

Queens Park Master Plan

Background

Laid out by John Armstrong in 1824, the spa was constructed the same year. Land then acquired by Thomas Attree between 1825-1830 and the park was renamed 'Queens Park' in honour of Queen Adelaide, wife of William IV. The park was private and only invited guests were allowed to visit.

After the death of Attree in 1863 the park was purchased by George Duddell, the park remained private, however changes were made, the archery grounds were transformed into a roller skating rink (now the pond), Duddell died in 1888 and the park was put back on the market.

The Races Stand Trustees purchased the park for the city a few years later and the park was designed by Mr May the Borough Surveyor and Mr Ward, the head gardener. The lake was created and a drinking fountain was erected in memory of the purchase of the land for the people of Brighton. The park was officially opened on 10 August 1892.

Queens Park MasterPlan Consultation

Brighton & Hove City Council has been working with local landscape architect Tom Hardiment, the Friends of Queens Park and the local community to develop proposals for the Park. The main project factors are:

Maintenance – The scheme must not cause an increase in maintenance.

Sustainability – All parts of any scheme must be as sustainable as possible, planting should reflect the council's shift towards herbaceous and perennial schemes which are lower maintenance, cheaper and more tolerant to extreme weather conditions once established.

Biodiversity – where possible, biodiversity should be considered, protected and enhanced.

Accessibility – where possible, access should be improved to enable as many park users as possible to enjoy the space.

Grade II – as a listed park, any structural changes will require approval from English Heritage and will be subject to planning consent.

The consultation began in June 2014. 2000 postcards were sent out to a selection of addresses: 1500 of these were in the area immediately around Queens Park and a further 500 were a random selection from a larger area around the park. People were invited to take part in the consultation by going online. The following events were held at Queens Park where the plans could be viewed in more detail and where paper copies of the questionnaire were available for people to complete:

- Bark in the Park – Sunday 15th June 12-4pm.
- Picnic in the Park – Sunday 29th June 12-4pm.

368 responses were received giving an 18.4% response rate. The methods of response are shown below:

	Number	%
Mail	97	26.4

Online	271	73.6
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Findings:

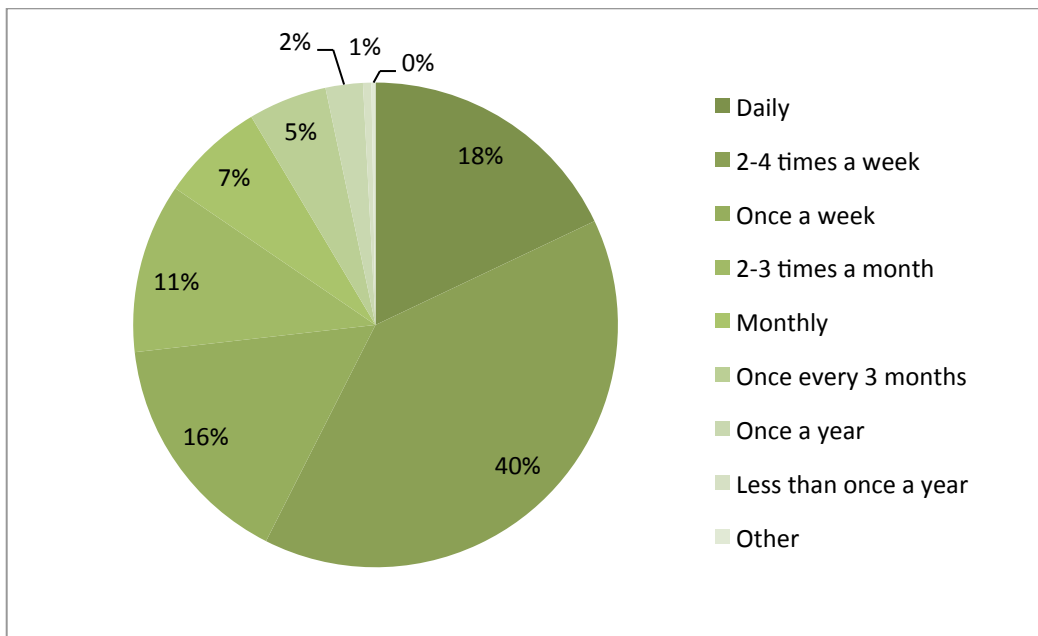
Q1

Have you visited Queens Park?

