

Public Satisfaction with Grounds Maintenance in LB Bromley

Final Report

idverde

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Prepared on Behalf of Tetra Tech Environment Planning Transport Limited.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 REPORT CONTEXT

- 1.1.1 Tetrattech was commissioned by idverde to undertake a survey of the perception of parks management and grounds maintenance in the London Borough of Bromley (LB Bromley).
- 1.1.2 In previous years both a postal survey and on-street survey have been conducted and the results combined to give an overall perspective on the satisfaction with grounds maintenance in LB Bromley. However, it was decided not to conduct an on-street survey this time around but instead to do a larger scale postal survey. To this end it was agreed to carry out a postal survey, with forms sent to a representative sample of 3,000 addresses in LB Bromley.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 POSTAL SURVEY

- 2.1.1 A postal survey was conducted by sending questionnaires to 3,000 randomly selected households in Bromley from a database supplied by the Council.
- 2.1.2 Each selected household was sent a letter explaining the purpose of the survey, with the survey form on the reverse side. A stamped addressed envelope was provided for the return of the questionnaire. To encourage responses, an incentive of a prize draw for a £100 Love2Shop voucher was offered, for which householders needed to return the completed form and fill in their contact details.
- 2.1.3 The survey form used is shown in Figure 1: Postal Survey Form.
- 2.1.4 A unique reference number was assigned to each form sent out so that checks could be made on response rates from different housing types, to ensure that the responses were still representative. It could also allow comparisons to be made by housing type, ward or other classifications, e.g. street cleansing beat, although this was not undertaken for this project.
- 2.1.5 The survey forms were sent out on 10th June and householders were asked to return forms by 27th June 2022 for entry into the prize draw.
- 2.1.6 Analysis was made of the responses to each question and the results are shown in Section 3.

Figure 1: Postal Survey Form

PLEASE ONLY TICK ONE <input type="checkbox"/> PER ROW					
1. How often do you visit parks in LB Bromley?	<input type="checkbox"/> Daily	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 - 5 times per week	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 - 3 times per week	<input type="checkbox"/> Once per week	<input type="checkbox"/> Occasionally
2. What is the main activity that you use parks for in LB Bromley?	<input type="checkbox"/> Dog walking	<input type="checkbox"/> Exercise	<input type="checkbox"/> Activities with children	<input type="checkbox"/> Relaxation	<input type="checkbox"/> Organised events
3. Overall, how satisfied are you with parks & open spaces in LB Bromley?	<input type="checkbox"/> Very satisfied	<input type="checkbox"/> Fairly satisfied	<input type="checkbox"/> Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	<input type="checkbox"/> Fairly dissatisfied	<input type="checkbox"/> Very dissatisfied
4. How satisfied are you with the condition of the following existing features in parks & open spaces? Please tick one box per row.	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Floral display	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grass	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cleanliness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Play areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Woodlands	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality of signage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Facilities (drinking fountains, toilets)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Biodiversity Friendly Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. What do you consider to be the number one priority for Bromley's parks from the list below. Please choose your most important park feature (Please only tick One box)					
Floral display	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Grass	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Cleanliness	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Play areas	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Woodlands	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Quality of signage	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Facilities (drinking fountains, toilets)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Biodiversity Friendly Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>				

3.0 RESULTS

3.1 RESPONSE RATES

- 3.1.1 There were 399 respondents to the postal survey, giving a response rate of 13%. Overall, 11% of forms were returned fully completed and 2% were returned with one or more questions not completed. This is equivalent to 84% of forms returned being fully completed (336/399), a good level, indicating that the questions were not too onerous.
- 3.1.2 Figure 2 and Table 1 provide a breakdown of response rates by housing type. The housing type with the highest response rate was semi-detached housing at 17% followed by detached at 16% terraced housing at 12%, and finally flats at 8%.

