

CONFERENCE AIMS

- * To bring together researchers, policy-makers and practitioners to explore the role and value of public parks in the twenty-first century.
- * To showcase learning from research and practice (across different sectors) on ways to support parks and maximise their diverse benefits.
- * To discuss ways forward for the future of public parks in light of the Select Committee Inquiry, and given current economic constraints.
- * To build new and enhance existing relations between those working in the management and governance of public parks and green spaces.
- * To generate new research questions and research collaborations.



THE FUTURE OF PUBLIC PARKS

POLICY, PRACTICE & RESEARCH



Historic England

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PROGRAMME

10:00 - 10:15 Welcome & Introduction

10:15 - 12:30 Session 1: The Role & Value of Parks in the 21st Century – Insights from Research

12:30 - 13:15 Lunch & Networking

13:15 - 15:00 Session 2: Maximising the Value of Parks - Innovations and Lessons from Practice

15:00 - 15:15 Refreshments Break

15:15 - 15:45 Session 3: CLG Select Committee inquiry

15:45 - 17:00 Session 4: Public Parks - Ways Forward

17:00 Close



- Toilets
- Fire
- Lunch / refreshment breaks - Gallery
- Wifi access: 10-11CHT password 'hospitality'
- #MYPARKMATTERS

HOUSE-KEEPING



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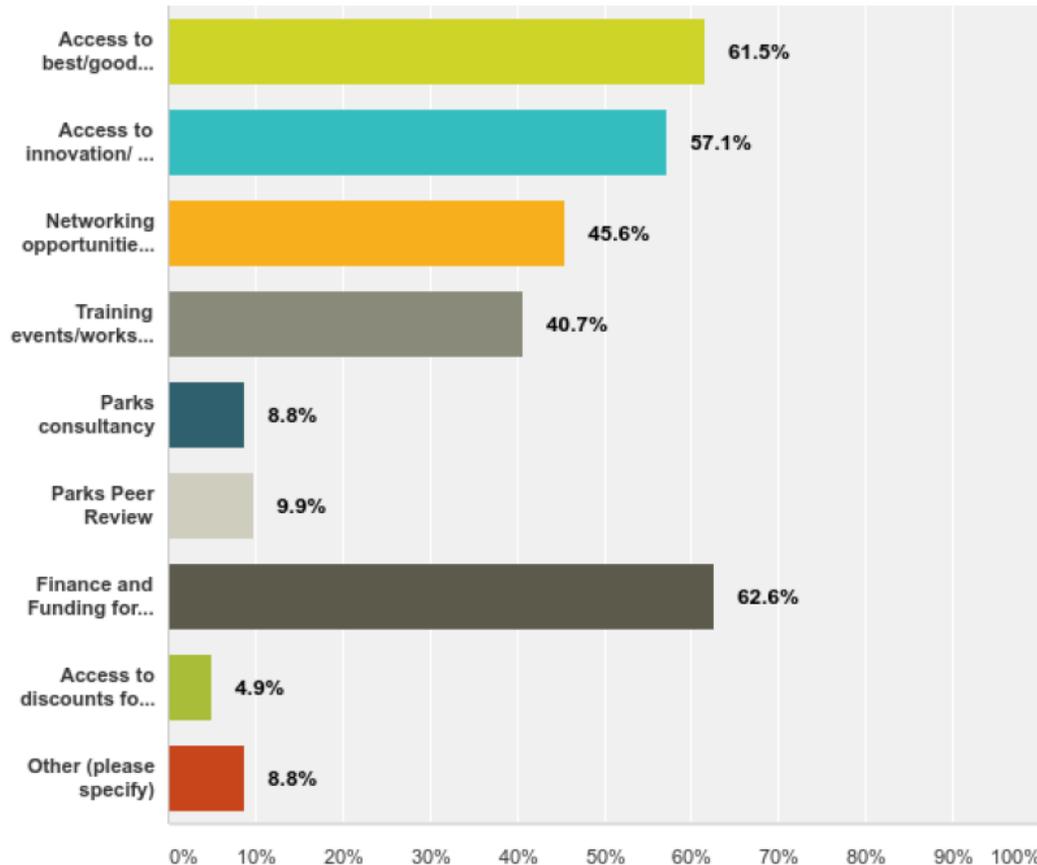
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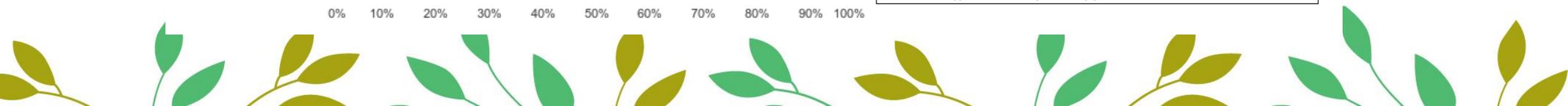
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9. If The Parks Alliance were to develop new services which would be important to you?



