



NATURE IS NURTURE

A REPORT FOR THE COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL
GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

By Philip Corf

October 2016



Kilgarth
School
Wirral



“ Kilgarth and Gilbrook Schools are both maintained special schools in Merseyside that cater for pupils with Social, Emotional and Mental Health difficulties. Over time we have seen an increase in the complex needs of our children who have a range comorbid neurodevelopmental disorders and mental health challenges including Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Alcohol-related neurodevelopmental disorder, Autism, Attachment Disorder, Oppositional Defiant Disorder and Specific Learning Difficulties. We use non-confrontational approaches to behaviour management and last year Kilgarth School removed sanctions as we focus on developing empathy and pro-social skills in children. We are researching the impact of our work with Goldsmiths, University of London; more details can be seen at the following sites [1,2]. ”

Steven Baker

(Executive Headteacher)

“ I learned of this inquiry through the Executive Headteacher, Steven Baker, who has links to the Education Service Teacher Ambassador programme. I would also like to thank all the children, parents and staff at Gilbrook and Kilgarth schools for their help and kind words of support. ”

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Introduction

The Local Government Select Committee were interested in two questions. Firstly, who uses parks and open spaces, how often and what for? Secondly, what contribution do parks make to the health and well-being of communities? The first question naturally welcomed pupil involvement and their opinions were gathered using questionnaires at both Gilbrook and Kilgarth schools. The results formed a data set with a range of 8-15 years (mean age of 11 years). In addition to this, parents/carers and adults were also asked to complete a questionnaire which further increased the scope of the data (age range 24-75, mean of 40 years). In total there were three forms of questionnaire: an age suitable questionnaire for the primary and secondary schools, Gilbrook and Kilgarth respectively and the parent/carer questionnaire. The pupil questionnaires differed only in terms of a visual cue to assist completion while the parent/carer questionnaire explored a few additional questions. In addition to the Select Committee's enquiry the questionnaires incorporated a specific avenue of questioning regarding peoples' emotional reception of parks, which relates into research around ADHD and parks/green space. In total 55 Pupils and 53 Parents/Carers replied to the questionnaires. Samples of the questionnaires can be found in the Appendix.

The Second question on parks contributions to a community's mental health and well-being was addressed through the form of a research project, which was expanded to include the term 'green space.' Given the school's role within the education system the research naturally centred on child development and mental health. However, in some cases the research has been expanded into adulthood and the community as a whole.

A Brief Background into Childhood Mental Health

In 2004 The Office for National Statistics showed that 1 in 10 children aged between 5-16 years had a clinically

diagnosed mental disorder. Furthermore, this group of children correlated with their parents having no educational qualifications and a family income of less than £100 a week [3]. Thus childhood mental health is associated with impoverished families.

When looked at in a trend, between the mid 1980s and mid 2000s boys aged between 15-16 years have doubled the frequency in reporting feelings of anxiety or depression, with 1 in 15 now reporting these conditions. Similarly in girls this trend has also doubled. However, worryingly the frequency is much higher at 1 in 5 [4].

A review of empirical literature undertaken by researchers at the University of Ottawa has shown that children who display heightened anger during childhood may develop health problems in adulthood. Interestingly the converse is also true where anger internalisation can also lead to health problems including depression and suicide. Therefore children who have maladaptive coping strategies for anger are at risk of problematic interpersonal relationships and both physical and mental health problems [5].

Mental health in children has also been linked to obesity, with overweight adolescents being more likely to show signs of depression [6]. Furthermore, neighbourhoods of children that have more vegetation are significantly associated with a decreased risk of being overweight [7].

Green Space as a Means of Moderating Mental Health

Nature appears to play a genuine role in the mental health of both children and adults. While at a glance this seems obvious and somewhat taken for granted, apparently the human psyche is entwined at some level with nature. David Strayer, a cognitive psychologist at the University of Utah specialises in attention. He has suggested that our brains have evolved in nature and are as a result, wired function in it. For example, EEG tests performed in nature show that the prefrontal cortex of participants winds down into a resting state allowing crucial time for sustained attention to relax.