Figure 2: Postal Survey Response Rates

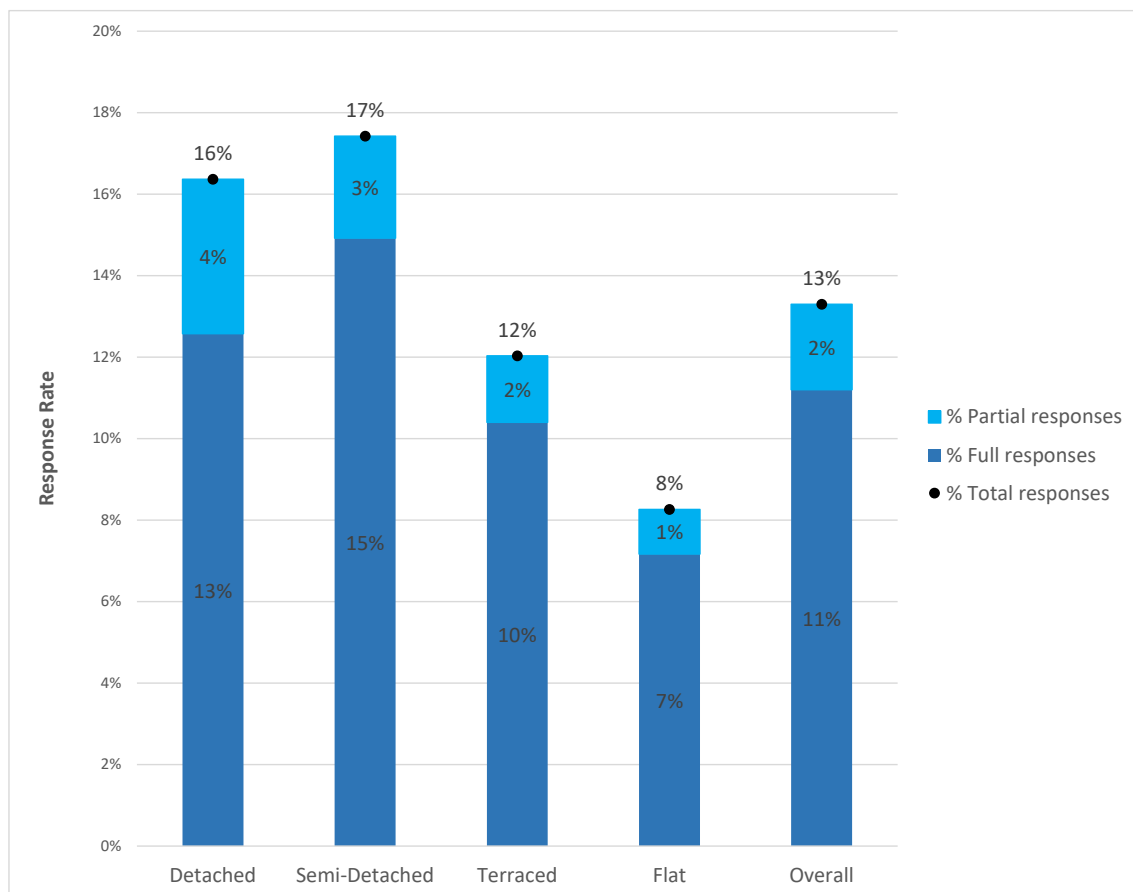


Table 1: Response Rates by Housing Type

	Detached	Semi-Detached	Terraced	Flat	Overall
Number of survey forms sent out	501	878	798	823	3000
Number returned	82	153	96	68	399
% Responses (of those sent out)	16%	17%	12%	8%	13%
% Full response	13%	15%	10%	7%	11%
% Partial response	4%	3%	2%	1%	2%
% No response	84%	83%	88%	92%	87%
% Full response of those that responded	77%	86%	86%	87%	84%

3.2 SATISFACTION

3.2.1 Figure 3 shows the breakdown of responses to each of the satisfaction questions (Q3 and Q4) in the postal survey. Blank responses are excluded from the percentages. The key to the colour coding in all subsequent graphs and tables is shown below. Favourable responses are classified as 'Very/Fairly Satisfied' and these cells are shaded in green; 'Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied' responses are shaded in yellow, 'Fairly Dissatisfied' responses are shaded orange and the least favourable responses ('Very Dissatisfied') are shaded red.

