

# Southwark Park Vision

May 2021



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partnership with:

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Council  
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# CONTENTS

<b>Acknowledgements and Foreword</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Abstract</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Part One: An Introduction to the Consultation</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1. Background Information</b>	<b>7</b>
1.1. About Community Southwark	7
1.2. About the Consultation	8
1.3. Consultation activities	8
<b>2. Methodology and Data Collection Techniques</b>	<b>11</b>
2.1. Workshops	11
2.2. Youth Workshop	12
2.3. Survey	13
<b>Part Two: Outcomes from the Consultation</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>1. Outcomes from the survey</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>2. Outcomes from the workshops</b>	<b>38</b>
2.1. Nature & Environment	38
2.2. Sports & Recreation	38
2.4. Culture, Art, & Community	39
<b>3. Outcomes from the youth workshop</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Part Three: Southwark Park Vision and Framework</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>1. Summary of findings</b>	<b>45</b>
1.1. The research sample	45
1.2. Concerns	46
1.3. Young advisors	48
1.4. Accessibility issues	49
<b>2. The Vision and Framework for Southwark Park</b>	<b>50</b>
2.1. Framework One	50
2.2. Framework Two	52
2.3. Framework Three	54
2.4. Framework Four	56
2.5. Framework Five	58
	<b>3</b>

## Acknowledgements and Foreword

The consultation of Southwark Park could not have been completed without several key contributors who deserve every due acknowledgement and thanks for their support. Firstly, we would like to thank **Southwark Council's Parks Department** for putting their trust into Community Southwark to consult on the park with local residents and stakeholders. We would also like to thank all the **Community Southwark staff and volunteers** for their support in facilitating the workshops and other engagement activities throughout the consultation, in particular **Katie Evans** for meticulously collating consultation data, assisting the write up, and proofreading the final document. Our final acknowledgement and thanks go to all the people who took the time to respond to the Southwark Park Vision consultation- on which this very report is based.



Myles Thorpe  
**Social Action & Communities Officer**  
**Community Southwark**

## Abstract

This document is a report on the consultation of stakeholders and residents that use Southwark Park. The aim of this report is to establish a vision (an aspirational goal) and framework (the necessary means to achieve this goal) for the future of Southwark Park.

The report is divided into three parts. **Part One**, 'An introduction to the consultation', is intended to give a sense of the scope and context of the consultation, but in and of itself does not contain any outcome and analysis of the consultation. **Part Two**, 'Outcomes from the consultation', will illustrate and drill down into what we learnt through our consultation activities. Finally, **Part Three**, 'The Vision and Framework for Southwark Park', is the key body of the document. In this final part, we will summarise all the key findings from part two, and then set out a clear, succinct vision for Southwark Park and set out five frameworks to achieve this vision.

# Part One: An Introduction to the Consultation



Community  
Southwark

# 1. Background Information

Over the last 5 years, several improvement projects have been delivered at Southwark Park including the installation of additional tennis courts, upgrading the playground, and resurfacing the athletics track. Construction of the new grand pavilion overlooking the lake was completed and the building now houses a new park café, park office, and public toilets. More recently, in 2021, construction work started that will deliver a new Sports and Athletics Centre at the park.

As the current programme nears completion, Southwark Council is keen to engage with stakeholders, residents, and park users to gather ideas and identify key priorities for future investment in the park. A community consultation will help the council to shape and develop proposals to secure future investment in the park.

The council commissioned Community Southwark to co-ordinate the consultation activities and gather resident feedback on what changes they would like to see in Southwark Park.

## 1.1. About Community Southwark

Community Southwark (CS) is the main provider of support and advice to the voluntary and community sector (VCS) in Southwark. We are deeply committed to supporting a strong and thriving sector in the borough through our three key strategic functions:

- Offering capacity building services
- Providing influence on behalf of the VCS
- Supporting social action

Our vision is of stronger communities that fulfil their potential. We aim to achieve this by creating and supporting the conditions for a strong and thriving Voluntary and Community sector (VCS). Through our work, our contacts, and our approach, we are rooted in the VCS and have an extensive understanding of issues Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations (VCSO's) face. We speak to, and engage with, VCSO's on a daily basis so we have an extremely current view of the changes and challenges facing the wider sector.

We occupy a strategic position in Southwark and have a strong track record of partnership working with independent funders, statutory bodies, and with a wide range of VCISOs as well as the local community.

## 1.2. About the Consultation

Community Southwark undertook a consultation with local residents regarding the future of Southwark Park and the improvements they would like to see to the parks facilities. The results from the consultation will help to shape the council's subsequent plans for the park's renovation.

The consultation engaged local residents, schools, community groups, businesses, employees, and other key stakeholders, who live and work in the area surrounding Southwark Park. Through carrying out the public consultation the project gained valuable information such as:

1. What residents and other key stakeholders think about the park
2. Residents' and stakeholders' priorities for changes or improvements
3. Levels of satisfaction with the park

Community Southwark are ideally placed to deliver this consultation as it utilises their existing expertise and knowledge which has enabled them to develop a successful VCISO for Southwark.

## 1.3. Consultation activities

Beneath each heading below we have listed the activities of the consultation. We had organised a number of face-to-face workshops, pop-up stalls, suggestion boxes, and a paper survey mailed to local residents' home addresses. Due to Covid-19 safety regulations we had to move the consultation entirely online which meant none of the aforementioned activities took place. We had kept the situation under review and aimed to hold site-based engagement activities where possible, but ultimately this was impossible as we had to maintain social distancing measures.

### 1.3.1. Survey

A survey was administered by Southwark Council via their online consultation hub. The survey was made accessible online to minimise social contact during the Covid-19 pandemic. The survey ran for 10 weeks and 4 days from 14<sup>th</sup> December 2020 to 26<sup>th</sup> February 2021 and attracted 461 responses from local residents.



Respondents were asked 21 questions in total:

- 10 questions related specifically to the park, how they use it, and what they would like to see improved.
- 11 questions concerned the respondent's background and other demographical information.

### 1.3.2. Workshops

There were three Southwark Park Vision workshops with a cumulative total of 53 attendees. Each workshop was 1.5 hours in length.

#### Adult workshops

We organised two workshops in early February 2021, one on a weekday evening and another on a weekend afternoon, in order to mitigate the risk of residents being unable to attend a workshop due to other commitments. Both workshops included the same content and stakeholders only needed to attend one of the workshops. The workshops were held via Zoom on the following dates:

- **Weekday evening workshop:** Thursday, 4<sup>th</sup> February: 6:00pm- 7:30pm
- **Weekend afternoon workshop:** Saturday, 6<sup>th</sup> February: 12:00pm- 1:30pm

While successful, attendees and organisers at both workshops raised concerns regarding the lack of presence and input from young people of secondary school age and young adults (18-24). As a result, we postponed writing the consultation report until we could hold an event that specifically worked with people from these demographics.

Although the initial workshops were not billed as being specifically for adults, the mean age would have been, roughly speaking, between 30-50. Thus, the first two workshops have become known anecdotally as the 'adult workshops'.

#### Youth workshop

In response to the above concerns, we held an additional workshop with the *Southwark Young Advisers* on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> April, 12:00pm-1:30pm. The workshop was attended by 13 young advisors aged approximately 13-19 years old. As we had anticipated, the young advisors added significant depth and dimension to the data we had collected from the previous workshops.

### 1.3.3. External research

We were open to receive supplementary research from stakeholders that took place externally prior to this consultation.

It should be noted that the additional information that was shared with us will only be used in this report to supply context and additional information to information that we received via the principal consultation activities. Information gathered in the consultation activities has been given priority in this report and additional information is only supplementary.

## 2. Methodology and Data Collection Techniques

### 2.1. Workshops

The workshops were structured to encourage attendees to start by thinking broadly about Southwark Park, and their general feelings and sentiments on the area, before being directed into focussed discussions, and then finally setting priorities for the park by the end of the session.