	Number	%
Yes	352	99.7
No	1	.3
Total	353	100

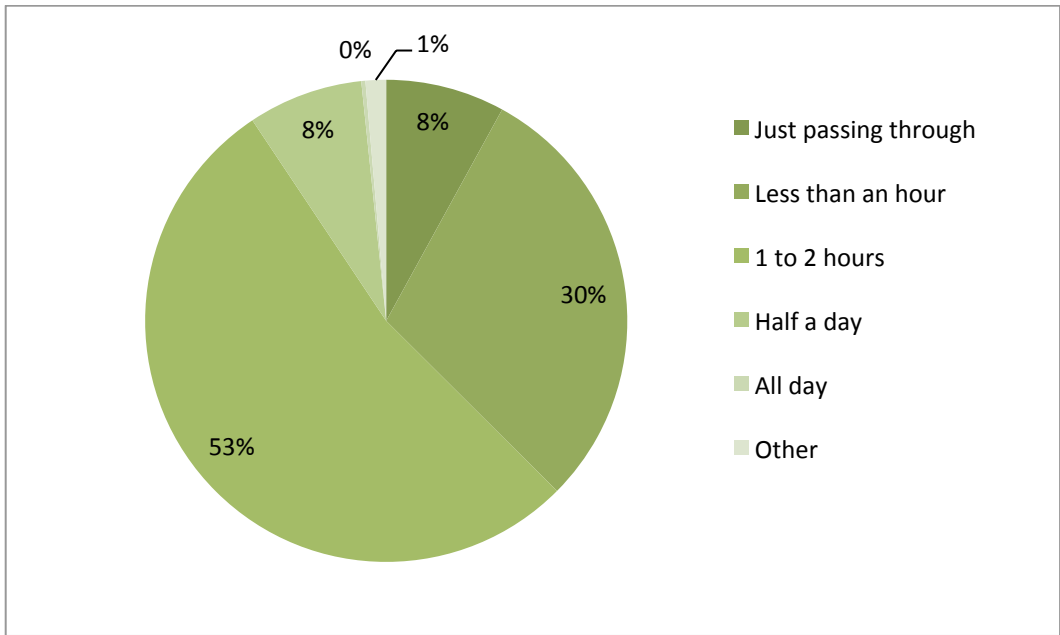
Q2

On average, how often do you use Queens Park?

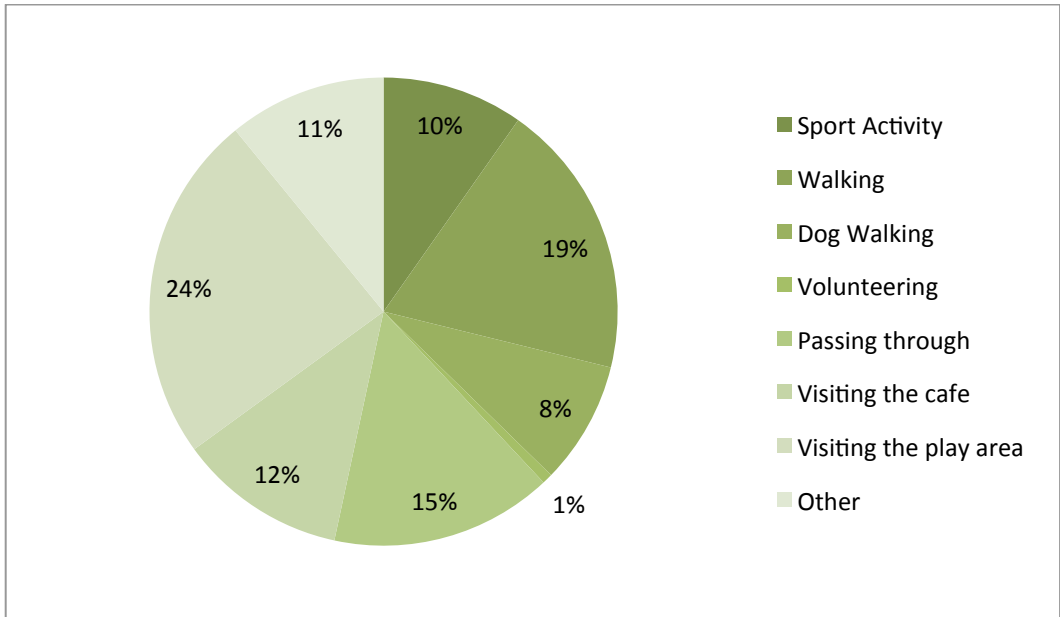


Q3

On average, how long do you spend at Queens Park?



Q4
What is your usual reason for visiting the park?



Of those who answered 'Other' to this question the most common reasons were exploring with children, picnicking, meeting friends, and relaxing or sunbathing.

