side and mini tennis, basketball and netball on the other.

Is it necessary to reduce the number of tennis courts currently on offer?

We will retain 3 full-sized tennis courts (two of which will have LED lights) and introduce 4 mini tennis courts that can also be used for pickleball and badminton. We will offer more coaching sessions and social tennis opportunities. In order to attract a wider range of people, we will also add line markings for two 3x3 basketball courts and one full-sized netball court. Overall, there will be more tennis/racket sport options and more choice of other activities.

When will the existing tennis courts be resurfaced?

The much-needed resurfacing of the tennis courts is taking place over the summer and we hope will be ready by mid August 2023. The wider project improvements are subject to planning permission and should be finished by March 2024.

Will there be provision for floodlights?

We plan to install LED court lights (Tweener) to extend play through the winter (+1000 hours per court per year). This will create opportunities for year-round fun and fitness, as well as provide more financial security for our coaches. This style of lighting is barely visible in daytime (an 8mm strip of LED lights on the fencing at 2.4m high). The lights will be subject to a curfew time and are designed to have minimal glare in order to respect both neighbours and wildlife.

What can you offer the older generations?

We want to bring people together and deliver and maintain a mix of amenities for all ages. Resurfaced and LED lit tennis courts, a new multi-use games area with netball (e.g. walking netball for older ladies), mini tennis/pickleball courts, adventure golf, shuffleboard lanes, and picnic benches are all envisaged. The hub will promote social inclusion, physical health and mental well-being, by offering a calendar of community-led activities and events. Some of these might be hosted by volunteers, connecting with existing community groups, while others might be more structured and coached. We will offer 'Forever Active', a mid-week morning for older residents where a programme of activities is enjoyed on rotation. The outdoor activity space will also be able to accommodate activities such as yoga, tai chi, garden games and more.

What can you offer to teenagers/girls as these groups are often overlooked?

Headington lacks facilities for young people: we will help close this gap with basketball, netball, mini tennis and more, including free provision after school.

Can you include a skatepark in the plans?

We fully support the prospect of a local skatepark in a suitable location and would want to help with any fundraising initiatives. We have been advised that this corner of the park is too close to houses for a skatepark and we have no funding for this.

Thank you for your support.

July, 2023