#### 2.1.1. Data collection

Data was collected through the following mediums:

- **Miro:** digital collaborative whiteboards where users can post ideas
- **Zoom polls:** Single or multiple-choice polls
- **Microsoft Word:** Scribes captured notes while facilitators encouraged conversation among the attendees.

**NOTE:** Due to technical problems with Zoom we were unable to download poll reports from the workshops. As a result, results from the Zoom polls are not included in this report.

#### 2.1.2. Format

1. Attendees were welcomed into the workshop and then guided through general information on the consultation, a brief history of Southwark Park and outcomes of previous consultations, ground rules for cooperation among attendees, and finally, the running order for the session.
2. Attendees were given live polls that were designed to establish a baseline feeling towards the park and encourage independent thought. The poll questions were divided into four categories. The purpose of these categories was to introduce attendees to the overarching themes that they would later be focussing on in breakout room discussion: 1) General usage, 2) Nature and the Environment, 3) Sport and Recreation, 4) Culture and Community. The results of the poll voting were revealed immediately after they were closed.
3. Attendees were randomly divided into three breakout rooms to discuss their thoughts on the outcomes of the polls, such as if there was anything that surprised them, and anything that they felt was missed that should have been addressed through the questions. A facilitator was placed in the room to maintain a focussed discussion, and a scribe to keep notes of the points raised.
4. Attendees returned to the main Zoom room where they were then able to move into one of the three breakout rooms of their own choice, 1) Nature and the Environment, 2) Sports and Recreation, 3) Culture and Community.

5. Focussing on the focus area of their breakout room, attendees had 35 minutes to collectively identify five areas in the park that they believed required improvement, how it needed to be improved or what changes should be made, and who would benefit and why. A facilitator was placed in the room to maintain a focussed discussion, and a scribe to keep notes of the points raised.
6. Attendees then returned to the main Zoom room. While the scribe from their breakout room read out the top five priorities identified from each group, another volunteer created a new Zoom poll and inputted these priorities for attendees to collectively vote on their top three priorities.

## 2.2. Youth Workshop

The youth workshop was designed to develop the ideas and priorities set out in the previous workshops, and also gather new information and priorities from younger people.

### 2.2.1. Data collection

Data was collected through the following mediums:

- **Vevox:** Single or multiple-choice polls.
- **Mentimeter:** Digital comments feed.
- **Microsoft Word:** Scribes captured notes while facilitators encouraged conversation among the attendees.

### 2.2.2. Format

The workshop was set out over 1.5 hours and followed a similar format to the adult workshop but with three key differences.

1. The polls asked the young advisors if they agreed with a number of statements on the park. Unbeknownst to them, these statements corresponded directly with priorities outlined in previous workshops. Throughout the poll, we asked the young advisors to elaborate on their decisions in the poll and captured this information in a Word documents.
2. Attendees were randomly divided into two breakout rooms and given 30 minutes to respond to two questions (roughly 15 minutes per question). They recorded their thoughts live using Mentimeter.
  - What do you think public spaces don't have that is preventing you from using them?
  - What kind of things would make Southwark Park work for you and would make you use it more?

3. The young advisors did not vote on a set off priorities when they left the breakout room discussions.

## 2.3. Survey

The Southwark Park Vision and Framework survey was administered by Southwark Council's Consultation Hub. Community Southwark have included an analysis of the survey results in this report.

# Part Two: Outcomes from the Consultation



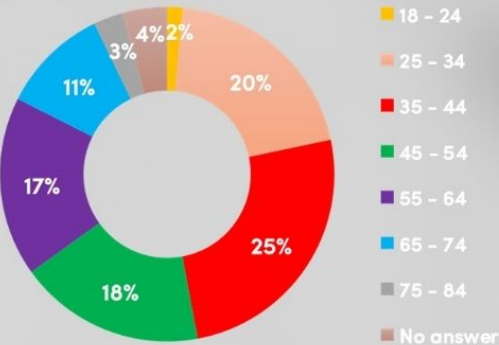
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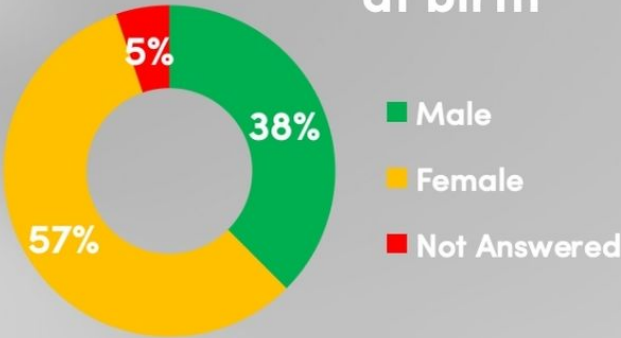
# Stakeholder survey

## Breakdown of respondents

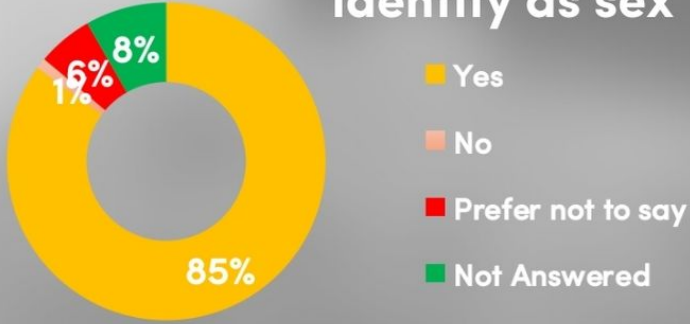
### Age



### Sex at birth



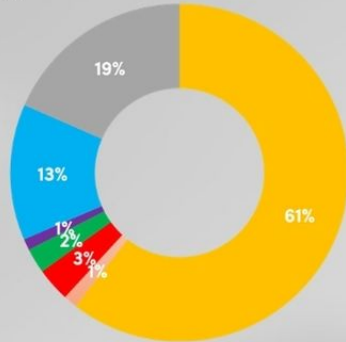
### Same gender identity as sex





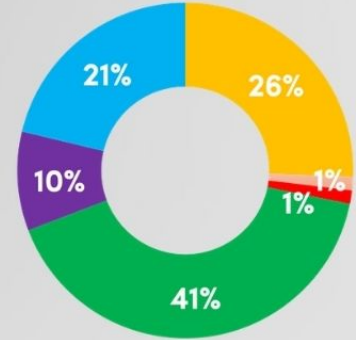
## Sexual Orientation

- Heterosexual/straight
- Lesbian/Gay woman
- Gay man
- Bi-sexual
- Other (please specify if you wish)
- Prefer not to say
- Not Answered



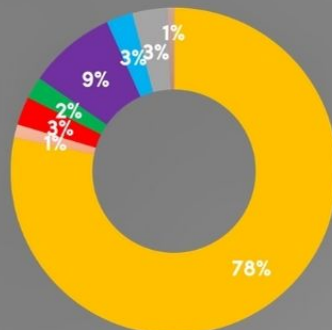
## Religious Beliefs

- Christian
- Jewish
- Buddhist
- No religion
- Other
- Not Answered



## Ethnicity

- White (British, Irish, other)
- Black (British, Carribean, African, other)
- Mixed
- Indian
- Not answered
- Other
- Other Asian
- Latin American