The Old Bowling Green

- Option A – Remove. Return it to the original sloping lawn.
- Option B – Keep and enhance. Retain it as the only sizeable level area in the park.

If it stays as a level area it must be low maintenance.
A level area would provide flexible lawn for such uses as: informal kick about, picnics, performances, occasional local school use (sports days, etc).

Q5a

Would you support the complete removal of the Old Bowling Green?

	Number	%
Yes	120	35.7
No	216	64.3
Total	336	100

Q5b

Would you like the flat space kept and revamped to make the space more functional?

	Number	%
Yes	324	92.0
No	28	8.0
Total	352	100

Q5c

Is there anything you would like to say about this area?

Of the comments given here there were a few reoccurring topics. The most frequent comment was that of support, particularly for the amphitheatre plans, and encouragement of making the Bowling Green a “flexible space” for a variety of uses 81 respondents mentioned this. 59 people also highlighted the importance of keeping this space flat and 45 respondents were keen for it to be made more sports focussed including suggestions such as installing all-weather pitches, outdoor gym equipment, or keeping it for informal games. Other comments included: keeping the current fences in place (12 responses), Continuing the planting around the edges (8 responses), and using this as a site for a new café/restaurant (6 responses).

The Pavilion & Courts

The building has potential to be self-financing – through revenue raised via shared use and hiring out to local organisations. As part of the refurbishment the steps could be improved and disabled access installed.

Q6a

Would you support the restoration of the pavilion providing increased facilities and greater scope for community use?

	Number	%
Yes	351	96.4
No	13	3.6
Total	364	100

Q6b

Is there anything you would like to say about this area?

The most popular response given here was that the pavilion was used as a community space; this was suggested and supported by 45 respondents. Possible uses given included: function room, party space, classes (i.e. yoga) and groups meetings etc. 16 people also suggested it could be the site of an addition café/restaurant. 25 respondents identified its need for restoration stating it is currently underused and highlighting it's presence as part of the parks history. There were also suggestions for access improvements including better disabled access, toilets, and cycle parking (13 respondents). A few respondents also admitted they knew little about the pavilion and more could be done to promote it (9 respondents).

The Scented Garden

It could be redesigned to improve the space, have a tranquil feel and have a greater variety of flowers and heights of planting; creating a greater diversity of habitats.

Q7a

Would you support a redesign of the 'Scented Garden' including an exit point close to the Clock Tower?

	Number	%
Yes	342	94.0
No	22	6.0
Total	364	100

Q7b

Is there anything you would like to say about this area?

Of all the additional comments given here the most frequent was support for the improvements in the Master Plan, respondents agreed the area needed opening up to the rest of the park and supported the additional exit proposed, (46 respondents). However 27 responses stated they would prefer the area to remain secluded, as it was an area meant for tranquillity. Concerns were expressed by 15 people about the amount of anti-social behaviour that takes place within the scented garden. Other suggestion for improvement included: More scented planting and wildlife encouraging planting (25 respondents), more facilities- toilets, kiosk, picnic area (7 respondents) and views that currently the area is underused and needs clearer purpose and direction (17 respondents).

Wildlife Garden

This garden is a successful and valuable resource providing habitats for attracting wildlife to the park. The garden could be rearranged to further enhance the wildlife potential.

Q8a

Would you support the listed improvement work to the Wildlife Garden?

	Number	%
Yes	337	93.1
No	25	6.9
Total	362	100

Q8b

Is there anything you would like to say about this area?

The most popular response here was general support for the improvements including proposals to increase wildlife, inclusion of paths and interpretation boards (38 respondents). However a similar number of people (34) stated that they were worried about the potential loss of the areas “wild feel” and strongly opposed the installation of interpretation boards. 10 people identified the area needed more general upkeep, and that it looked tired and overgrown in its current state. 7 respondents wanted more available interaction for children suggesting, nature trails etc. Also, 14 people wanted even more to be done to encourage wildlife including feeders and planting.

The Pond

In terms of design, the pond could either be kept as it is, or enhanced to increase the amount of habitat rich areas.

Q9a

Would you like the pond to remain as it is?

	Number	%
Yes	78	25.7
No	225	74.3
Total	303	100

Q9b

Would you support enhancements for wildlife?

	Number	%
Yes	348	96.7
No	12	3.3
Total	360	100

Q9c

Is there anything you would like to say about this area?