Access to best/good practice examples
Access to innovation/ new ways of doing things
Networking opportunities with others within the parks sector
Training events/workshops focused on issue facing the sector
Parks consultancy
Parks Peer Review
Finance and Funding for Parks
Access to discounts for other services e.g. Insurance
Other (please specify)



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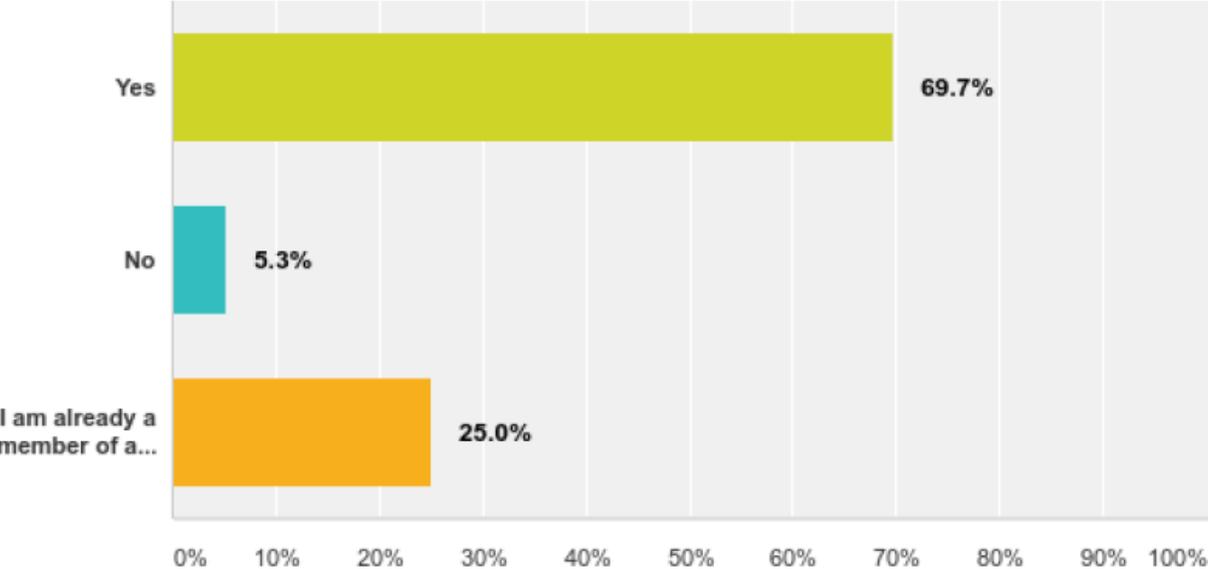
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12. Would you find regional forums useful?