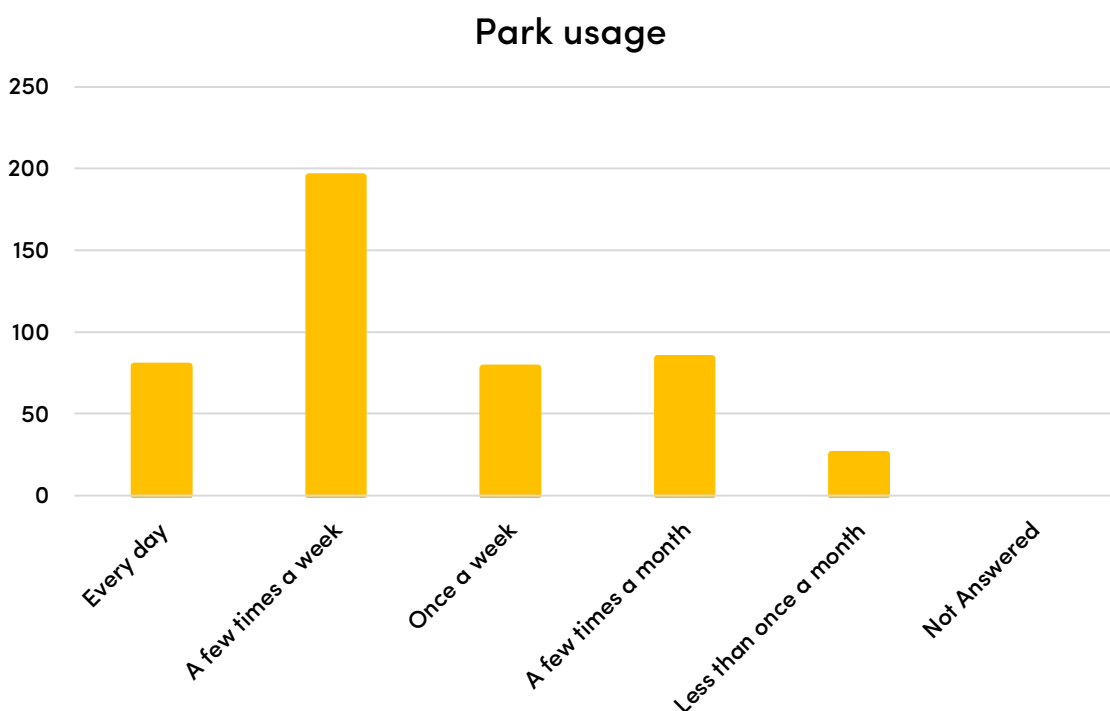


# 1. Outcomes from the survey

## 1. How often do you visit Southwark Park?

Format: Single select.

Number of responses: 461



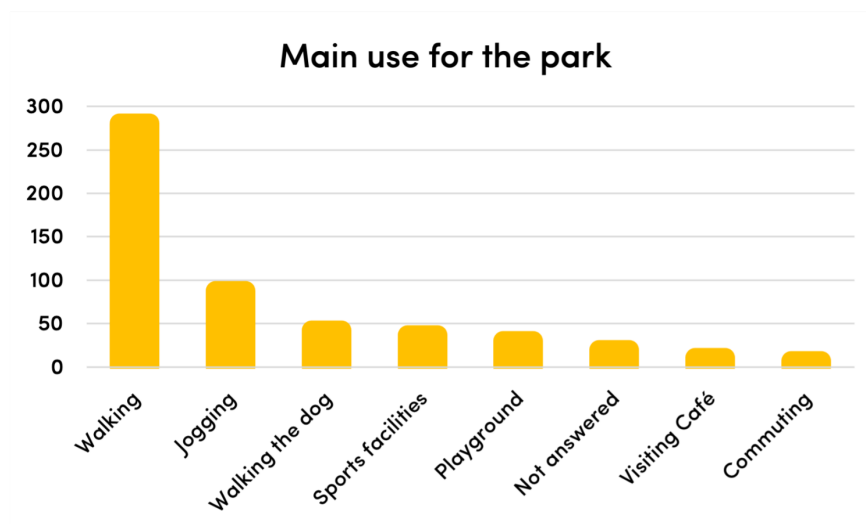
### Key findings:

- 274 (59%) of respondents identified themselves as being regular users of the park. Regular user is expressed as the total sum of people who use the park 'every day' and 'a few times per week'.
- 41% of people who identified as the other three options are considered as, for the purposes of this report, 'non-regular users'.

## 2. What is your main reason for visiting the park?

Format: Single select

Number of responses: 441



### Key findings:

- 70% (323) of respondents use the park predominantly for walking (based on the total sum of people who selected 'walking' or 'walking the dog'). If we incorporate respondents who selected jogging, the figure rises to 89%.
- 24% (111) of respondents shed some light on other usage habits by using the 'other' input field which gave some additional insight.
- 3% (14) respondents visit the art gallery as their main reason but otherwise no other cultural activities were mentioned.
- Most expressed an appreciation for green spaces, nature, and opportunities to reconnect with nature within the urban sprawl; a landmark to meet friends; the cricket pitch; or a combination of the options available illustrating that there was no one single reason to visit the park.

### Key quotes:

- "This is a vital destination to enjoy outdoor exercise in a relatively clean and open environment, particularly during Covid-19 restrictions. It also provides a sense of community as we observe or meet at a distance with others."
- "My husband, myself and our daughter love the park, the galleries and it gives us joy and relaxation as well as triggers our cultural needs."
- Walking through the park to avoid road fumes and noise. It is always more uplifting."

- “It is important for me to have everyday walks and exercise in the park. It is good for my mental wellbeing.”
- “To enjoy the beauty of the park with all the trees, shrubs, flowers, lake and wildlife.”
- “We remember our children now we’re old. We can see the change in the park which isn’t the way it should be changing. It is not friendly for young children there’s nothing really there for them. All they [sic] really done is made into a woodland with nowhere to play for the children.”

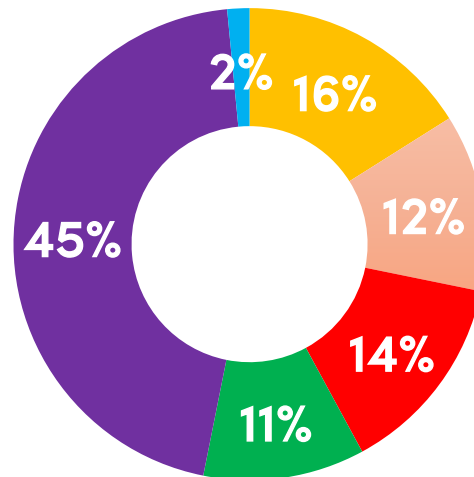
### 3. Which entrance do you use most to access the park?

Format: Single select

Number of responses: 454

Entrance	Total
Gomm Road	74
Hawkstone Road	56
Christchurch Gate and Paradise Gate	64
China Hall Gate	51
Jamaica Gate	209
Not Answered	7

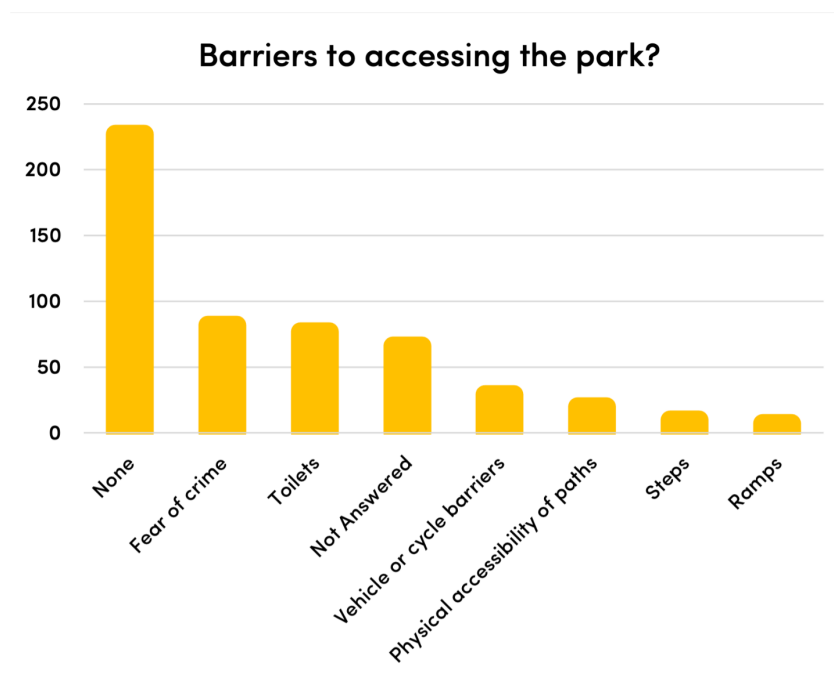
- Gomm Road
- Hawkstone Road
- Christchurch Gate and Paradise Gate
- China Hall Gate
- Jamaica Gate