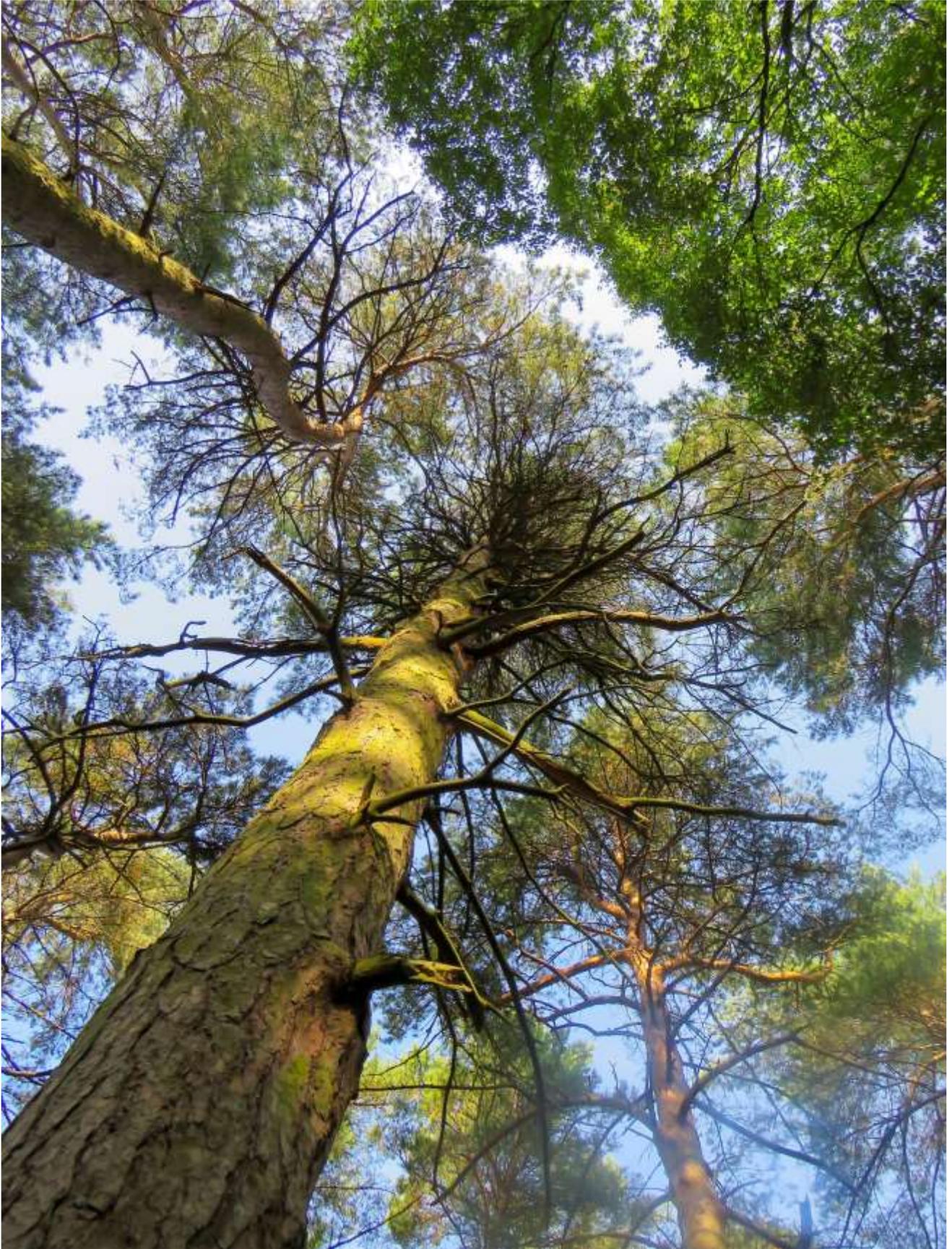


Image by Ian Jackson

Exhaustive use of direct attention without break can be the source of considerable stress through the increase of stress hormones such as cortisol within the body. In turn this has an effect on heart rate and blood pressure as the sympathetic branch of the Autonomic Nervous System is utilised beyond its fight or flight design that nature intended. Interestingly nature buffers this effect allowing a restoration of the directed attention system. For example in one study, 337 children with a mean age of 9 years who also lived near vegetation coped better with the impact of stressful life events and as a result had a better psychological well-being [8]. However, for me, the really interesting findings of this study were that the level of nearby nature correlated with the child's ability to deal with stress, thus emphasising the changing degree of green space and nature on mental well-being.

Of course the restorative effects of nature on stress and mental health isn't confined just to children. A piece of research done in Edinburgh measured a rural and urban walk on adults with either good or poor mental health [9]. The findings showed cognitive restoration to both mental health groups was more significant after the rural walk in comparison to the urban counterpart. However, again nature's interaction with restoration was more complex than one would expect. The poor mental health group showed a greater restorative effect in cognition when compared to the good health group, thus showing a non-linear relationship to the therapeutic process.

Frances Kuo, an Assistant Professor at the University of Illinois has also explored the effectiveness of green space at recovering mental fatigue. Kuo's work has centred around green space and ADHD which will be discussed later. However, the author has also addressed the matter of green space being a moderator for poverty. Kuo argues that greener surroundings in impoverished communities would enhance a resident's ability to rebut life stress through attention restoration [10].

Interestingly mental fatigue and lack of urban greenness in low income households is associated with higher levels of aggression than with greener building counterparts [10a]. Similar associations have been made between inmates at Snake River Correctional Institute in Eastern Oregon.

In Oakland California a children's hospital is trialling a project of prescribing family walks in nature as a treatment and in South Korea the Government are developing 'healing forests' as a means of treating depression [10b].

Associations Between Child Poverty and Green Space

Gilbrook and Kilgarth Schools are located on the Wirral ward made up of the districts of Upton and Bidston and St James respectively. According to the Wirral Compendium of Statistics 2016, the Wirral and North West as a whole have seen a slight decrease in child poverty between 2011 and 2013. However, they are still above the national average of 18.0%. In 2013 21.5% of children living on the Wirral were doing so in poverty. This in turn was slightly higher than the North West as a whole at 20.3%.

When looking at specific wards we find a bleaker view in some cases. While Upton's child poverty was at 25.2% in 2013, Bidston and St James was highest for the Wirral at 43.5%. Making Bidston and St James the most child impoverished ward on the Wirral. This means that in Bidston and St James alone there are 1,556 children (0-15 years) living in poverty. When we take the Wirral as a whole this figure increases to 12,822 children [11].

Tim Gill, a well-known author on child poverty and play dynamics reported in 2011 [12], that:

“only 10% of children play in woodlands, countryside and heaths compared to 40% in their parents' generation..” [12, p.14].

In addition to this he asserts that there is a growing concern around childhood obesity as it has been “rising for decades.” As discussed earlier we know there is an association between poverty and poor mental health in children and it is no surprise that when we overlay a map of Wirral green spaces according to ward district, we see that the most impoverished areas such as Bidston and St James are also some of the most sparse in terms of green space.

Gill also points out that impoverished parts of society use parks less frequently than that of their affluent counterparts [12]. This is particularly relevant to the ward of Bidston and St James given its high level of child poverty and that 50.6% of households in that area don't have a vehicle [11].