Key

Favourable		Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Not Favourable	
Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied		Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied

Figure 3: Survey Responses to Satisfaction Questions



3.2.2 Table 2 provides further detail on the responses to questions 3 and 4 in the postal survey. It shows the percentage of responses that are favourable, the most frequent response and the percentage for each response. Cells are shaded according to the key above, with stronger shading indicating higher values within that classification. Overall, the responses are positive:-

- 77% of respondents are satisfied with the parks and open spaces in LB Bromley;
- Satisfaction with individual features varied greatly ranging from 21% satisfaction for 'Facilities' at the lower end of the spectrum up to 77% satisfaction for 'Grass' and 'Woodlands';

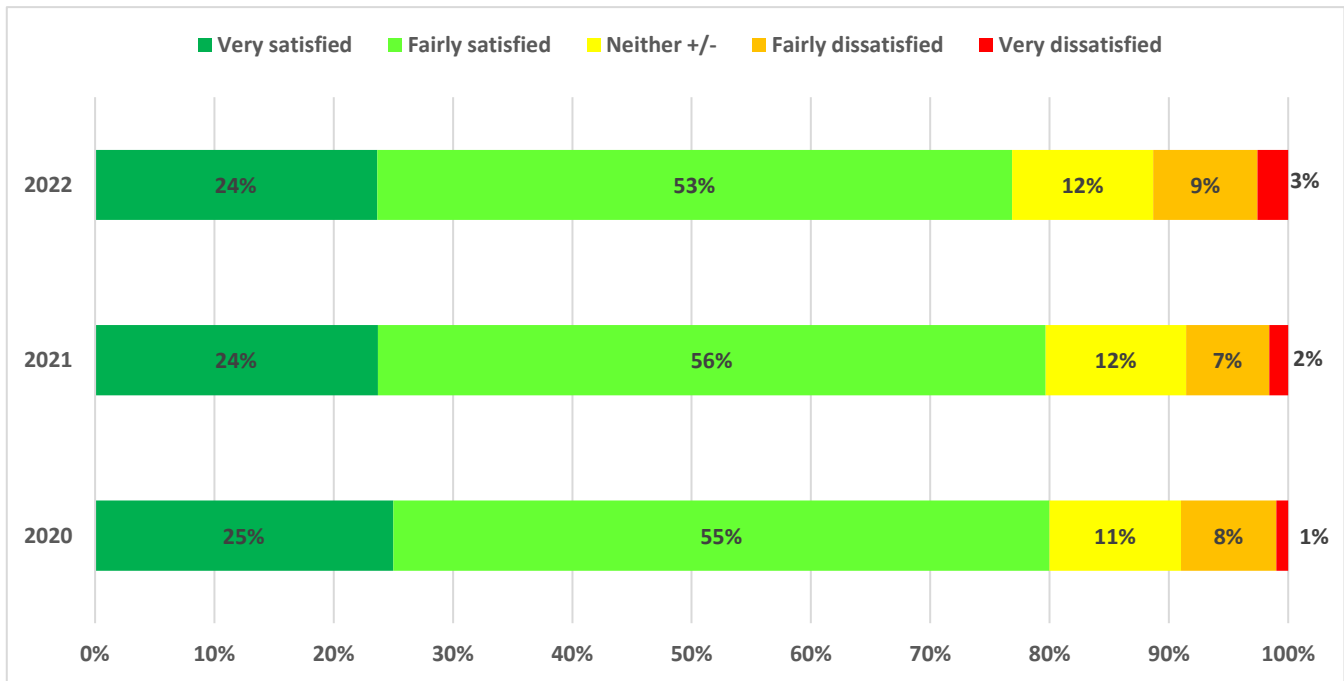
- The highest level of dissatisfaction (combined fairly and very dissatisfied) for individual features was recorded for 'Facilities' at 57%, while lower levels of dissatisfaction were recorded for all other features with 'Cleanliness' recording the second highest dissatisfaction at 20%. It is important to note that while the question specifically asked for satisfaction with the condition of the features, several responses where 'very dissatisfied' had been selected respondents had added comments suggesting their dissatisfaction was levelled at the lack of facilities available.