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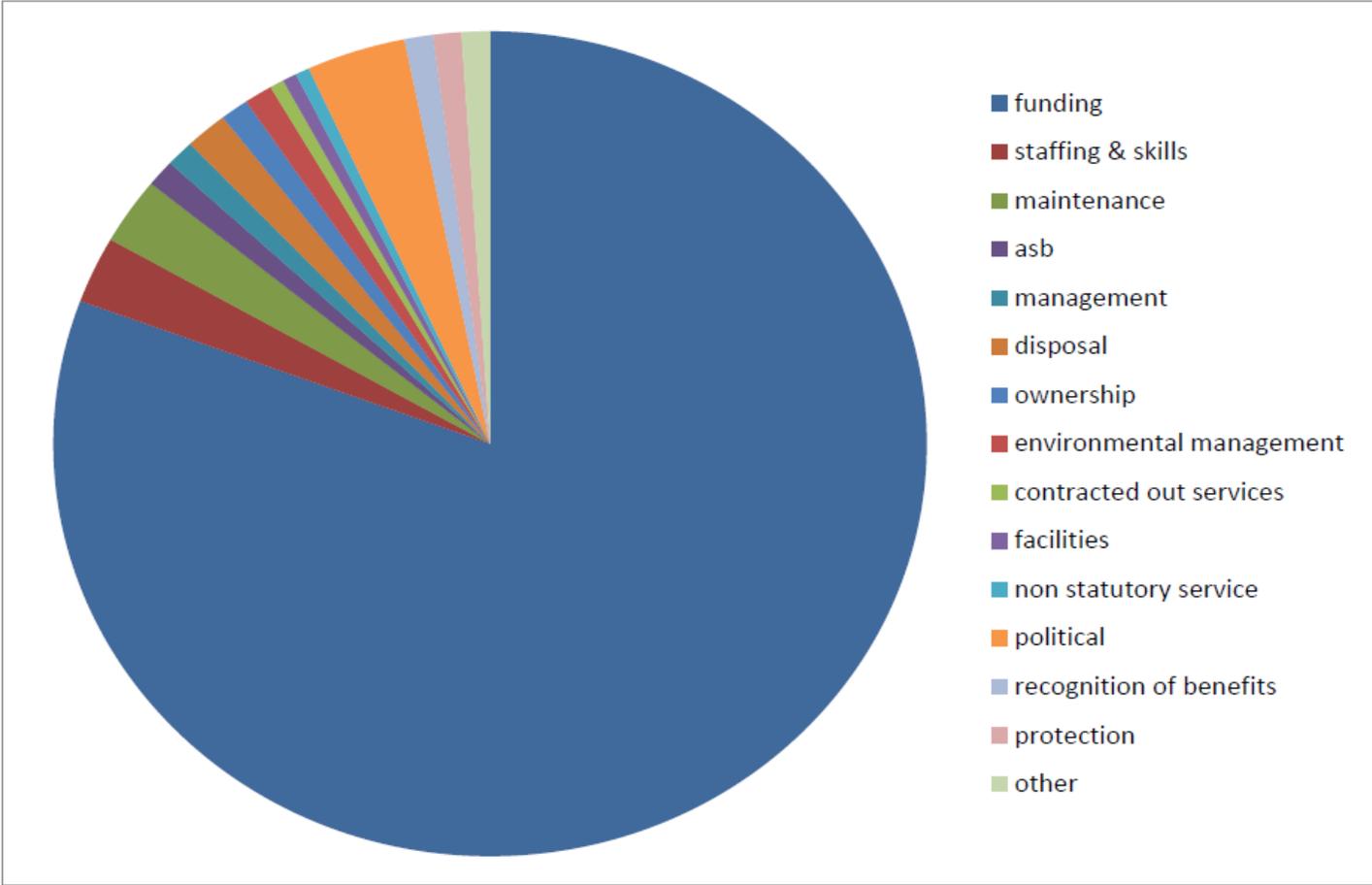
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15.1 National issues facing the sector - ranked first



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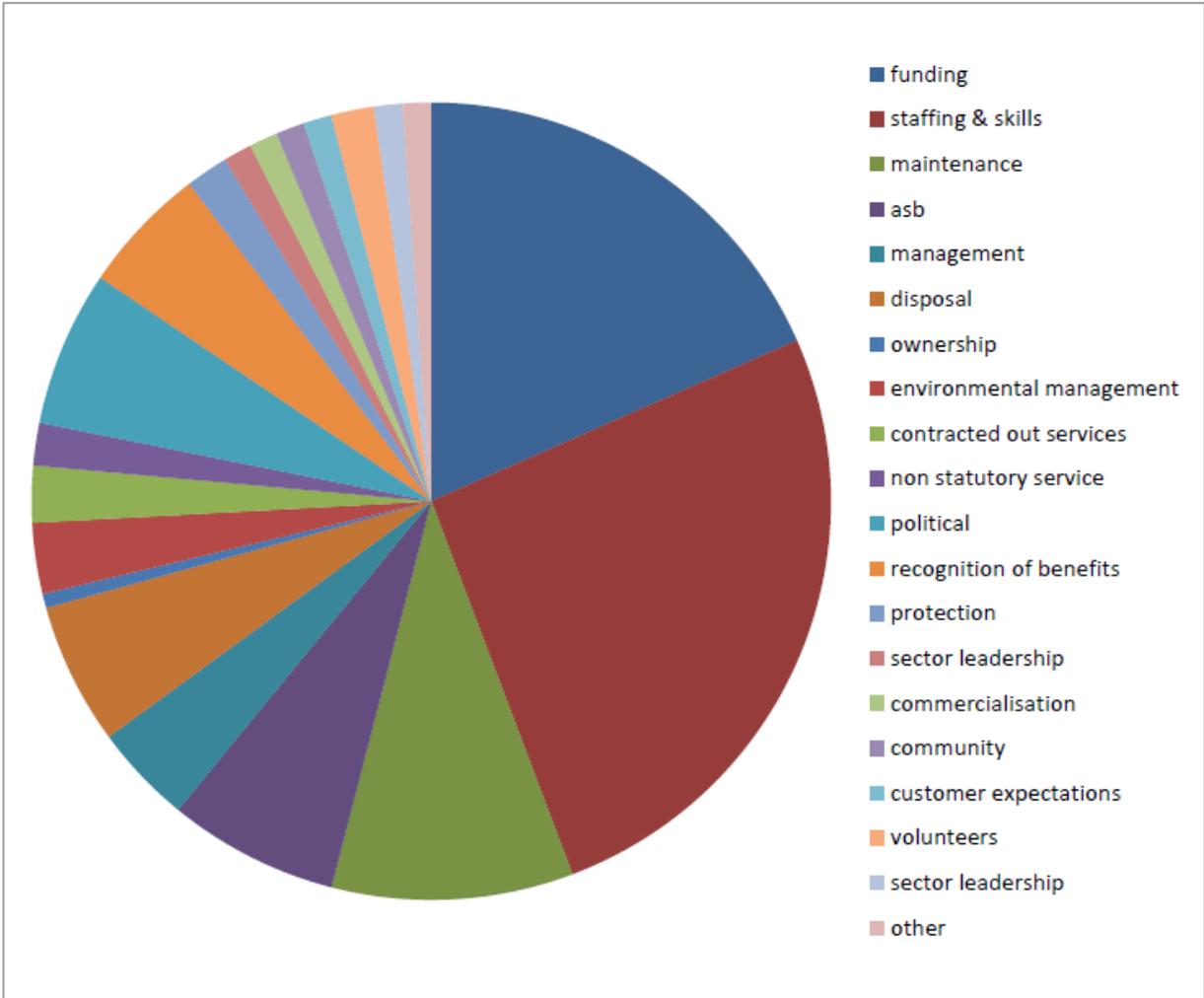
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15.2 National issues facing the sector - ranked second