## 4. What barriers are there, if any, to accessing the park?

Format: Single select

Number of responses: 395



### Key findings:

- 58% (229) of respondents to this question expressed that they felt that there were no barriers to accessing the park.
- Respondents who chose either 'ramps', 'steps', or 'physical accessibility of the paths' as a barrier was a small proportion of overall responses at 9% (37). Addressing these issues is vitally important in order to improve the overall accessibility and inclusion of the park. Accessibility issues are more likely to affect stakeholders that were unable to access the online survey, or others were unable to complete them due to a cognitive impairment which may have excluded key groups from the research sample. Recommendations made later in the report will bear this in mind.
- 19% (87) of respondents used the 'other' field to expand on issues in accessing the park. 18% (21) of these respondents explicitly mentioned crowding of the paths to some capacity, whether that was through daily exercise, cycling, or jogging.
- 18% (82) of respondents believed that crime prevented their access to the park, and a number went on to elaborate that they felt unsafe as women, but lighting in open park spaces, such as that in Burgess Park, would improve feelings of safety at night.

- Early closing hours in winter accounted for several responses to lack of accessibility.

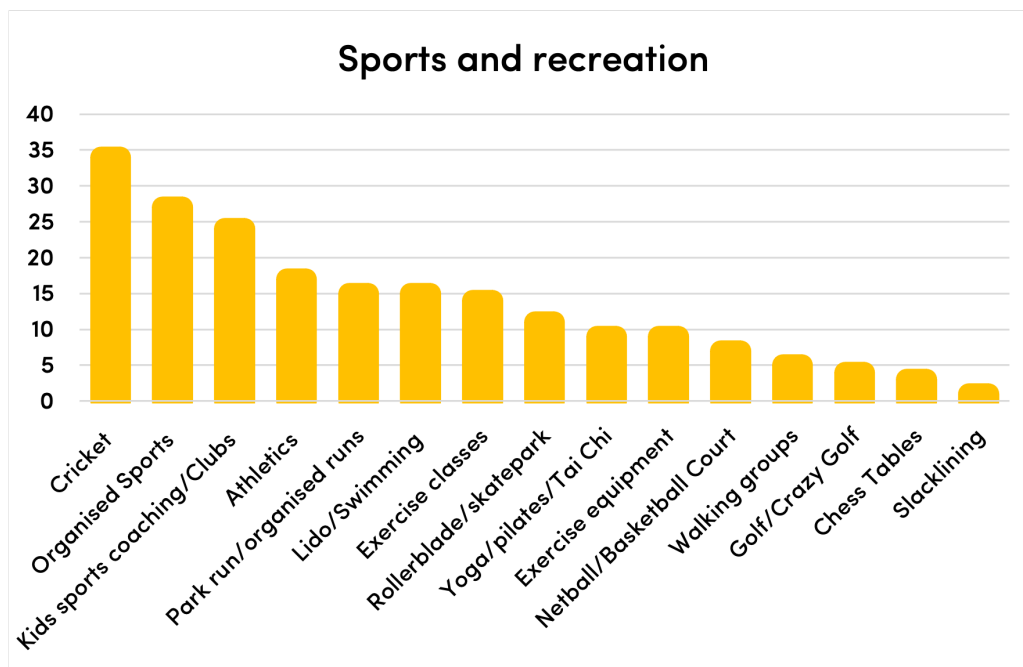
### Key quotes:

- “Lack of seating at suitable intervals for people with mobility problems.”
- “Areas of the park pavements, particularly near the bandstand are prone to flooding even with minimal rain often making it impossible to walk through the park with a wheelchair or pram.”
- “It is the only large park in the vicinity and gets crowded at popular times with pedestrians, children, buggies, dogs, bikes, mobility scooters, skaters and joggers all using the same paths. Separate cycle paths (or no cycles allowed) would improve things, as would a jogger path around the periphery of the park. Widening of some paths.”
- “Many benches are unusable after it rains due to puddles around it. Would be nice if something is done to avoid water pooling around the benches.”
- “Public toilets are only located on the pond side of the park and are not always available. Band side of the park has no public toilets, so many visitors use the walls adjacent to residential areas.”
- “Dogs not on leads. They run around and up to people and some jump at you. My son has Autism and is scared of unfamiliar dogs especially ones off leads and come up to him, as he is unsure of them. He now refuses to go to the park which would be so good for his mental health.”
- “In winter when it gets dark early it would be nice if there was a nature-friendly way of lighting up the pathways a bit more and extend park opening hours so that people who work till 5pm and can still go out for a walk”.
- “Mostly find the park OK but some cyclists ride far too fast and aggressively especially at crossover space.”

## 5. What sort of activities would you like to see in the park?

Format: Free text area

Total number of responses: 370



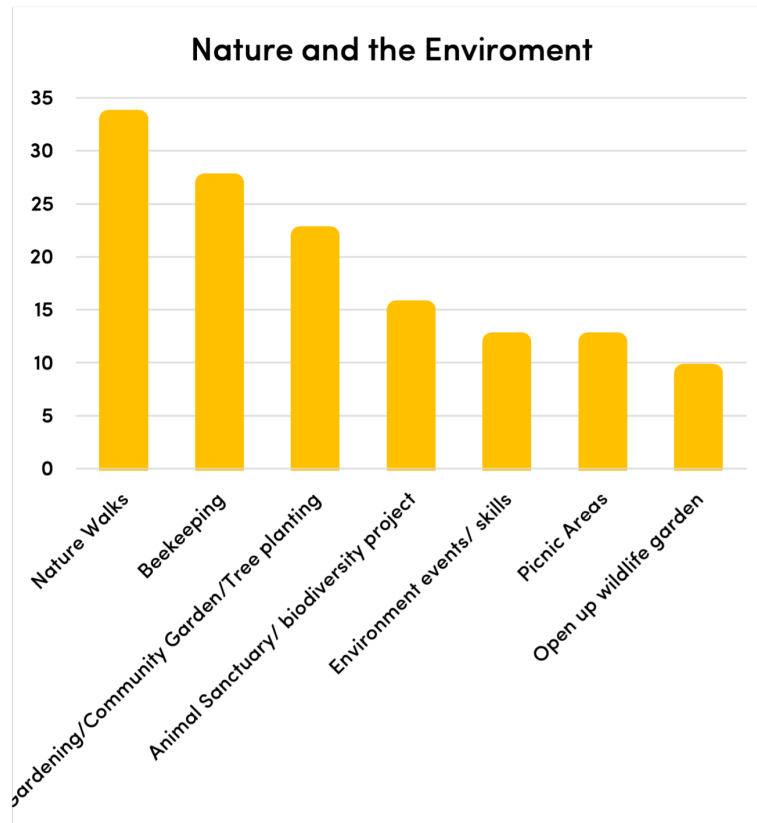
### Key findings:

- Over 8% (32) of respondents suggested introducing organised runs or increasing access to the Athletic Track to the public; opening the track to the public could support the introduction of park runs such as 10km or charity runs.
- 10% (37) of respondents mentioned increasing the number of cricket events and the number of cricket nets available. Some also noted that also improving the grass pitch in the surrounding areas would encourage spectators and engagement from the wider community with cricket events. Improvement of the grass pitches has been a prominent theme throughout the survey.
- 11% (41) of respondents cited organised sports events and exercise classes as a way to bring communities together and also encourage a healthy lifestyle.
- 30 (8%) of participants mentioned either bringing back the Lido, the old golf course, or creating either a skatepark or an area to rollerblade/BMX. Some noted this would provide more activities for young adults to enjoy in the park.
- Several responders mentioned organising children's sport coaching events or general activities to keep them entertained especially during school holidays.