Table 2: Survey Responses to Satisfaction Questions

Question	% Satisfied	Most Common Category	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither +/-	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Total
Parks & Open Spaces in LB Bromley								
Satisfied with Parks & Open Spaces in LB Bromley?	77%	Fairly satisfied	24%	53%	12%	9%	3%	100%
Satisfied with features in parks and open spaces in LB Bromley:								
Floral Display	64%	Fairly satisfied	21%	43%	25%	9%	3%	100%
Grass	77%	Fairly satisfied	27%	49%	13%	8%	2%	100%
Cleanliness	63%	Fairly satisfied	16%	48%	17%	15%	5%	100%
Play Areas	49%	Neither +/-	15%	35%	38%	9%	4%	100%
Woodlands	77%	Fairly satisfied	31%	46%	16%	6%	1%	100%
Quality of signage	58%	Fairly satisfied	17%	41%	31%	9%	3%	100%
Facilities (i.e. drinking fountains, toilets)	21%	Fairly dissatisfied	3%	17%	22%	35%	22%	100%
Biodiversity Friendly Areas	43%	Neither +/-	10%	33%	43%	11%	3%	100%

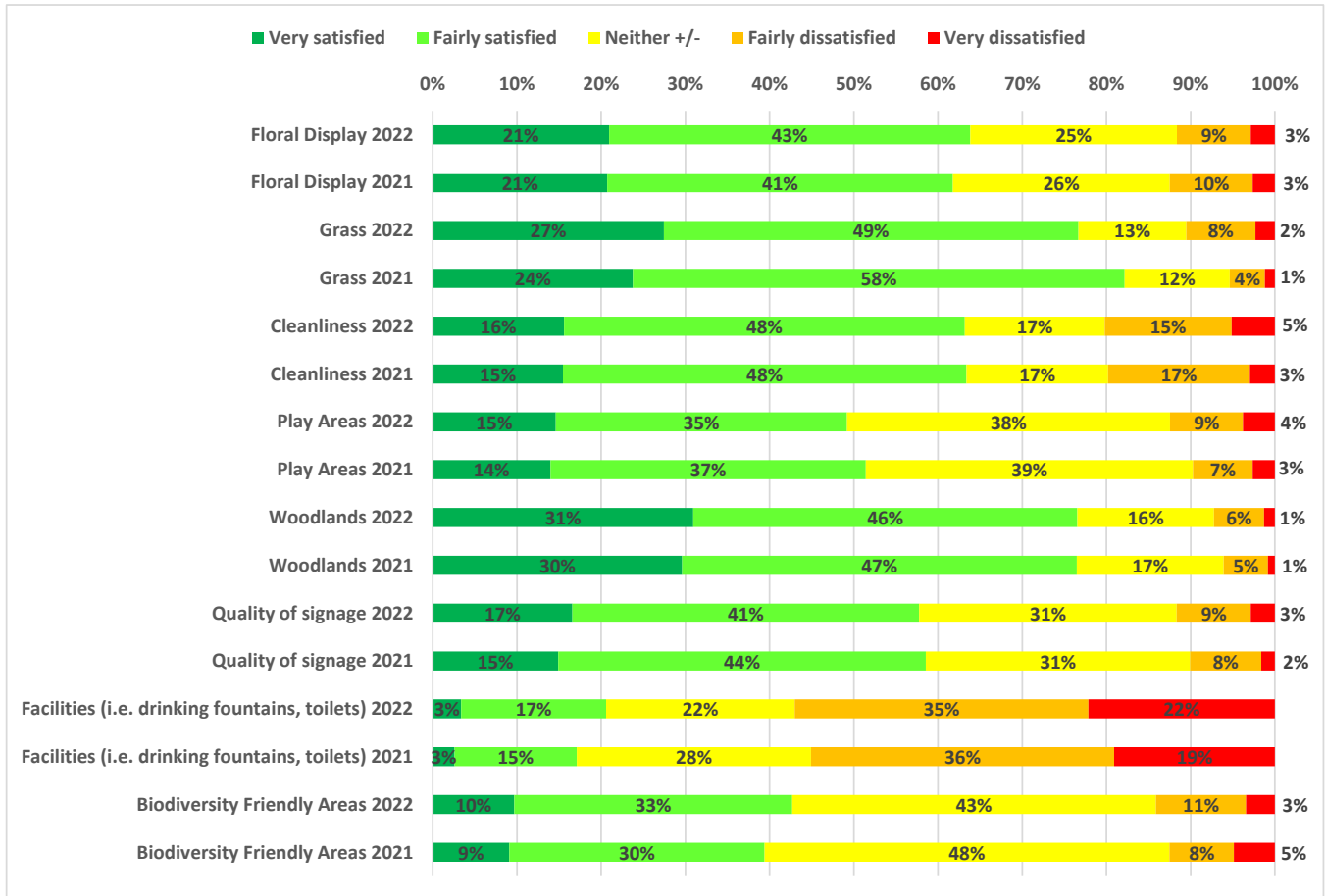
3.2.3 Figure 4 below shows a comparison between the overall satisfaction with Bromley's parks and open spaces in the current survey against the previous Postal survey conducted in March 2021 and March 2020. Comparing the results of the three postal surveys indicates that levels of satisfaction have remained consistent with the percentage of respondents in each category of satisfaction changing by 2% or less.