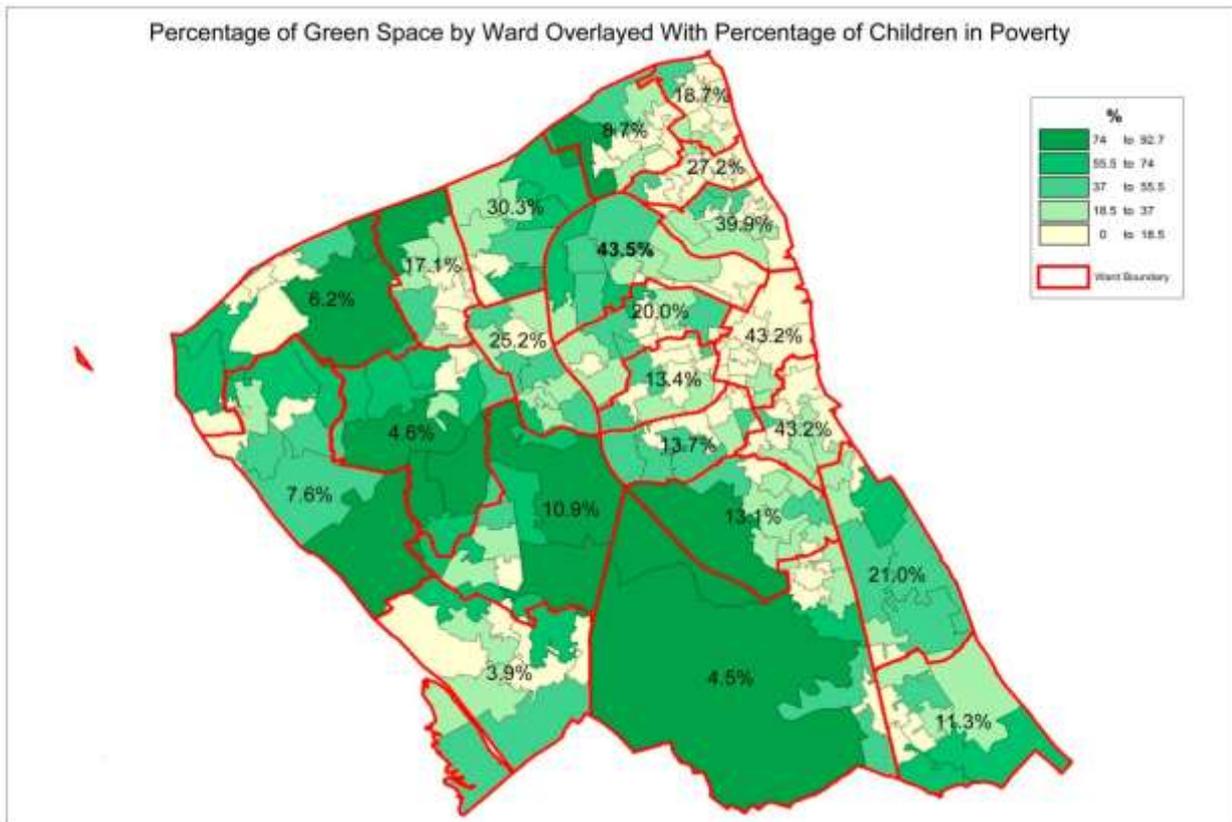


Figure 1: Statistics from the Wirral Compendium 2016 overlaid on a map of Wirral ward district green space in 2014.

The Wirral parks and open spaces strategy 2014-2024 has identified that highly populated areas such as East Wallasey and Birkenhead have a natural green space deficiency. There is also a 126 hectare deficiency in access to nature such as Local Nature Reserves [13]. The council have planned actions to alleviate this problem, one of which is to target a minimum distance of 400m from people's homes to parks wherever reasonably practicable. This action is to be commended and should be supported. For example if we make green space more accessible to children they still need to want to go outside and play. When electrical devices absorb so much of our children's minds these days we need to make sure such efforts by the Council aren't in vain.

Richard Louv, in his national bestseller "Last Child in the Woods" identifies many of the mental health risks already mentioned in this report. However, one of interest here is that of early exposure to green space as a means of priming children to have a lifelong positive attitude toward nature and the environment as a whole [14]. In addition to this evidence, research has shown that

childhood visits to green and natural spaces sculpts their visiting habits to similar environments as an adult. This would suggest that if children are exposed to nature in their youth then they are likely to seek this in adulthood [15]. Therefore the earlier in life and more often a child uses various electrical devices will deprive them of time to develop these nature seeking associations for adulthood. Furthermore, strong evidence exists that excessive use of computer devices at a young age may fundamentally affect brain development [14]. As a result one can extrapolate that poverty plays a significant role in the utilisation of green space and this effect is then compounded by additional discouraging factors such as electronic devices that could affect communities on a familial and generational cycle.



Image by Ian Jackson

Attentional Restoration: Green Space Alleviates ADHD

The work in this area stems from Attention Restoration Theory (ART). This work was laid down by Kaplan & Kaplan in 1989 in their book "The Experience of Nature: A psychological perspective." However, the concept of a dichotomised attentional system comes from William James in 1892. ART emphasises essentially two aspects to attention; 'involuntary' (fascination) and 'directed attention'. The foremost is considered to be resistant to fatigue while the latter is exhaustive. Fascination is key to the process of restoring attention, essentially allowing a recharging or resting of directed attention. However, directed attention is crucial in its own right as it allows us to cross roads safely and solve problems but also to inhibit one's impulses and exercise self-control [16]. Without going into too much psychological theory here, needless to say that these systems and their interaction are impaired in ADD/ADHD.

Marc Berman, Assistant Professor at the University of Michigan has investigated the more exacting aspects of environment that engage attentional restoration. He argues that urban areas capture attention dramatically and that this requires 'top-down' directed attention. Conversely nature captures attention in a modest subtle 'bottom-up' fashion that allows directed attention time to replenish [17]. Therefore it appears that activating 'fascination' requires an environment full of rich stimuli but doesn't tax direct attention. The attention capture should be soft, that is to say transient or subliminal that allows the fluid involvement of thought and reflection.

As mentioned earlier, Frances Kuo has investigated the connection between ART and green space on children with ADD/ADHD. It is suggested that 1.5% of children have Hyperkinetic Disorder (Severe ADHD) in Britain [3]. By mathematical calculation this would equate to 895 children with Hyperkinetic Disorder in Wirral given a total of 59,637 residents under the age of 15 in Wirral [11]. Kuo argues that this complex group of children can have their attentional functioning improved through the use green play settings [18]. An additional point here is that the 'greener' the play setting was the less severe the child's attention deficit symptoms were after play. However this refers to a comparison of indoor play on video games/TV compared to outdoor play on a football pitch or fishing. I feel I must draw attention to the fact that 'soccer' is more active than video gaming and therefore

there may be a confounding variable of physical activity in the results. Luckily the researchers factored for this matter and showed that 'active' green play settings were not significantly different from 'passive' green play settings in terms of PAAF scores (Postactivity Attentional Functioning) [18].