Chair: Adam Crawford

University of Leeds

SESSION 1A: THE ROLE AND VALUE OF PARKS IN THE 21ST CENTURY – INSIGHTS FROM RESEARCH



The State of Research on Public Parks & Future Directions

Katy Layton-Jones, University of Leicester

The Leeds Parks Project

Anna Barker & David Churchill, University of Leeds

QUESTIONS



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Dr. Katy Layton-Jones

THE STATE OF RESEARCH ON PUBLIC PARKS & FUTURE DIRECTIONS



‘we strongly believe that without being able to demonstrate the contribution made by parks to broader agendas, local authority parks departments will find it difficult to secure sufficient priority for their parks, or to access alternative funding sources’.

House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee:
Public Parks, Seventh Report of Session 2016–17

**'NOW, what I want is, Facts...Facts alone are wanted in life.
Plant nothing else, and root out everything else...Stick to
Facts, sir!'**

Mr. Grandgrind, *Hard Times* (1854)

'Urban Parks

A BASIC PROBLEM—THE INFORMATION DEFICIT

23. Though witnesses sent in plenty of evidence about urban parks, here too there is a basic lack of information. Discussions were informative but largely took place in a statistical vacuum'.

House of Commons, Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs
Committee Report of the Inquiry into Town and Country Parks, 1999



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THE
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DEMOS



Nesta...



transforming urban spaces into people places



UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA



ENGLISH HERITAGE



We need more research to demonstrate the contemporary relevance of parks?





We need more research to demonstrate that people value their historic parks?



Protests planned over controversial Redrow housing plan

Councillors set to decide on Harthill scheme as Calderstones School also raises objections



BY ALISTAIR HOUGHTON
05:00, 13 FEB 2017

NEWS

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Community updates, Crime Statistics, Local News & Events and much more...