Figure 4: Comparison of Overall Satisfaction with Bromley's Parks and Open Spaces



3.2.4 Figure 5 shows the satisfaction with each park's and open space's feature compared with the results from the March 2021 survey. The majority of levels of satisfaction have remained similar across the two surveys with changes of 1-5% up or down.

Figure 5: Comparison of Satisfaction with Features in Bromley’s Parks and Open Spaces in 2022 compared with 2021

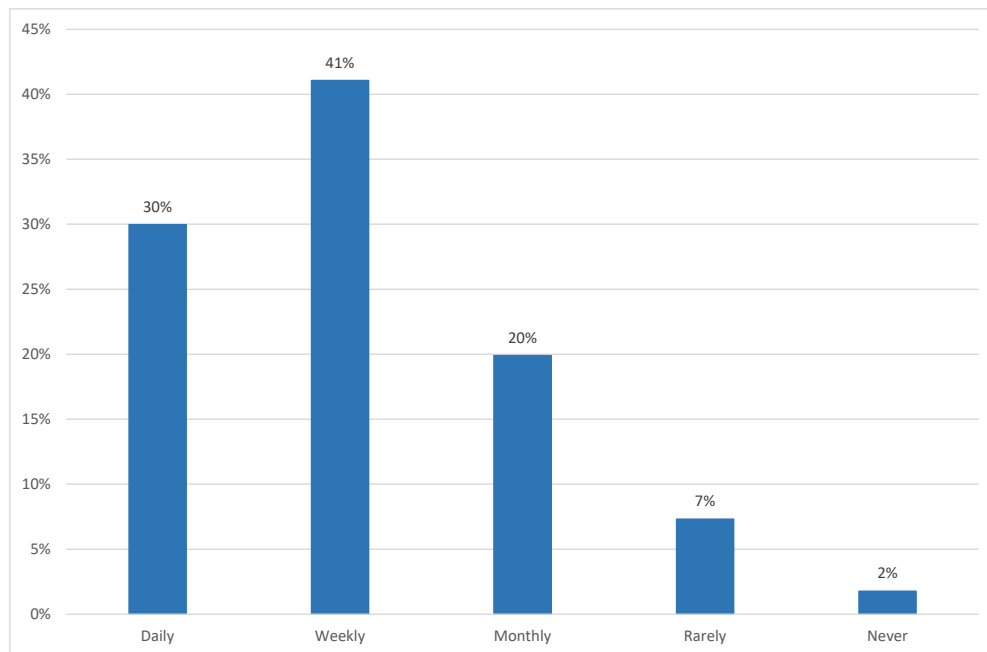


3.3 VISITING FREQUENCY

3.3.1 Question 1 in the survey asked respondents: ‘How often do you visit parks in LB Bromley on average?’. In previous surveys the options have been “Daily”, “4-5 times a week”, “2-3 times a week” “once a week” or “Occasionally”. At the request of idverde this year’s options were amended too: “Daily”, “Weekly”, “Monthly”, “Rarely” and “Never”.

3.3.2 Figure 6 shows the majority of respondents reported that they visited LB Bromley parks ‘Weekly’. There has also been an increase in the percentage of respondents reporting that they visit daily in 2022: 30% compared with 11% pre pandemic, 18% during the pandemic and 15% in 2020.