### Key Quotes:



- “I am a huge fan of Park Run, which we had been doing with our whole family, so I would love to see that return as soon as possible; further activity on the running track would be excellent”
- “More activities for children and young people. There is not enough for them to do in the park. They need more than just walking around looking at trees”
- “Sport and fun activities for older residents: the bandstand area could host some dancing, Pilates, yoga or gentle exercise activities without the need of losing green space.”
- “More public use of the athletics track. It is a shame that it is only open once a week to the public for a few hours, and a few nights a week to a handful of running clubs. As a leader in a local running club, I often receive many comments about what a shame it is that the public is unable to use the athletics track, which sits vacant pretty much all week.”



### Key findings:

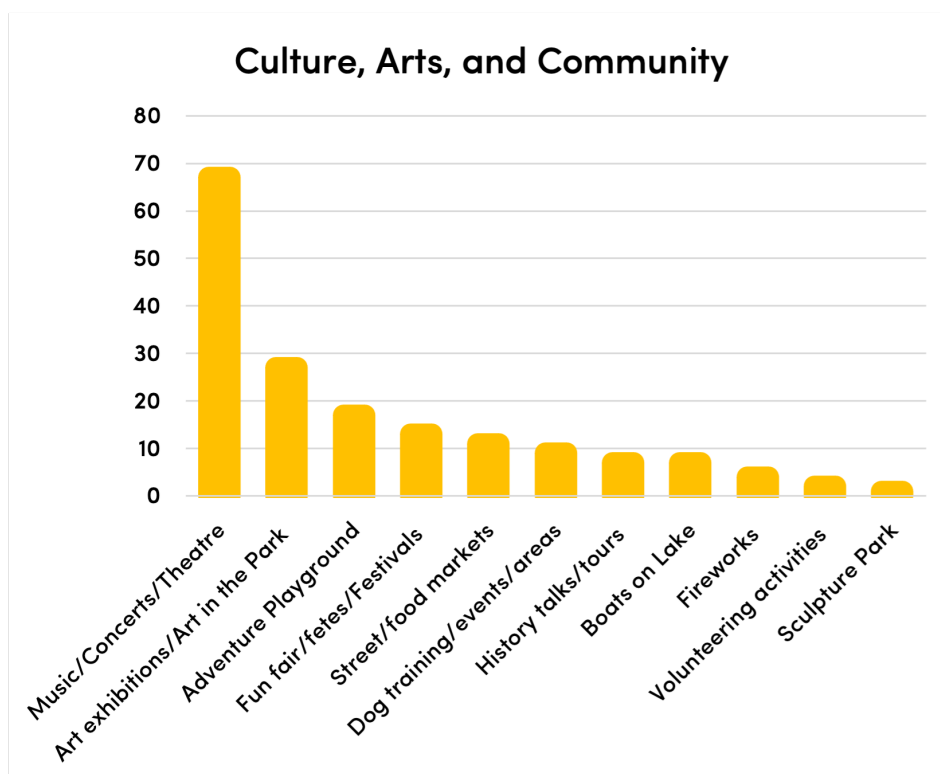
- 3% (12) of respondents mentioned increasing the number of picnic areas and outdoor seating so there are places for families to relax and enjoy the park. A large proportion of respondents complained that this minimal seating restricts their ability to gather socially and enjoy the park.
- 13% (48) of participants suggested introducing nature trails, walks or tours to educate the community on the plants and wildlife in the park (particularly for

children), or starting a biodiversity project to increase the wildlife presence in the park.

- A similar number of respondents, 13% (49), suggested activities to encourage the community to become more involved with nature in the park including opening a community garden, hosting gardening classes, beekeeping courses or use the beehives for other purposes.
- 2.5% (9) of respondents enquired about opening up the wildlife garden to make it more accessible and enjoyable for the public.

### Key Quotes:

- “More places to sit down and relax, like the new benches and tables near the cafe, for picnics and enjoying the weather during summer.”
- “Tree information and guided historical tours of the trees (people could give voluntary monetary contributions) or picture board of how the park used to look.”
- “I think it is important to retain the green space of the park as a place of calmness and tranquillity so that children, young people and adults can enjoy a piece of the natural environment, the trees, the fresh air and a good walk.”
- “I hear the beehives are being removed. That is really wrong given how bees are super important in pollination. They are also an incredible education to people of all ages who are stuck in towns and have probably never seen beehives in action.”



### Key findings:

- 18% (67) of respondents proposed to introduce live music concerts, theatres or open cinemas, this was by far the largest activity suggestion; with particular interest in hosting these events near the bandstand so the area is utilised. However, it is important to note that 2% (7) of respondents mentioned they would not want loud music in the park, and 1% (4) of respondents stated they disliked commercial activities such as the Alice in Wonderland event that was held recently.
- 7%(27) of participants suggested increasing the number of art exhibitions and artwork across the park – especially the idea to include local residents art.
- 6% (24) of respondents mentioned introducing activities such as festivals, fetes, street food markets or farmers markets – again using local food venders was stated in some responses.

### Key Quotes:

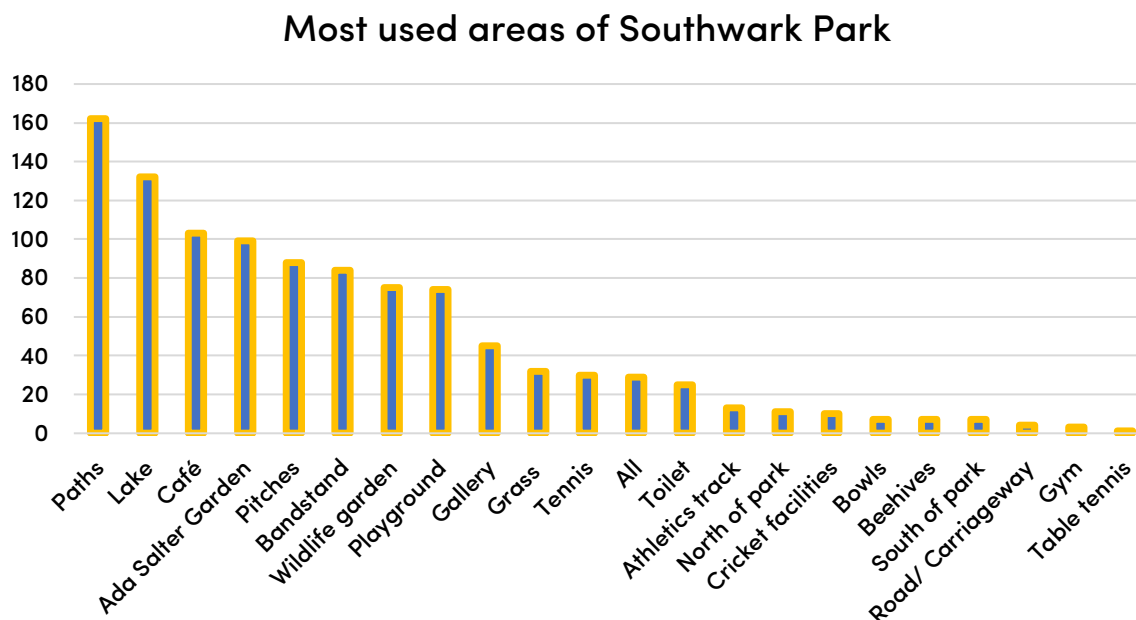
- “In respect to the art gallery, I think you could have regular photography, art and poetry competitions for local children, young people and adults, with different elements of the park chosen for each competition theme.”
- “The galleries are an important resource, and it is very important to encourage participation in their activities.”
- “Organised events such as the Alice in wonderland event caused significant disruption to park users and the damage from this event had still not been repaired.”
- “Music from the bandstand – brass bands, easy listening music, gentle jazz, country singing. Anything that will complement the park surrounds.”
- all ages who are stuck in towns and have probably never seen beehives in action.”

**NOTE:** 34 (9%) participants were happy with the activities already offered at the park and felt it was not necessary to introduce anymore activities.