Another study by Kou and Taylor on children with ADHD between ages 7 and 12 showed that they concentrated significantly better after a 20 minute walk in the park when compared to a 20 minute walk downtown [19]. This was measured through 'Digit Span Backwards' (DSB) which is also a good measure of Working Memory capacity and functioning. Interestingly the researchers compared the therapeutic walk in nature DSB to that of the effects of a dose of Methylphenidate and they were comparable. Thus a 'dose of nature' may be equivalent to a medicated approach, however the researchers do not assess the effectiveness of this over time and therefore we cannot say if it is as effective as medication without further research.

One more result from this study is that children were asked to rate the nature walk as; fun; relaxing; interesting; scary; boring; weird and/or uncomfortable. The data showed that significantly more children found park walks fun and relaxing over downtown walks. These criteria seemed straight forward enough to be asked within the questionnaires and as a result were included as a means of possibly measuring children's susceptibility for the use of green space as a therapy/educational setting in the future.

A national study involving responses from 452 parent / guardians of children aged between 5 and 18 years with ADHD also showed that green outdoor activities reduced symptoms significantly when compared to other settings, even when activities were matched [20]. Finally involvement with animals and natural settings have helped to prove that children with ADHD and learning difficulties are less symptomatic and more responsive to learning than when in a classroom setting [21].



Image by Ian Jackson

Green Space: A Factor in Cognitive Development and Academic Attainment in Children.

Last year researchers in Barcelona assessed cognitive development in 2,593 school children (7-10 years) over a one year period. They found that trajectories in Working Memory were enhanced and a reduction in inattentiveness was associated with greenness, within and surrounding the school boundaries. Furthermore this was partly attributed to a reduction in TRAP (traffic Related Air Pollution) [22]. Similar findings relating to TRAP and cognitive development have been shown that even low levels of Nitrogen Dioxide exposure in early life can have an adverse effect on neurodevelopment [23]. This is further supported by research showing that when low income family children were relocated to a greener home environment their cognitive functioning increased following the move [24].

Evidence now shows that Working Memory is a better predictor of academic attainment than IQ with Working Memory being a dissociable skill in its own right with unique links to academic attainment. Working Memory ability at age 5 can be used to predict numeracy and literacy 6 years later [25, 26]. One study in 2010 assessed children with ADHD; inattentiveness; low Working Memory and a healthy comparison group. All three groups performed worse in reading and maths in comparison to the healthy group [27].

Who Uses Parks and How Often?

From the 108 completed questionnaires, 85.5% of pupils use parks and 98.1% of parents / carers / adults (PCA) use parks. Thus a wide range of people within the community use parks. Of the parent / carer group 90.6% used a park within at least the last month whereas 74.5% of pupils had used a park in the last month. It is apparent that the PCA group are more frequent users and their usage concentrates within 'at least a once a month' range. A more specific breakdown can be seen in Figure 2.

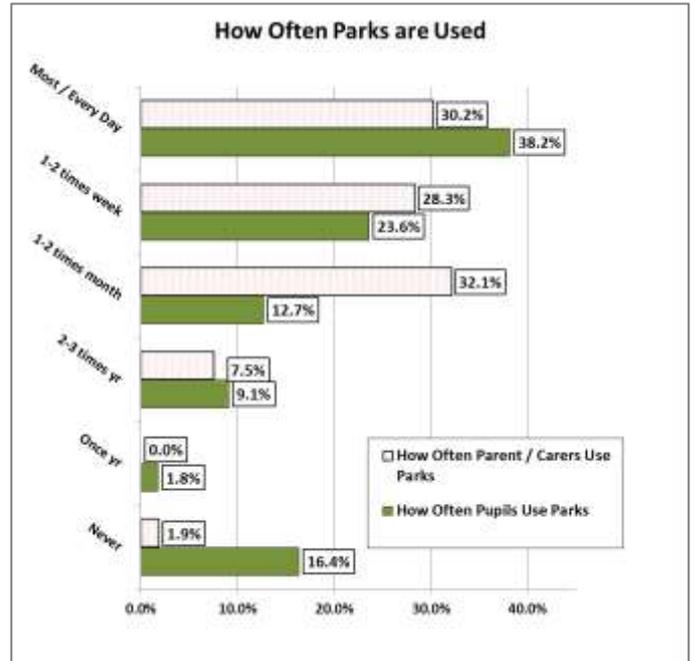


Figure 2

Another disparity between the two groups was also the amount of pupils that 'Never use parks', 16.4% of pupils compared to 1.9% of PCAs. Therefore a lot less young people in the community are engaging with parks than the previous generation supporting findings from earlier research [12].

“More things on the park to make it fun”

(Pupil age 10, Central Park)

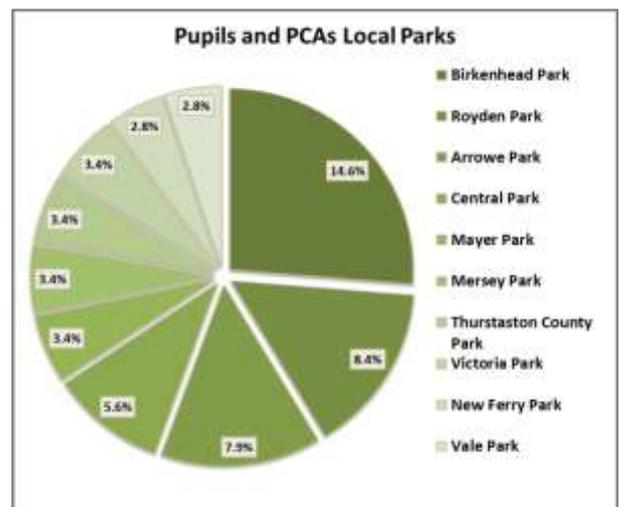


Figure 3

Of 64 park listed as local or regularly visited by respondents, the top 10 are shown in Figure 3. Note that Birkenhead Parks makes up 14.6% followed by Royden Park and Arrowe Park, 8.4% and 7.9% respectively. See Figure 3.