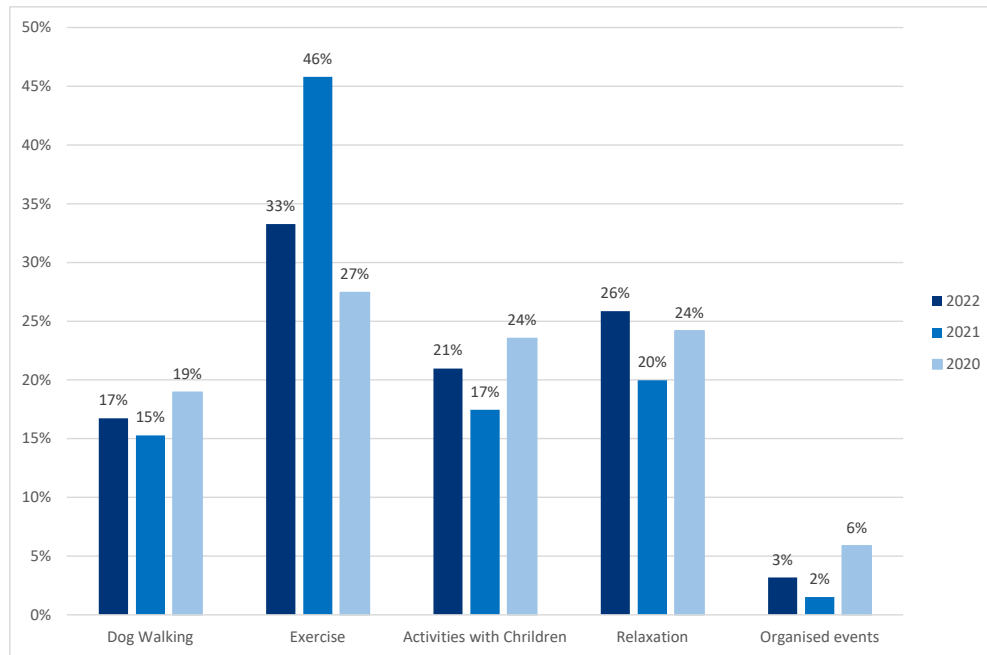
Figure 6: Reported Frequency of visits to LB Bromley’s parks in 2022



3.4 REASONS FOR VISITING PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

- 3.4.1 Figure 7 shows the respondents main reason for visiting LB Bromley’s parks and open spaces in 2022 compared with the results from the 2021 and 2020 survey. Where respondents ticked more than one activity all responses have been included within the analysis thus there are 446 responses in total to this question.
- 3.4.2 In all three surveys ‘Exercise’ was the main reason for visiting at 33% in 2022, 46% and 27% in 2021 and 2020 respectively, followed by ‘Relaxation’ at 26%, 20% and 24%. Reasons for visiting LB Bromley parks and open spaces have stayed fairly consistent between the surveys with the exception of ‘Exercise’ which saw a significant increase in respondents selecting this as the main activity between 2021 and 2020.

Figure 7: Main reason postal survey respondents visit LB Bromley parks and open spaces (2022, 2021 & 2020).