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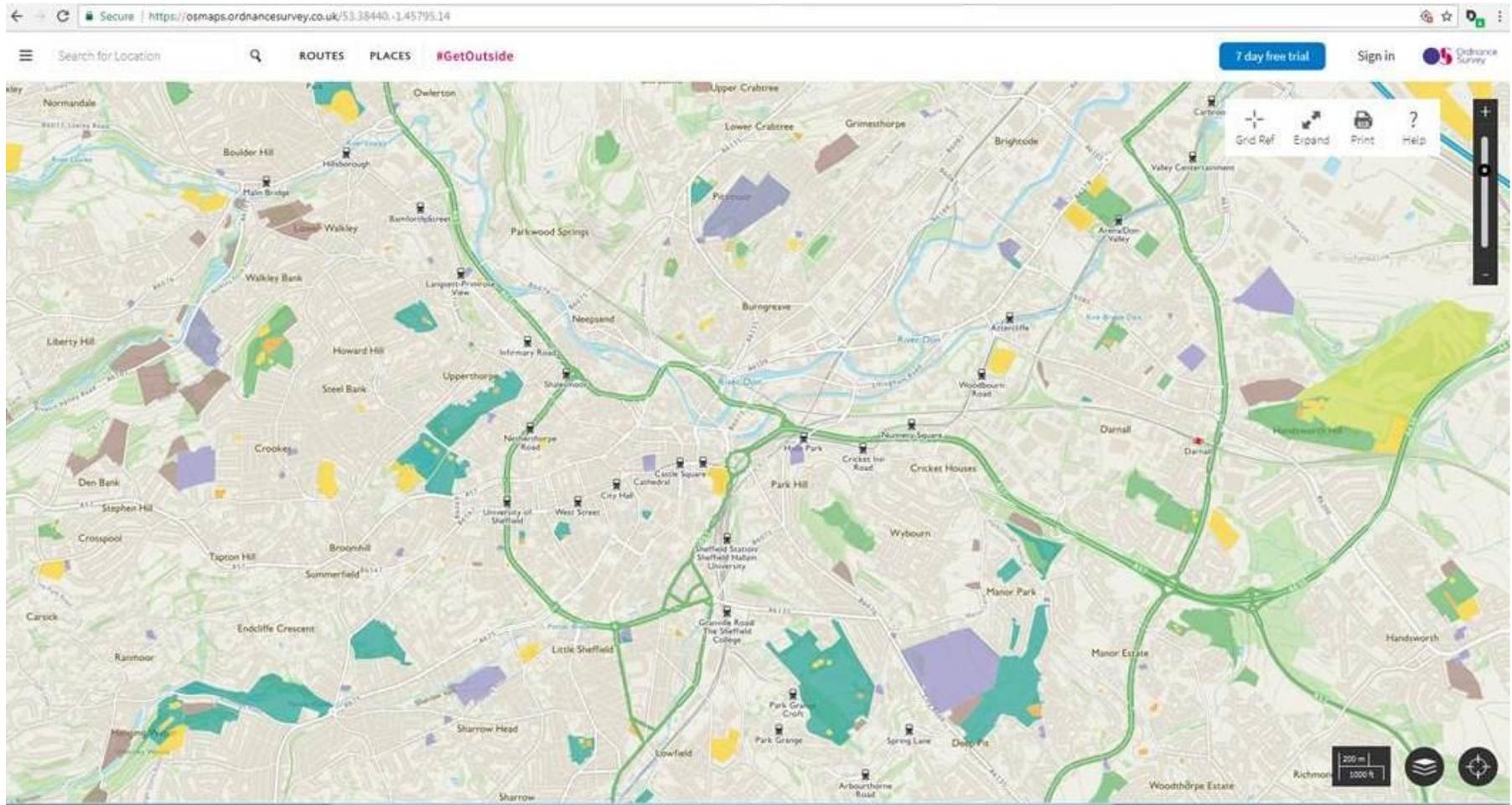


RECOMMENDED



‘The Committee is also of the view that all local authorities ought to know the extent of their parks in terms of their number, size, attributes and facilities. By means of a regular and statistically valid evaluation of their parks, local authorities should estimate visitor numbers, and know something of who they are and what they think of their parks. By these means, a national total of number of parks can be arrived at and comparisons made’.

House of Commons, Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs
Committee Report of the Inquiry into Town and Country Parks, 1999



OS Open Greenspace

‘Its primary purpose is to enable members of the public to find and access green spaces near them for exercise and recreation’.

OS Website

Code Lists

Code List: FunctionValue	
http://www.os.uk/xml/codelists/OpenFunctionValue.xml	
Value defining the function of the green space	
Value	Description
Allotments or Community Growing Spaces	Areas of land for growing fruit, vegetables, and other plants, either in individual allotments or as a community activity. Produce is for the growers own consumption and not primarily for commercial activity.
Bowling Green	A specially prepared area intended for playing bowls.
Cemetery	Areas of land associated with burial areas.
Religious Grounds	Areas of land associated with churches and other places of worship. Only included where there are significant areas of green space (over 500m ² of natural space - identified as surfaces that are not manmade, such as grass, woodland and bare earth).
Golf Course	A specially prepared area intended for playing golf
Other Sports Facility	Land used for sports not specifically described by other categories. Includes those facilities where participation in sport is the primary use of the area.
Play Space	A specially prepared area intended for children's play, usually linked to housing areas or parks and containing purpose built equipment. Not captured if within schools or paid-for tourist attractions.
Playing Field	Large, flat areas of grass or specially designed surfaces, generally with marked pitches, used primarily for outdoor sports, i.e. football, rugby, cricket.
Public Park or Garden	Areas of land designed, constructed, managed and maintained as a public park or garden. These normally have a defined perimeter and free public access, and generally sit within or close to urban areas. Access is granted for a wide range of uses and not usually restricted to paths or tracks within the area. May include areas with managed facilities such as benches and flowerbeds, and more natural areas.
Tennis Court	A specially prepared area intended for playing tennis.