What are Parks Used For?

Parks are used by the community for a wide range of purposes and as a whole the groups most use parks for *family days* and *meeting friends*. Interestingly a much larger percentage of the PCA group use parks for *relaxing* and *family days* 52.8% and 77.4% respectively, compared to 12.7% and 41.8% respectively. A large amount of pupils use parks and greenspaces as a means of socialising i.e. *meeting friends* (63.6%) compared to 34.0% of PCAs.

“It’s the only place me and my friends mainly meet”

(Pupil age 14)

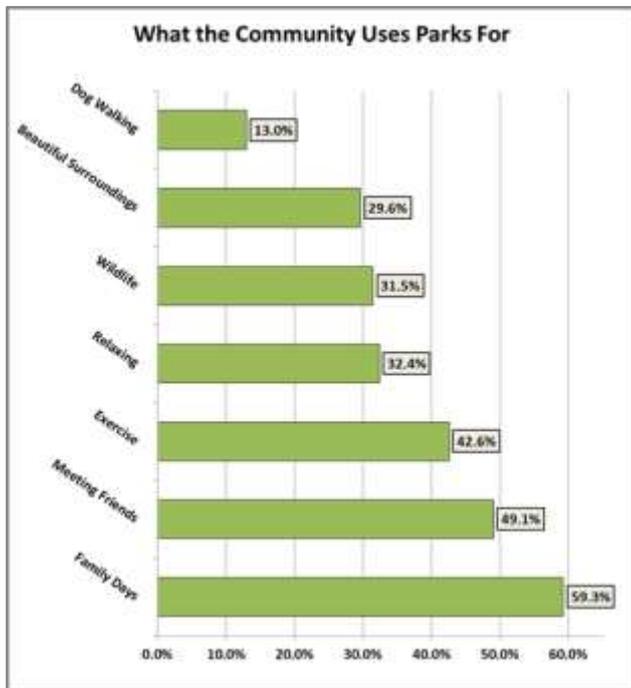


Figure 4

A considerable amount of PCAs enjoy the *beautiful surroundings* and *dog walking* over pupils who prefer *wildlife*. See Figure 5.

“My park makes me happy, relaxed and with nature and it’s extremely interesting and quite fun to see the little squirrels eat the nuts. It’s the best park I know.”

(Pupil age 9 Birkenhead Park)

Parks are also used for more structured affairs such as Scout events and even social BBQs. For example in September 2016 Gilbrook Primary School visited Royden Park as part of an outdoor education afternoon. The children were noticeably engaged with nature and wildlife, their spirits were high as they sang along the paths. Needless to say, finding a way back to the mini-bus was excellent exercise for their visuo-spatial Working Memory.

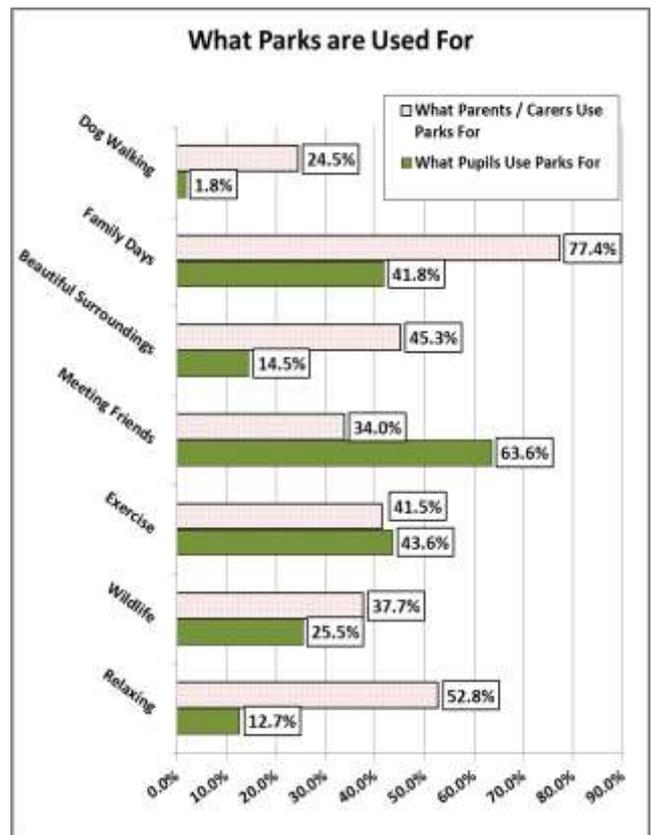


Figure 5



Royden Park / Image by Ian Jackson

The Community's Emotional Experience of Parks

As discussed earlier, research has measured children's views on parks in relation to ADHD. This can be expanded to see the community's emotional experiences of parks and greenspaces as a whole and across groups.

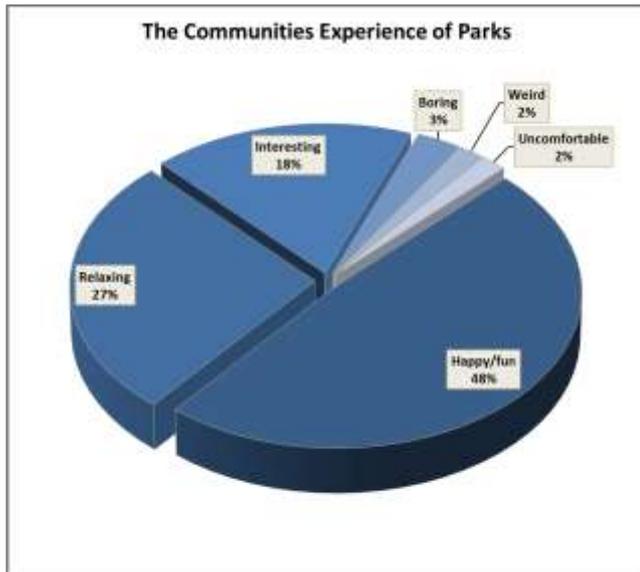


Figure 6

As a whole 48% of the community find parks to be *happy / fun*. A further 27% find parks to be *relaxing* and another 18% *interesting*. When these are taken together as a 'positive' emotional measure of parks we attain 93%. Thus 7% of the community seem disenfranchised from parks, finding them to be *boring*, *weird* or *uncomfortable*.