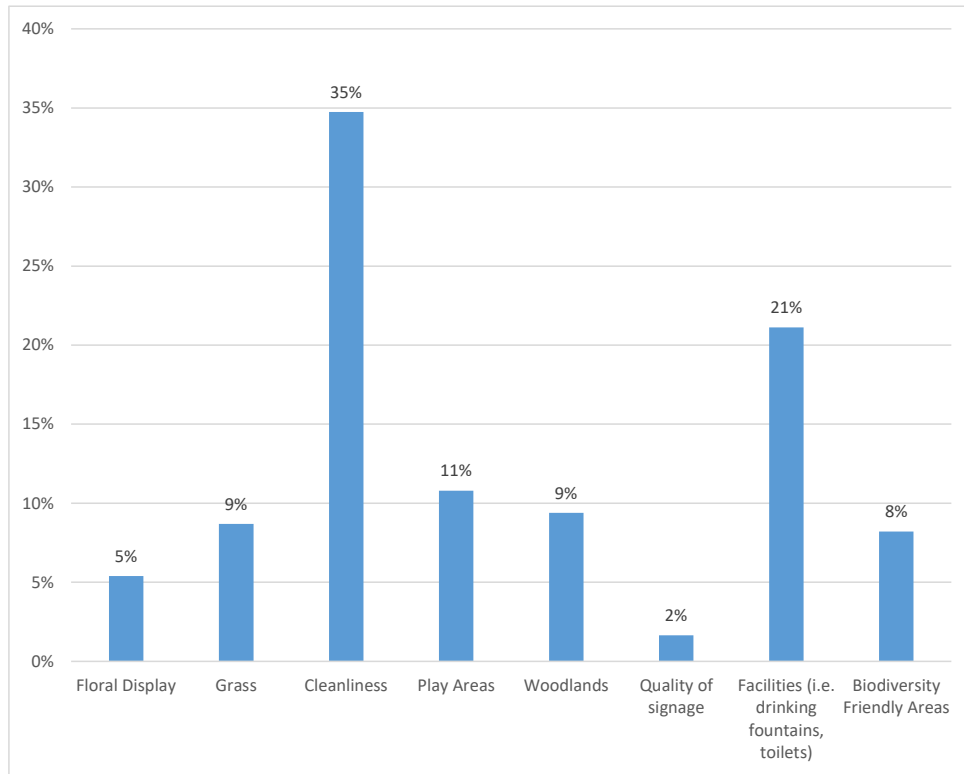


3.5 KEY PRIORITIES

- 3.5.1 Question 5 in the survey has been amended each year in an attempt to reduce respondent error in completing it.
- 3.5.2 In the 2021 survey respondents were required to tick what they considered to be the three key priorities for Bromley’s parks and open spaces from a list of features. Three columns were provided for respondents to select their most important, second most important and third most important feature. Within the question emphasis was put on respondents only selecting three key priorities and only ticking three boxes. However, it was found that this question was still misinterpreted by a significant number of respondents. Responses ranged from correct completion, to duplicate importance (i.e. multiple features selected as most important), to a box ticked for every feature and several incomplete responses. ‘Cleanliness’, ‘Facilities’ and ‘Woodlands’ were the most commonly selected features in respondents top three key priorities for LB Bromley’s parks and open spaces while ‘Quality of signage’ had the lowest percentage of respondents selecting it within their top three.

- 3.5.3 In the 2020 survey, the final question required respondents to rank a pre-defined list of park and open space features in terms of importance from 1-8, with 1 being of high importance and 8 being of low importance. It was found that this question was misinterpreted by some respondents rendering analysis difficult. Responses ranged from correct completion, to duplicate numbers (i.e. multiple features given the same ranking) and several incomplete responses. 'Cleanliness' and 'Grass' were the most highly ranked features in terms of importance with 'Quality of Signage' ranked as the least important.
- 3.5.4 As such the final question in the 2022 survey was modified and instead respondents were required to tick what they considered to be the number one priority for Bromley's parks from the list of features. This approach does seem to have reduced respondent error, however there were still several returned surveys where more than one feature was ticked as the most important - in these instances all responses have been included within the analysis.
- 3.5.5 Figure 8 shows the percentage of respondents that selected each feature which they considered to be the number one priority.
- 3.5.6 Overall 'Cleanliness' was the most important feature with 35% of respondents selecting it as their number one priority for Bromley's parks, followed by 'Facilities' at 21%. 'Quality of Signage' had the lowest percentage of respondents selecting it as their number one priority at only 2%.