OS Website

kllj1@le.ac.uk

‘It is hoped the dataset will prove instrumental in helping the public sector create and manage health and wellbeing strategies, active travel plans and various environmental initiatives that include air quality, biodiversity, housing regeneration and flood resilience’.

OS website

CONSENSUS
&
COLLABORATION



Inside academia

- REF (Research Excellence Framework)
- RCUK (incorporating AHRC and ESRC)
- Open Access variations on publication



Outside academia

- Less insulated from political agendas
- Competitive for grants
- Low proportion of grants set aside for research

Principles

- Political independence of thought and protection of findings.
- A commitment to the long view - resist transient terminology that renders our research obsolete within a single political cycle.
- Recognition of our common function within the sector.
- Acknowledge and promote evidence of consensus of findings.
- Develop **inter-professional** research projects.
- Attempt to build international research projects. If this is not possible, be willing to contribute to other countries' initiatives. Be a good 'research citizen'.

Turn research into action...

- A campaign to raise public appreciation of parks at risk.
- Individuals and organisations to speak boldly about general rules rather than exceptions.
- Reflect the reality as well as the aspiration for parks.
- End the banality.

- **Objective**
- **Collated**
- **Interpreted**
- **Available**
- **Active**

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Dr Anna Barker, Dr David Churchill,
Professor Adam Crawford & Dr Nathan Booth

THE LEEDS PARKS PROJECT



THE FUTURE PROSPECTS OF URBAN PUBLIC PARKS

Findings - Informing change

Anna Barker, Nathan Booth, David Churchill and Adam Crawford
University of Leeds

JULY 2017

 #MYPARKMATTERS @leedsparksstudy
www.futureofparks.leeds.ac.uk



THE PROJECT: 2015 - 2017

- **Aim: To think forward through the past and present**
- Project explores the social role, uses and future prospects of public parks in Leeds, both in the Victorian era and today.
- Historical research & contemporary study
- City-wide overview & three case study parks
- Funded by the AHRC, supported by Leeds City Council and a national advisory network



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Leeds
CITY COUNCIL



THE FUTURE PROSPECTS OF URBAN PUBLIC PARKS

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STRUCTURE

1. Public survey findings
2. Lessons from history
3. Possible park futures

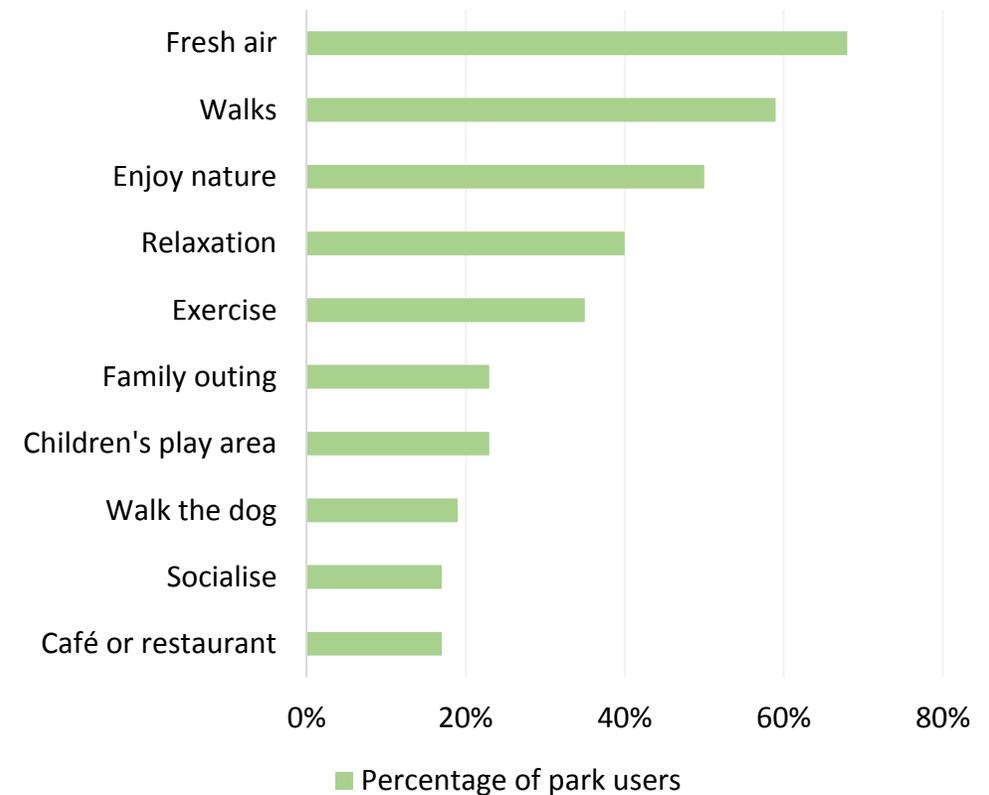


LEEDS PARKS SURVEY: PARK USE

- Parks are widely used and enjoyed by diverse groups in society.
- More than 9 in 10 used parks in preceding year.*
- No significant difference in use by ethnic group.