"My best memories are of visits to the parks with my daughters when they were younger - swings, feeding ducks, wildlife, flowers, stepping stones. Where else can you take the children out for some fresh air and amuse them without spending money. Parks are accessible to all and part of our heritage. They must stay that way."

(PCA age 54)

Looking at this data across groups we can resolve more detail in differences. Figure 7 Shows that the 7% of disenfranchised emotion towards greenspaces lies in the pupil group entirely with 14.3% of pupil responses being of this nature. However the sample should be taken into consideration here as the children come from an SEN / EBD background. The PCA group didn't show this trend and while it's interesting the root of this eminence cannot be defined here due to the possible confounding variable of emotional state across groups. None-the-less the pupil group shows that 6.5% of responses found parks to be *boring*. Note that I have used the term 'responses' here, this is intentional as respondents could answer to more than one category of question which results in more responses than the total number of respondents.

In both groups there was a trend in responses. This being that *happy / fun* was most common then *relaxing* and *interesting* successively.

"Parks make me feel ecstatic and happy."

(Pupil age 10)

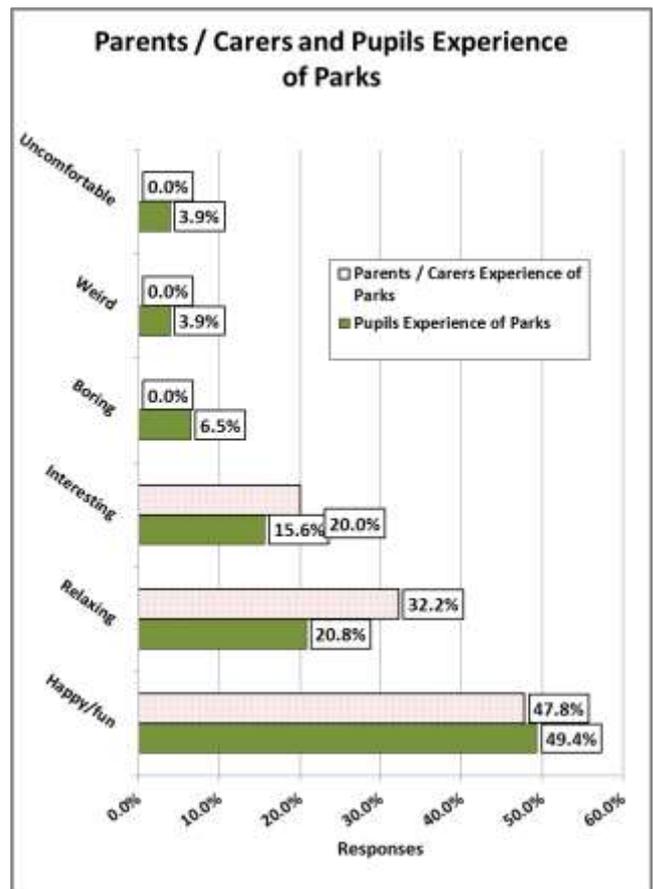


Figure 7



Royden Park / Image by Ian Jackson

Parks are An Essential Asset of the Community

As part of the questionnaires, respondents were asked about how they would feel about losing their parks. It can be seen that 64% of the community would be *very sad* about losing their local park and a further 23% would be *sad*. See Figure 8.

“I would be extremely sad because I love feeding the cute animals there and I'd miss climbing the rocks and trees and eating the nice doughnuts at the lovely café. Please don't take it away.”

(Pupil age 9)

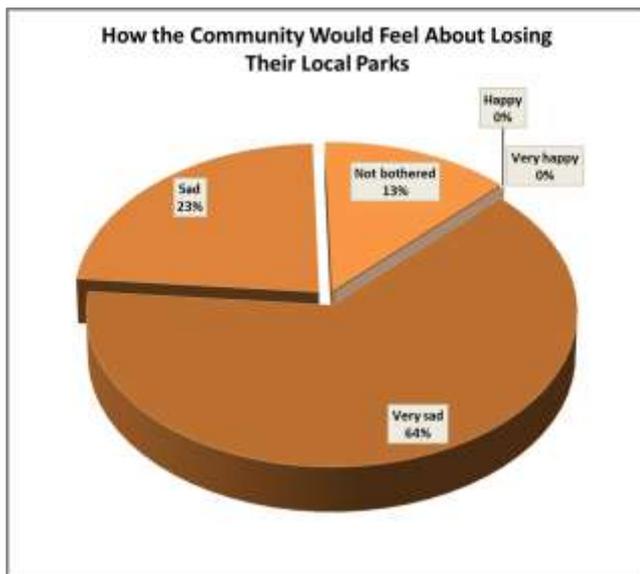


Figure 8

When we look at Figure 9 across groups it is evident that the PCAs are more unified in their feeling of value that parks and greenspaces provide as a community. This is reflected in their 90.6% response of *very sad* to seeing them go. The pupil group was more spread out with approximately a third each between *very sad* and *not bothered*. Sadly the reasoning behind 30.9% of children being *not bothered* at the concept of losing their local park cannot be answered definitively here. However, one wonders if could emanate from the attraction of digital devices and / or the lack of close by greenspace?

“I will feel very sad because I play football.”