## 6. What areas do you use most in Southwark Park?

**Format:** Three free text areas. Answers were able to be quantified as respondents referenced map of Southwark Park in their answer(s).

**Number of responses:** 433.



### Key findings:

- 59% (161) of respondents mentioned the paths in their answer. In particular, they spoke of their narrowness which contributed significantly to an oversaturation of footfall. Many respondents noted their displeasure and resentment towards joggers, cyclists, and e-scooters with whom they felt it was difficult to share the path with. Others mentioned widened paths, such as those at Burgess Park, to enable multiple usages of the paths.
- 49% (132) of participants spoke of their enjoyment of the lake. The lake was noted particularly in conjunction with the paths, nature, and the pavilion café. Many felt that the lake looked tired, unkept, and felt that more time should be invested making the lake more visually accessible through a clean-up and ongoing maintenance operations.
- There are already a great number of sport facilities in the park, but respondents expressed frustration that the facilities were inaccessible. A number said they would like to use the sports track to jog. Other respondents who use the paths also requested that the sports track be opened to the public on a regular basis to relieve congestion on the paths.
- 17% (74) of respondents cited the playground as their most used area of Southwark Park. Respondents mentioned that the current playground should be

expanded or another one built. They also commented that there was little in terms of places to engage young children in Southwark Park beyond the existing children's playground.

- People used the Ada Salter garden, 22% (99), and Sports pitches, 20% (88), but felt they were generally unkempt and lacked accessibility for wheelchair users and prams in terms of places to linger and general access the area.
- The Dinton Grove Gallery was not included on the map for respondents to choose from. 10% (45) of respondents to this question pinpointed the gallery as their reason to visit Southwark Park and noted that it would have been appropriate to include this on the consultation survey.

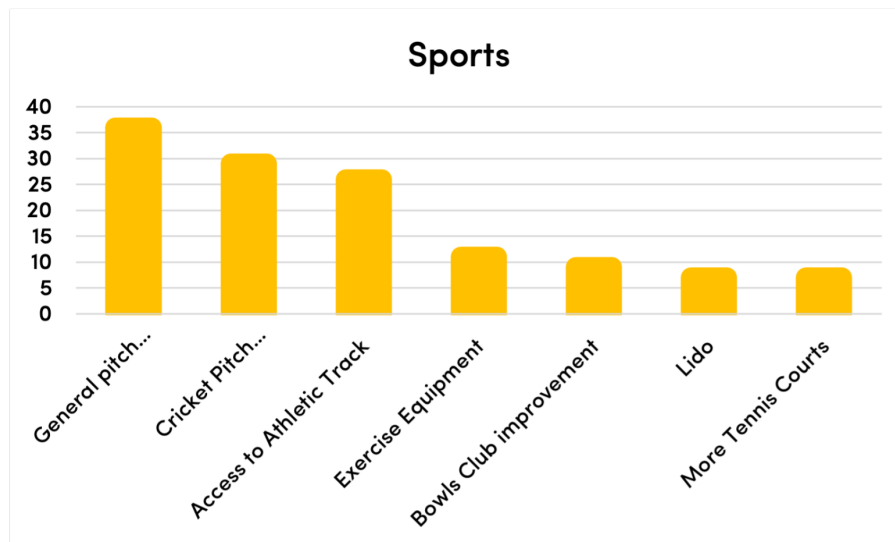
### Key quotes:

- "Wildlife Garden. I love the garden; I think it's a lovely place of quiet and it's quite unique".
- "Trying to use all the open spaces to walk and relax but it has become impossible. The park is not a park anymore, but a sports ground hijacked by runners, cyclists, electric scooters, footballers, etc., making it impossible for walkers to relax and enjoy the park."
- "All footpaths: I just cover lots of ground walking around the park, this park has been a lifesaver for my mental and physical health during lockdown."
- "Wildlife Garden (we only watch from outside as we do not have access to the area). We watch and list bird species in the park to submit records to British Trust of Ornithology via Bird Track."
- "We look at the plants and read about them where there are placards. We take pictures of the flowers."
- "Sports Pitches - this is where I let my dog off the lead to play with other dogs. Other parts of the park are just bit too close to gates/ roads with heavy traffic so are not as safe."
- "My day is not complete unless I have walked the whole park which I have done daily (I'm 72). I love the social life meeting other dog walkers."
- "Art Gallery, as an artist and art lover, I think it's great to enjoy Southwark Park Gallery and Dilston Grove (not included on the map)."
- "Picnic on the grass and full use of the benches of which some at the bandstand end would be appreciated."

## 7. Where in the park would you like to see improvements?

Format: Free text area

Number of responses: 376



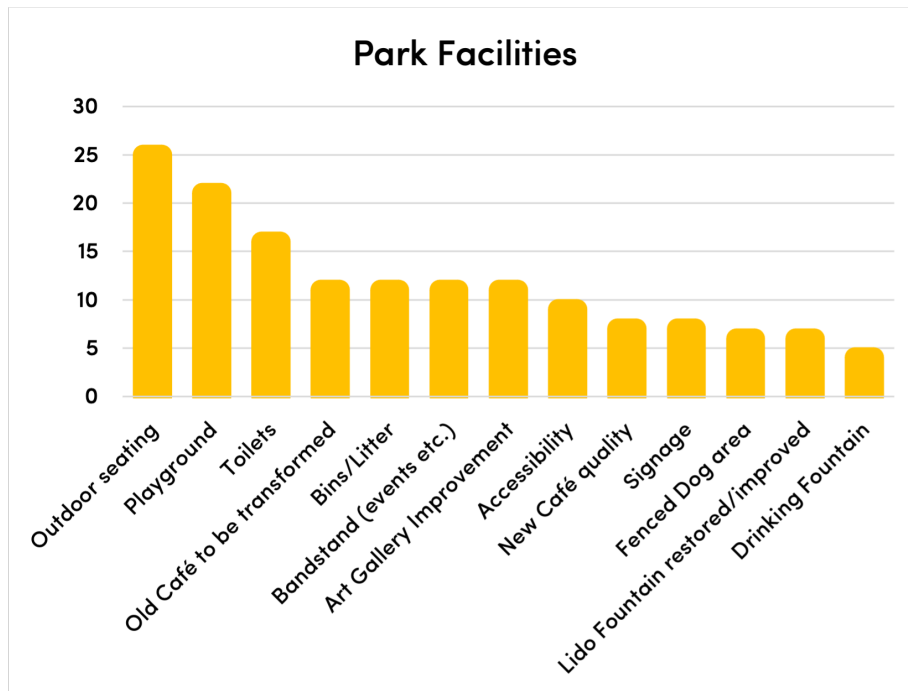
### Key findings:

- Over 9% (36) of respondents commented on the need to improve the quality and maintenance of the sports pitches in the park. The pitch that most participants commented on was the cricket pitch, 7% (29), many highlighting the need for better quality wicket nets and grass pitch.
- 6.5% (26) of respondents commented that the Athletic Track should be more accessible to the public, rather than just for official running clubs.
- 2% (7) of respondents suggested reinstating the Lido in the park.
- 3% (11) of respondents commented on the quality of the outdoor gym and exercise equipment, requesting to improve the quality of the equipment and/or to increase the number of facilities.
- 2% (9) of respondents suggested to either renovate the Bowls Club or transform it into another facility as it underutilised.

### Key Quotes:

- “The Area around the Bowls Club seem to be the least used and least attractive”
- “I'd love to see another lane or two for cricket nets as these tend to be very busy all the time. Setting up the fields with proper football goals and a grass cricket pitch would be a great addition to the park and encourage users of all ages to come to the park to use these facilities.”

- “Sport fields – the current quality is terrible, and I am looking at joining a different club”
- “The absolute highest priority must be to better utilise the athletics track. It's such an asset. There are not enough of them in London.”