By far the most popular comment here was to do with the state of the pond itself, 74 respondents highlighted the desire for removal of much of the algae/weeds/ duckweed and that more water circulation was needed to keep the pond looking clean. There was support for the measures suggest to help wildlife encouragement 53 people stated they supported the dipping platforms, aquatic planting and inclusion of a non-accessible area. However 12 respondents were opposed to the pond dipping platforms in particular. 26 people mentioned their desire for a strategy to discourage the amount of seagulls at the Pond, suggestions for this included encouraging more ducks and informing people not to feed the seabirds. Further suggested improvements for this area of the park included installing a small railing to prevent objects/people falling into the pond and occasions were stated were this had happened (9 respondents). 11 respondents also highlighted that they would like to see more uses for the pond i.e. educational/ boating events.

The Cascade

The cascade is a great original feature of the 1892 garden but it loses a significant amount of water when running and needs attention.

Q10a

Would you support the restoration of the cascade and landscaping of surrounding areas?

	Number	%
Yes	351	97.0
No	11	3.0
Total	362	100

Q10b

Is there anything else you would like to say about this area?

The majority of people who provided additional comments for this question identified The Cascade as one of their priority for restoration, stating it was one of the most widely used areas of the whole park (46 respondents). 39 people stated their support for the improvements suggested, and in particular noted the importance of reinstating the flowing water of The Cascade. Other recurring comments included some reservation about removing the trees (12 respondents), noting the current uncared for state of the area and it's need for more upkeep (17 respondents) and 12 people stated they believed the money would be better spent elsewhere, and that this what not a priority amongst all of the other projects in the park.

Cafe and toilets

At present the café and toilets are inaccessible to large amounts of park users.

Q11a

Would you support the construction of a new café in a new location?

	Number	%
Yes	223	69.0
No	100	31.0
Total	323	100

Q11b

Or the rearrangement of the play area fence boundary?

	Number	%
Yes	110	46.8
No	125	53.2
Total	235	100

Q11c

Neither - Café location is fine as it is

	Number	%
Yes	105	28.5

Q11d

Is there anything you would like to say about this area?

This was the area of the park which provided the highest volume of additional comments and suggestions. By far the most popular theme was the desire to maintain the separate areas for children and for dogs and in particular strong opposition to allowing dogs anywhere near the children’s play area, 79 responses included this opinion. In reference to the location of the café there were varied reactions to the proposals in the Master Plan. 41 respondents did acknowledge that there was a problem with accessibility and that there needed to be a solution to suit both parents and dog owners. 26 respondents agreed with the new site proposed in the plans, with some stating the proximity to the play area currently is uncomfortable and provides a limited view. However more people (46) wanted to see the café stay in the current location and with only minor modifications, as it was in the best place. 26 people stated their desire for a completely new and/or additional café in a new location in the park. There were also improvement suggestions including better opening hours and better products (17 respondents) and new/refurbished/more accessible toilets (20 respondents).

West Drive Boundary

The West Drive Boundary needs a long term management plan – to protect the health of the important trees, stabilise the soil, and increase the wildlife habitat potential.

Q12

Would you support the proposed improvements?

I2a

Slope stabilisation and retaining wall.

	Number	%
Yes	325	98.8
No	4	1.2
Total	329	100

I2b

Steps at southern end.

	Number	%
Yes	291	89.5
No	34	10.5
Total	325	100

I2c

Railing to West and North Drives.

	Number	%
Yes	236	74.4
No	81	25.6
Total	317	100

Q12d

Is there anything you would like to say about this area?

23 respondents added additional support for the proposals due to the needed improvements in accessibility. However there was opposition, particularly for the railings (23 respondents) as people stated they were unnecessary and would provide no benefit. There were complaints about the amount of dog fouling and litter in this area (12 respondents) and encouragement of more planting which should also be better maintained (13 respondents).

Historical aspects

The park has a number of important historical design elements including the Grade II listed Drinking Fountain, gateway arches and Clock Tower.

Q13a

Would you support the restoration of key features such as the Drinking Fountain and the Clock Tower?

	Number	%
Yes	353	97.0
No	11	3.0
Total	364	100

Q13b

Is there anything you would like to say about this area?

Respondents expressed additional support here for restoration of all the historical features within the park (41 respondents). 20 people highlighted their desire for the restoration of the drinking fountain and 17 stated support for the historical boards and information in particular. However 12 people were unsure of the inclusion of photos because they may cause “too much clutter” or encourage “vandalism”. 13 respondents identified this area was not a priority for restoration and that the historical components didn’t need to be fully functional.

Park Furniture

The existing furniture is in need of attention and the lighting provision could be improved for certain routes through the park.

Q14a

Which type of furniture do you think would be most suitable for the park?

	Number	%
Modern	53	15.2
Traditional	295	84.8
Total	348	100

Q14b

Would you support additional lighting along key paths?