(Pupil age 10)

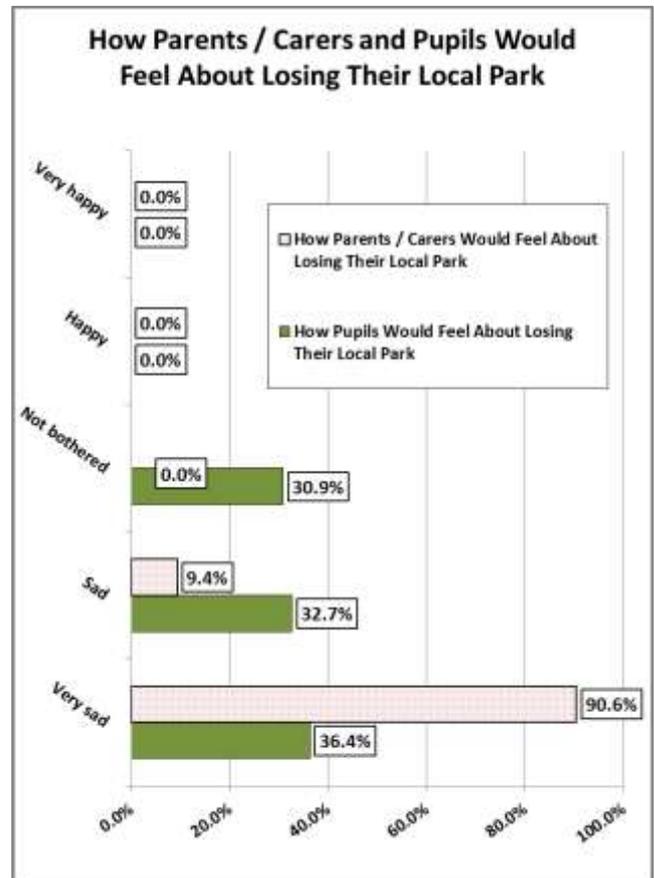


Figure 9

“It will impact on mental health and healthy living for young people and adults”

(PCA age 47)

“[It] will cause more groups of youths to hang around people's houses and cause a high increase in anti-social behaviour”

(PCA age 33)

“It is lovely to see children playing out in the park rather than hanging out on streets or in front of the TV”

(PCA age 45)



Royden Park / Image by Ian Jackson

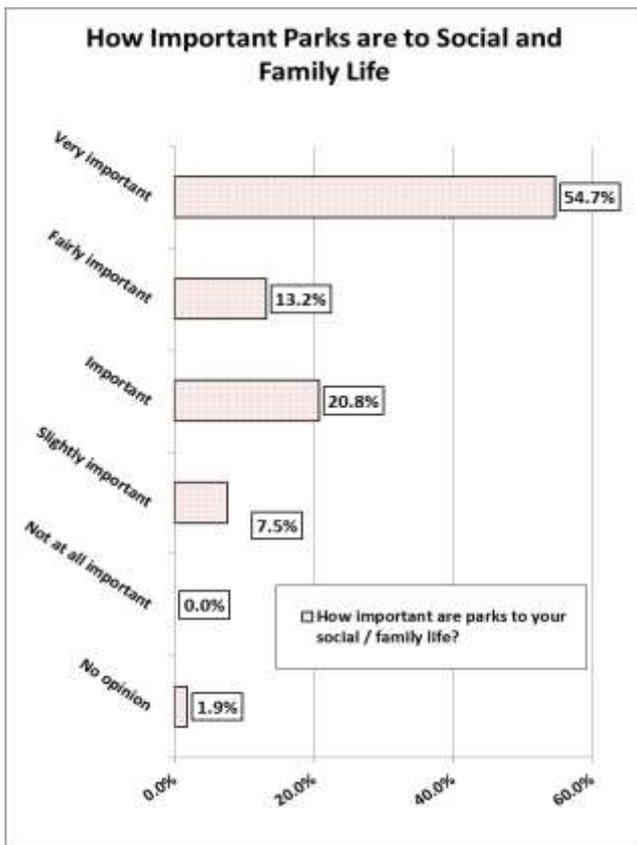


Figure 10

Finally figure 10 shows the PCA groups' views on what parks provide to their family and social life. Almost the entire group deemed this to be of importance with 54.7% specifying *very important*. The written opportunity for an answer to this question proved fruitful and provocative.

"Extremely important to me as I use this time daily to walk my dog and clear my head from the busy working day."

(PCA age 29)

"Every Saturday I meet up with my sisters/mum and go for a walk. All our children meet up and have a fantastic afternoon."

(PCA age 42)

"I take my son who has disabilities - autism and ADHD."

(PCA age 49)

"My son plays at my local park - Lingham Park most days after school and at weekend. He uses the skate park and meets his friends."

(PCA age 32)

"My son and a lot of children would have nowhere to go that doesn't cost lots of money. They would no longer have somewhere that they can play on their bikes away from the roads."

(PCA age 32)

"Would be devastated as it's in our daily routine and our family enjoy this. We play games and look at the scenery and the history and educate our children."

(PCA age 39)

"A great place to meet up with friends, kids can play and there's usually ice-cream!"

(PCA age 49)

"Important for family life, exercise, and being healthy, enjoying wildlife."

(PCA age not specified)

"Once you build on green land it has gone forever."

(PCA age 52)

"Extremely important, as walking around the park, taking in fresh air, listening to wildlife, engaging with others socially relaxes me."

(PCA age 34)



Royden Park / Image by Ian Jackson

Recommendations: Forest Schools, School Nature Clubs and Grounds Projects

Tim Gill [12], in his 2011 'interventions into a lack of childhood involvement in greenspace' suggested, amongst others, two recommendations. 'After School Nature Clubs' and 'forest school programs' were both cited as having high scope for geographical targeting. However, he cited 'after school nature clubs' as having an unclear level of interest. This could be investigated in further research. School grounds projects such as gardening have been shown to educate children on a healthy nutritional diet. One such project exists at Gilbrook and should be commended. Given the pupils interest in the garden, its current expansion and the enjoyment from outings to Royden Park it isn't unimaginable that interest in a 'school nature club' would be there. While field trips and gardening projects are mainly associated with educational benefits a nature club could be used to provide free, interactive play, exploration and child-initiated learning [12, 28]. Given the research drawn together in this report it is possible that this may benefit children with challenging behaviour, ADHD and violent behaviour.

Roe [29] supports the view, through research, that forest schools have restorative health benefits on young people. Similar non-linear patterns were shown in the data, with 'behavioural problem' and 'mental disorder' groups showing more dampening effect on anger than the 'good behaviour' group. This is encouraging as often behavioural problems impede learning significantly. Thus any reduction in barriers to learning would be greatly beneficial to education and overall better health for the child.