*Responses weighted by gender & ethnicity = 5,745 respondents. Of these, 91% (n=5,228) were park users.

Reasons for use



LEEDS PARKS SURVEY: VISITOR PREFERENCES

- Leeds City Council manage 70 public parks – 7 ‘major’ (city) parks and 63 ‘community’ parks.
- Many people (31%) **do not** usually visit the park nearest to where they live.
- Instead, they travel beyond their immediate locality to access the attributes and facilities of another park.



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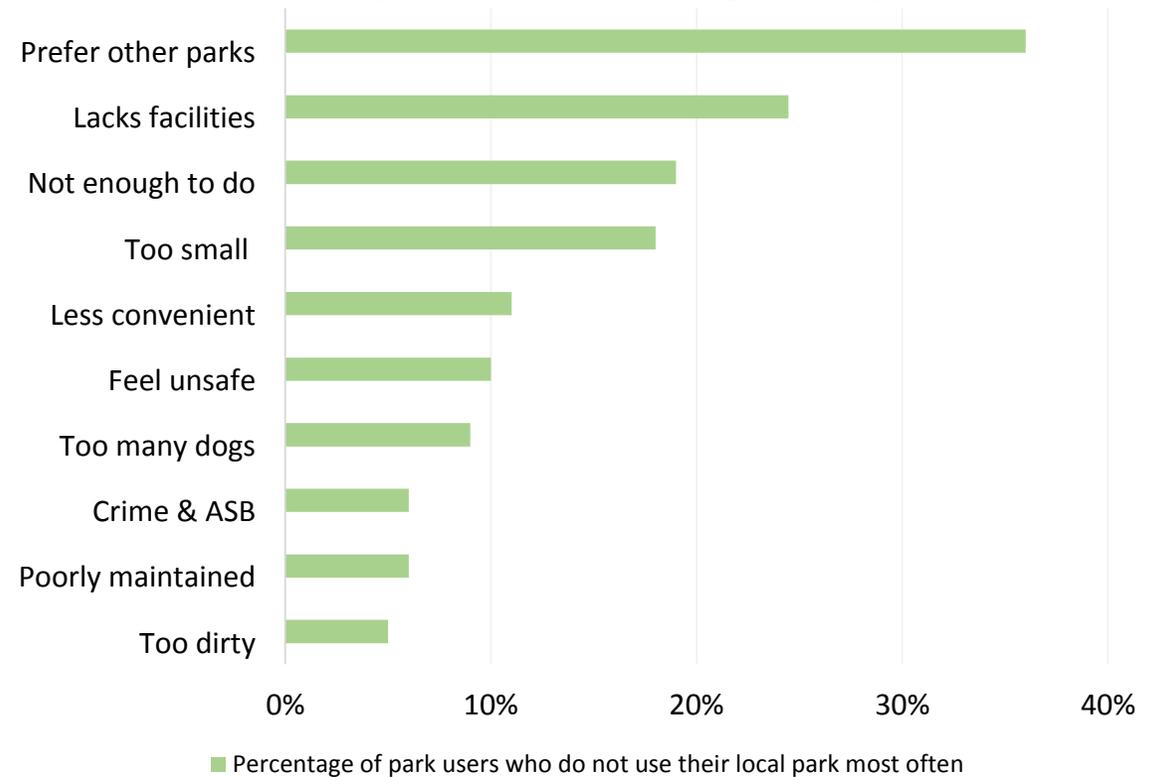


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'I make weekly visits to another park for parkrun. I have nothing against my nearest park but don't visit as frequently.' (Park user)

Reasons for not visiting local park (most regularly)



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The behaviours of park users and patterns of park use raise broader questions and implications:

- Seeing/managing parks as local or city-wide, social assets.
- Dangers of a self-reinforcing, tiered hierarchy of parks if funding, facilities and resources follow visitor numbers.
- Implications for funding policies based on locality alone, such as proposals that local residents contribute to a parks levy.

'I prefer Roundhay Park, even though it is one of the furthest [away], because it is big, beautiful, peaceful, and interesting.' (Park user)

'[My main fear is that] It will be forgotten as it is small and only used by locals, as opposed to say Roundhay which attracts people from all over Leeds.' (Community park user)



LEEDS PARKS SURVEY: NON-USE

- Good quality, accessible green space is associated with better mental and physical health, and reduces health inequalities.
- However, certain groups of people tend to use parks less, including those who might significantly benefit from them.
- Approx. 1 in 12 did not use parks in the preceding year.
- 75+ and people with a disability significantly less likely to use parks.
- Top reasons for non-use were ‘poor health or disability’.