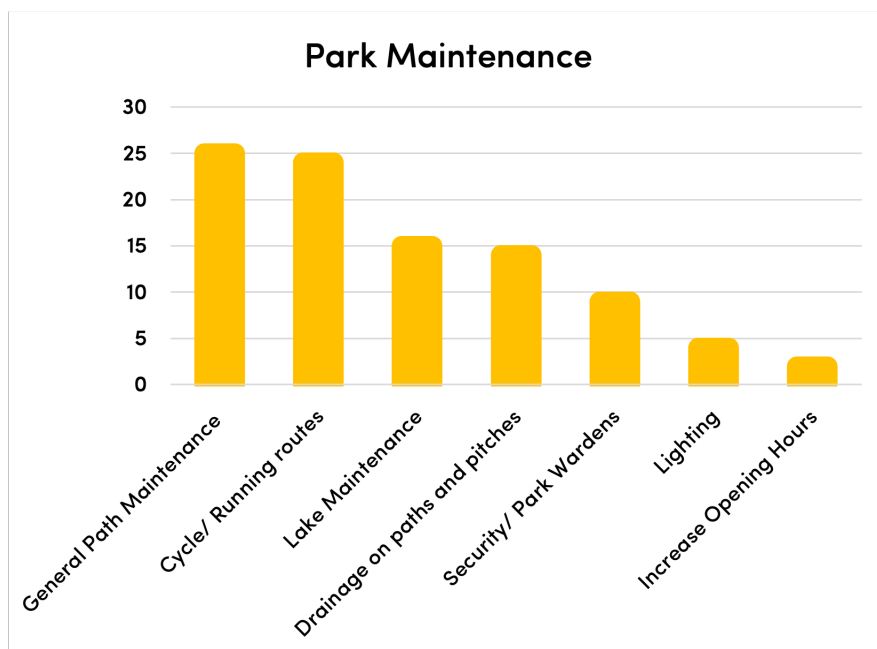


### Key findings:

- (5%) (27) of respondents commented that the playground is often overcrowded, suggesting that there is a need to expand the current one or build another one in another part of the park – a few mentioned building a new playground.
- 13% (52) of respondents suggested increasing either the number of toilets, bins or outdoor seating and picnic areas – in particular outside the new café.
- 2.5% (10) of respondents highlighted the need to repair the drinking fountains or restoring the Lido Fountain.
- 3% (11) of respondents felt that the Bandstand area is quiet and underused, as previously mentioned in section 6, some participants suggested hosting music or theatre events at the bandstand.
- 3% (11) of respondents highlighted the need to improve the gallery, by increasing the number of exhibitions or classes to encourage community involvement.
- 2% (7) of respondents commented on the signage across the park, in particular the signs for different entrances and informative signs for the various plants, trees and wildlife.
- Similar to the Bowls Club, 3% (11) of respondents suggested renovating the Old Café to another hospitality facility in the park or transform it for another use.

### Key Quotes:

- “I'd also like to see more public art and more interaction with the gallery - there is a real opportunity to make Southwark really special in this way - there aren't too many parks with good galleries in London.”
- “The overcrowded playground could be made larger, or a second playground built in the area of the park nearer Rotherhithe.”
- “More use of band stand throughout the year, encourage local musicians to use this site, or licensed buskers.”
- “Gates to park clearly named---essential for meeting points and emergency services.”



### Key findings:

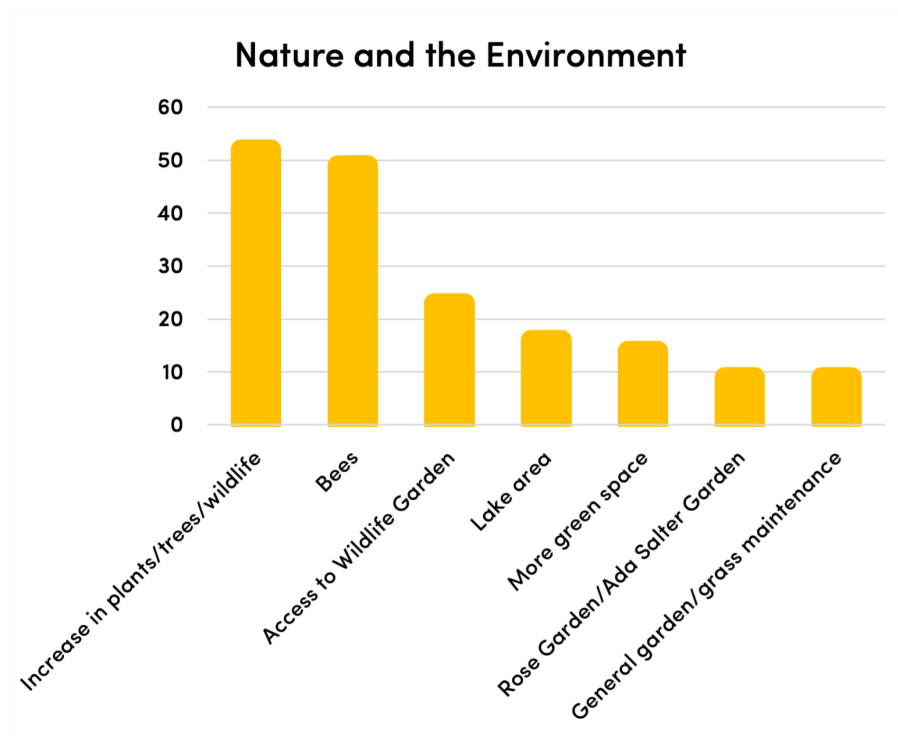
- 7% (29) of respondents commented on the poor drainage in the park including the sports pitches, paths and lake. Some suggested that the lake should be drained or cleaned as it has an unpleasant appearance and parkgoers do not enjoy sitting and gathering near the lake.
- 6% (24) of respondents mentioned widening the pathways or creating cycle/running routes as they believed some cyclists and joggers posed as a danger when using the park.



- 3% (13) of respondents highlighted the need to improve the security in the park, suggesting either increasing the lighting, having park wardens or increasing police presence.
- 6.5% (25) of respondents commented on the general path maintenance such as trimming the grass edges, filling potholes and tarmacking the path near the Jamaica Gate, replacing the wood chippings, as it creates a mess.

### Key Quotes:

- “The Lake needs to have urgent maintenance to bore hole fountains pumps and the overall maintenance needs improving Cutting back reeds so the lake can be seen”
- “Stop the bikes as they are dangerous so are scooters and skateboards. It is very dangerous. This is why in my 71 years of living in this area. I am now afraid to use the park as often as I used to.”
- “Policing to keep criminal elements of society out of the park is a much have, on a permanent ongoing basis.”
- “There are several deep holes which are obscured by the grass, and if running or walking across it, present the risk for sprained and broken ankles, etc.”



### Key findings:

- 13.5% (52) of respondents commented on increasing the number of plants, trees, flowers, gardens or encouraging wildlife and biodiversity – this was the most suggested improvement to the park. Respondents suggested adding a garden next to the bandstand, having hanging flower baskets and more wildlife areas.

- 12.5% (49) of respondents disagreed with the removal of the beehives in the Wildlife Garden and wanted to keep the bees or at least have a full explanation as to what is happening to the beehives.
- 6% (23) of respondents commented on accessibility of the Wildlife Garden and feel it should be open to the public or at least have allotted times to visit the garden.
- 6.5% (25) of respondents mentioned that either the Rose Garden or the Lake area needed improvement including clearing the reeds and adding more colour to the garden.
- 3.6% (14) of respondents commented on increasing the amount of green space in the park.