Evidence exists that schools in England are already taking this approach [30]. After investigation the nature of forest schools in Denmark, the inner city school developed their own forest school in an inner city environment. The endeavour was positively welcomed by staff and parents and the researchers suggest that these results should spur on involvement in forest schools for teachers, children and parents. Another piece of research involved the University of Northampton whereby part of the campus was developed into a forest site. A primary school utilised the forest in a pilot study involving pupil, staff and parent interviews. However, the data due to the way it was collected was less reliable i.e.

subject to opinion. The researchers have developed a toolkit to overcome these shortfalls and assist other schools visiting the site.

Recommendations: City and Greenspace Planning

As mentioned earlier Marc Berman has done considerable research on greenspace and its benefits to cognition and mental health. Currently Marc is working on exactly what our minds perceive as naturalness in an effort to better predict what environments will have the most beneficial effect. Research done in 2014 found a correlation between perceived naturalness and low-level features of environmental scenes. These include; density of contrast changes; density of straight lines; average colour saturation and average hue density in scenes. Scenes were evaluated implicitly through the use of multidimensional scaling analysis and explicitly through direct naturalness ratings by participants. A computer algorithm was then developed which could evaluate a scene with 81% accuracy to what a person would perceive [31, 32]. The researchers intend to apply this to select scenes for further cognitive improvement experiments. However, the outcome of this research also has implications for city and greenspace planning. For example, therapeutic gardens or forests could be developed on existing green sites, particularly those that are of little or undesirable low-level visual feature similarity.

Recommendations in Conclusion

- 1: Further investigate Forest Schools and school initiatives that engage children with nature and suggest that this is targeted at SEN, EBD groups.
- 2: Greenspace development should encompass the latest understanding into naturalness and these aspects should be drawn upon to better help communities.



Royden Park / Image by Ian Jackson

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A Pupil Questionnaire on Parks

This questionnaire is about who uses parks, how often they are used and what for. We are really interested in what you think and it's a chance to let Politicians know your thoughts on parks and how they are used. For your help you will earn 10 HOUSE POINTS for completing this questionnaire. Remember there are no right or wrong answers so relax. If you need help just ask a member of staff!

How old are you? _____

Are you a Boy or Girl? _____

How often do you use parks?

Please tick one

Never	Once a year	2 or 3 times a year	Once or twice a month	Once or twice a week	Most / every day
<input type="checkbox"/>					

What do you use parks for?

Please tick, you can tick more than one!

					
Relaxing or thinking / quiet time	Seeing / hearing wildlife	Exercising (sports etc.)	Meeting friends	Enjoying beautiful surroundings	Family days
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

If you use parks for something else please tell us below.

Continued on next page...

If you know the name of the park/s you visit or the street they are on please tell us below.

How would you feel about losing your local park?

Please tick one box

				
Very sad	Sad	Not bothered	Happy	Very happy
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

You can also say in writing how you would feel about losing your local park/s below.

What is your experience of parks like?

Please tick, you can tick more than one!

					
Happy / fun	Relaxing	Interesting	Boring	Weird	Uncomfortable
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

You can also say in writing how parks make you feel below.



A Student Questionnaire on Parks

This questionnaire is about who uses parks, how often they are used and what for. We are really interested in what you think and it's a chance to let Politicians know your thoughts on parks and how they are used. For your help you will earn 10 HOUSE POINTS for completing this questionnaire. Remember there are no right or wrong answers so relax. If you need help just ask a member of staff!

How old are you? ____

Are you Male or Female? _____

How often do you use parks?

Please tick one

Never	Once a year	2 or 3 times a year	Once or twice a month	Once or twice a week	Most/every day

What do you use parks for?

Please tick, you can tick more than one!

Relaxing or thinking / quiet time	Seeing / hearing wildlife	Exercising (sports etc.)	Meeting friends	Enjoying beautiful surroundings	Family days

If you use parks for something else please tell us below.

If you know the name of the park/s you visit or the street they are on please tell us below.

How would you feel about losing your local park?

Please tick one box

Very sad	Sad	Not bothered	Happy	Very happy

You can also say in writing how you would feel about losing your local park/s below.

What is your experience of parks like?

Please tick, you can tick more than one!

Happy / fun	Relaxing	Interesting	Boring	Weird	Uncomfortable

You can also say in writing how parks make you feel below.



A Parent / Carer / Adult Questionnaire on Parks

This questionnaire is about who uses parks, how often they are used and what for. We are really interested in what you think and it's a chance to let Politicians know your thoughts on parks and how they are used. The data from the questionnaires will be compiled and provided to a Select Committee in Parliament as part of a report on parks.

How old are you? ____

Are you Male or Female? _____

If you know the name of your local park you visit or the street it is on please tell us below.

Do you use any other parks regularly? If so please provide the names or the names of the streets they are on.

How often do you use parks?

Please tick one box

Never	Once a year	2 or 3 times a year	Once or twice a month	Once or twice a week	Most/every day

What do you use parks for?

Please tick, you can tick more than one!

Relaxing or thinking / quiet time	Seeing / hearing wildlife	Exercising (sports etc.)	Meeting friends	Enjoying beautiful surroundings	Family days

If you use parks for something else please tell us below.

How much time do you spend in parks on a usual visit?

Please tick one box

Don't visit	Less than 30 minutes	30 minutes to 1 hour	1 to 2 hours	2 to 4 hours	More than 4 hours

How important are parks to your social / family life?

Please tick one box

No opinion	Not at all important	Slightly important	Important	Fairly important	Very important

You can also express an answer in writing to the question below.

How would you feel about losing parks?

Please tick one box

Very sad	Sad	Not bothered	Happy	Very happy

You can also say in writing how you would feel about losing park below.

What is your experience of parks like?

Please tick, you can tick more than one!

Happy / fun	Relaxing	Interesting	Boring	Weird	Uncomfortable

You can also say in writing how parks make you feel below.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.