	Number	%
Yes	237	89.1
No	29	10.9
Total	266	100

Q14c

Is there anything you would like to say about this area?

The majority of additional comments given here supported the findings above with 43 respondents expressing their preference for traditional furniture in most cases their reasoning for this was they felt it would be more in keeping with the character of the park. 35 respondents also furthered their support for additional lighting as the park is too dark or feels unsafe at night. However 18 respondents were opposed to more lighting and expressed that any inclusion of this should be low-level/dim, reasoning that more lighting may attract anti-social behaviour to the park. 25 people also expressed a lack of preference between the modern and traditional styles, these people often stated they would support a decision based on eco-friendliness, cost-effectiveness and durability. They also often supported the use of LED or Solar technologies.

Q15

Further Comments

Further comments are grouped below in order of response rate.

Not all respondents submitted further comments, and those that did could mention more than one point

	Number
Keep dogs away from children's playground/ Maintain separate area for children and dogs	31
Modernise/improve playground equipment and facilities	29
Focus on minor improvement and park maintenance/don't lose natural feel.	26
Include more sports equipment and facilities/ designated areas for sport	24
More community engagement in restoration-educational projects/historical components/ community areas and facilities	19
Increase amount of signage/litter bins/ dog bins etc	18
Positive/Supportive comments	18
More planting/ new planting areas	13
Provide more toilets/ improve existing toilets	13

Café comments – better opening hours/needs improvement/new location/ restructure management/ better goods	11
Provide more security – CCTV/ lighting/ wardens	10

Equalities Monitoring

Age

	Number	%
17 and Under	1	0.3
18-24	2	0.6
24-34	48	15.2
35-44	124	39.2
45-54	74	23.4
55-64	42	13.3
65-74	21	6.7
75+	4	1.3
Total	316	100

Gender

	Number	%
Male	119	35.4
Female	217	64.6
Other	0	0.0
Total	336	100

Do you identify as the gender you were assigned at birth?

	Number	%
Yes	311	98.4
No	5	1.6
Total	316	100

Ethnicity

	Number	%
White: English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, British	286	85.9
White: Irish	5	1.5
White: Gypsy or Irish traveller	0	0.0
Other White	28	8.4
Black or Black British: African	0	0.0
Black or Black British: Caribbean	0	0.0
Black or Black British: Other	0	0.0
Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi	0	0.0
Asian or Asian British: Indian	1	0.3
Asian or Asian British: Pakistani	0	0.0
Asian or Asian British: Chinese	0	0.0
Asian or Asian British: Other	1	0.3
Mixed: Asian & White	3	0.9
Mixed: Black African & White	0	0.0
Mixed: Black Caribbean & White	2	0.6
Mixed: Other	5	1.5
Arab	0	0.0
Any Other Ethnic Group	2	0.6
Total	333	100

Sexual Orientation

	Number	%
Bisexual	6	1.9
Gay man	28	8.8
Heterosexual/ 'straight'	270	85.2
Lesbian/ Gay woman	8	2.5
Other	5	1.6
Total	317	100

Religion

	Number	%
I have no particular religion or belief	185	57.6
Buddhist	9	2.8
Christian	51	15.9

Hindu	0	0.0
Jain	0	0.0
Jewish	4	1.2
Muslim	0	0.0
Pagan	1	0.3
Sikh	0	0.0
Agnostic	6	1.9
Atheist	57	17.8
Other	2	0.6
Other Philosophical belief	6	1.9
Total	321	100

Disability

	Number	%
Yes a little	24	7.5
Yes a lot	5	1.5
No	294	91.0
Total	323	100

	Number	% ¹
Physical Impairment	11	37.9
Long-standing illness	10	34.5
Sensory Impairment	2	6.9
Mental Health Condition	6	20.7
Learning Disability/Difficulty	2	6.9
Developmental Condition	2	6.9
Other	0	0.0

Carer

	Number	%
Yes	21	6.5
No	303	93.5
Total	324	100

	Number	% ²
Parent	9	42.9
Child with special needs	1	4.8
Other family member	6	28.6
Partner/spouse	3	14.3
Friend	1	4.8
Other	1	4.8

¹ Of those who answered "yes" to disability. Percentages will not add to 100% because respondents could tick more than one type of condition.

² Of those who answered "yes" to carer.

Armed Forces Service

	Yes		No	
	Number	%	Number	%
Are you currently serving in the UK Armed Forces?	0	0.0	297	100.0
Have you ever served in the UK Armed Forces?	4	1.3	294	98.7
Are you a member of a current or former serviceman or servicewoman's immediate family/household?	8	2.7	284	97.3