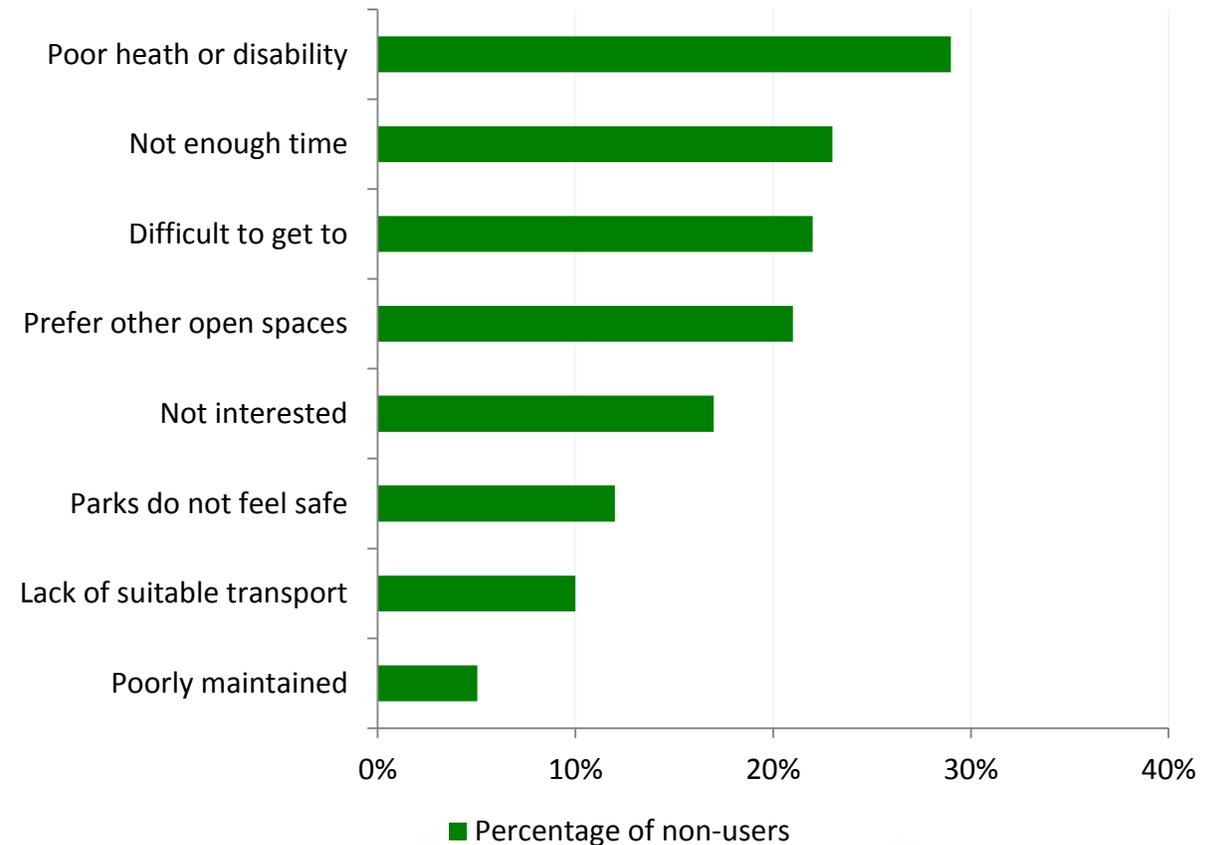


LEEDS PARKS SURVEY: REASONS FOR NON-USE

'I am 86 years old, my legs are very bad at walking and I don't have transport. I used to love to go to Temple Newsam.'

'I am a disabled, wheelchair user without my own transport so access is difficult.'

'Bladder problem. Worry about accessibility of loos.'



URBAN PARKS AS 'SPACES APART'



'Really enjoy the green parklands in a large commercial city.' (Park user)

The Victorian park ideal:

- Minimal construction
- Little productive/commercial activity
- A space of recreation

Continual process of striving to make parks spaces apart from the surrounding city.

Contemporary challenges as spaces apart:

- Funding restraint
- Commercialisation
- Green infrastructure



POSSIBLE PARK FUTURES

- Parks becoming more varied.
- Models are ideal-types:
 - parks may not conform directly to any single type
 - multiple models may infuse how parks are governed
- Models differ along three dimensions:
 - Funding, rights of access and (contractual) conditions of use;
 - Design of the park and how it facilitates use;
 - Management of competing needs and uses.
- Tipping points & interaction effects