Figure 8: Key Priorities for LB Bromley's Parks and Open Spaces



4.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 Overall, responses are positive with 77% of respondents indicating that they are satisfied with LB Bromley's parks and open spaces, however this result is a 3% decrease compared to the 2021 survey.
- 4.1.2 Satisfaction with 'Facilities' was the only response that was largely negative with the majority of respondents falling into the 'Fairly Dissatisfied' category and only 21% reporting they were satisfied ('Very Satisfied' and 'Fairly Satisfied' combined). It is important to note that the result from the 2021 and 2020 survey also had only a 17% and 18% respectively satisfaction for 'Facilities', therefore there has not been a significant decrease in respondents' perception. The wording of the question was amended in the 2022 survey to specify satisfaction with the condition of existing facilities, however for several responses where 'very dissatisfied' was chosen respondents had added comments around the page suggesting their dissatisfaction was related to the lack of facilities available.
- 4.1.3 The results show clearly that there has been a shift in respondents' behaviours in the past three years, with respondents visiting LB Bromley's parks and open spaces on a much more regular basis: although visiting 'Weekly' was the most common response there has been a significant increase in those visiting 'Daily' with 30% in 2022 compared with 11% pre pandemic, 18% during the pandemic and 15% in 2020.
- 4.1.4 The main reasons why respondents visit LB Bromley's parks and open spaces has remained largely unchanged between 2020 and 2022. Compared with the 2021 results all activities have seen a slight increase in the percentage of respondents with the exception of 'Exercise' which has decreased by 13%. However, between 2021 and 2020 there was a slight decrease in all activities except 'Exercise' which had seen a significant increase. This is likely attributed to respondents now returning back to pre-pandemic lifestyles.
- 4.1.5 'Cleanliness' was the most commonly selected feature in respondents' top priority for LB Bromley's parks and open spaces with 35% of respondents choosing it as their number one priority. This was followed by 'facilities' with 21% of respondents selecting it as the top priority. It should be noted that 'Cleanliness' had fairly high levels of satisfaction (at 63%) whereas satisfaction with 'Facilities' was only 21%; however, as discussed, we can't rule out that some of this dissatisfaction is due to the number, rather than the condition, of existing facilities. Although the questions were set out slightly differently in both 2021 and 2020 'Cleanliness' was selected as the most important feature by respondents, this was followed by 'Facilities' and 'Woodland' in 2021 and by 'Grass' in 2020. Throughout all three surveys 2020-2022 'Quality of signage' has been selected as the least important feature by respondents.

APPENDIX A – RESPONDENTS COMMENTS

Survey No	Comment
1312	Tillingbourne Green always has litter
376	Could do with outdoor gym equipment in the borough especially in Norman park
2894	Blakes Park desperately need more and larger bins
2320	Need toilets in Alexandra Rec
2250	Looking forward to seeing some of the overgrown areas and roundabouts being cut now no mow may is over – vision difficulties and hay fever
1458	No toilets in the priory park Orpington
881	Play areas run down / broken or like Beckenham place park not designed for toddlers but older children only
2086	More benches and seats required
1351	Grass on sides of roads left long time between cuts and cut grass just left
2261	Give us some toilets
1476	Crystal palace park grass was damaged by 2021 concerts and has not recovered. Cleanliness is a issue near the train station. Some people use the park to play loud music with DJ equipment I don't think it is legal.
912	Crystal palace park and Kelsey Park are overrun with rats
1424	Trees need cutting back on to gardens and stop sun into gardens
560	Toilet Facilities are appalling in Norman and Kelsey Park. They are disgusting to take babies / children too please update them.
471	Dog Poo everywhere
327	Disgusting there is no toilets in Norman Park
285	Big issue is with poor quality of paths – muddy, flooded barely passable in winter – really need investment
827	Toilets in Beckenham Park are appalling. Beckenham recreation ground on Croydon Rd ? have been sub standard for many years, Kelsey Park too.
2834	Parks are full of rats
658	I was in Glenrammon rec with my granddaughter when I spotted broken glass by the fence withing the children's play area. Noticing a grass cutting vehicle in operation I spoke to the driver and asked him to notify head office. Immediately he left his vehicle and cleared up all the glass himself making the area safe. A wonderful attitude and I thanked him for his thoughtful actions.
1012	We visit Kelsey Park frequently and are horrified at the general air of the place, paths are full of weeds mud and bird droppings. It is clear that the state of the lower pond is awful. Fallen trees lie across it and no effort has been made since the pandemic started to restore it (and many other things) to the beautiful park generally to former glory.
238	Lots of Dog Poo
2803	Please repair the bridge in Kelsey Park
583	Please consider / improve disabled access
1802	Keeping ponds and lakes clean should be a priority
447	Need closed bins as foxes rip them all open