### Key quotes:

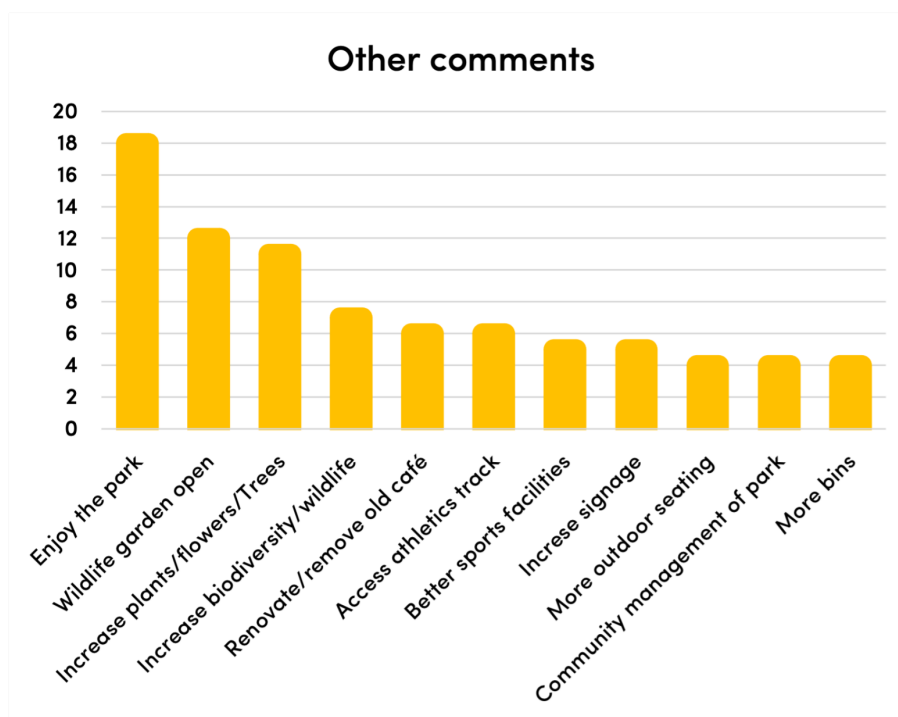
- “The park, especially over the past year (during the pandemic) has been vital for the health and wellbeing of its users. Accessibility for all is key to this.”
- “I would like to see the hanging baskets reintroduced to the lamp columns along the driveway of the main entrance and around the perimeter of the bandstand.”
- “More tree planting and potentially an orchard space in the park would be good, the park suffers significantly compared to other parks like Burgess & Greenwich from a lack of diversity.”
- “The Rose Garden to be really worked up to be beautiful all the year round, and the lake to be cleaned to minimise less pleasant smells, maximise wildlife and potentially to add features such as waterlilies.”
- “There are plans to remove the bees from the wildlife garden, which seems irresponsible. Bees are critical for the ecosystem of the city, and the park is one of the few spaces where a lot of them can be kept.”

**NOTE:** Please note 7 (2%) of respondents felt there was nothing to be improved in the park.

## 8. Any other comments?

Format: Free text area

Number of responses: 271



### Key findings

- One sentiment dominated responses to this question. 46% (126) of respondents showed their concern for the beehives in Southwark Park and said they would like them to stay. This is by far the single greatest sentiment expressed by respondents to this question and is 40% higher than the second most expressed sentiment (i.e., residents enjoyed the park at 6% (18)). Please note that this figure was not included on the graph above as it visually distorted the data.
- 16% (44) of respondents expressed the importance of allowing nature to flourish, whether that be through improving public accessibility to the wildlife garden, increasing biodiversity and wildlife, or planting more trees, shrubs, and flowers. Several respondents noted that trees are useful vectors to provide a place for rest and shade for park users in the summer months.
- The old café should be repurposed for general community use. Some suggestions included using it as a place to store sports equipment and as changing rooms for people using the sports and nature facilities.
- A number of respondents commented on the cyclists/electric scooters, travelling extremely quickly – some proposed creating a cycle path and some wanted to ban cyclists and electric scooters.

- A few commented on the signage for park entrances and to introduce signs labelling trees/plants in the park. This echoes a fairly consistent theme throughout the consultation.
- 4% (11) of respondents commented on increasing either the number of toilets, bins or outdoor seating.
- Having more access to the Athletics Track is a comment, multiple participants made. General improvements to the quality of the sports pitches and also their accessibility – one respondent mentioned the pricing to book was high and another suggested a fairer booking system for the tennis courts.

### Key quotes

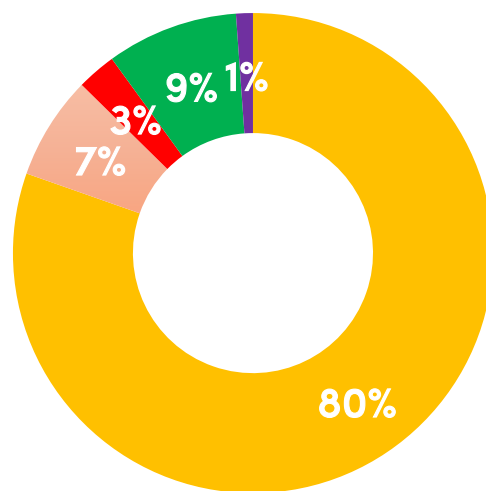
- “Do not mess with the wildlife area – disturbance is detrimental to biodiversity and this is an essential wildlife corridor.”
- “Please retain the beehives in their current location after any works have been carried out. They are essential and we love them.”
- “I think a few patches of grass that people don’t use for sport or sitting could be transformed into more wildlife friendly areas (meadow or wildlife pond). There could also be more hedgerows planted round the sides of the park to attract wildlife.”
- “Fruit trees can be placed all around the park and clearly mapped through a fruit tree trail which can bring the community together, teaching young people the importance of connecting with nature through fruit, seeing it grow through the seasons. If all these trees were clearly identified, everyone would be able to locate them and enjoy their fruits.”
- “It is important to look at the future of the park and where it is going also in terms of its ecology and environmental impact, hence the importance of keeping the beehives, for example. I definitely think it would be good to have wild areas where the public do not have access, to allow plants, insects and other wildlife to have a sanctuary.”
- “Plant more trees, and don’t plant them singly by themselves or in rows. Plant them so that, when they mature, they will form a copse or some other arboreal feature that will give shade to humans and wildlife as the climate gets warmer. Also, give some thought to changing the type of trees you plant in order to take account of global warming, Ash Dieback and other tree diseases.”
- “Recycling bins throughout the park would make a huge difference to the amount of waste, especially in summer when waste bins are overflowing with empty cans, glass bottles and cardboard boxes from picnics.”
- “Dog mess is a huge issue in our park and ruins visitor’ enjoyment of the beautiful space. Increased signage could be installed.”
- “The old cafe building should either be repurposed or torn down.”

## 9. In what capacity are you responding to this survey?

Format: Single select

Number of responses: 461

Response	Number
I live in the local area	426
I work / study in the local area	37
I am a visitor to the local area	14
I am a member of a local group or organisation (please specify below)	47
Other (please specify below)	6
Not Answered	0



- I live in the local area
- I work / study in the local area
- I am a visitor to the local area
- I am a member of a local group or organisation (please specify below)
- Other (please specify below)

## 2. Outcomes from the workshops

Total attendees: 40

### 2.1. Nature & the Environment

Attendees felt that the overall maintenance of the park needed to be improved, in particular filling gaps in the hedges and the area around Jamaica Gate. Suggestions to improve this included using shrubs, increasing the number of community gardening schemes, painting the railings, repairing the pavements, and draining the waterlogged areas. One attendee commented that this maintenance is essential as the “Park is used by lots of people and needs to be accessible”. Furthermore, many noted that the gardening area by Gomm Road should be utilised and protected. Another suggestion was to create sensory gardens that are accessible to the public and appealing to children.

Creating a nature trail and informative signage of the plants and trees in the park was proposed by a number of attendees as this would encourage interest in nature whilst also educating the community on the park’s landscape. Increasing the biodiversity of the park was important to the workshop’s participants, many noted to introduce leaflets and further information on the park’s wildlife in one of its facilities such as the Art Gallery. The future of the beehives was a key concern for attendees, many requested if the bees could remain in the park or, if this is not possible, a full explanation on why they are removing them needs to be released.

### 2.2. Sports & Recreation

There were a number of suggestions for what new sports and recreation facilities attendees would like to see in the park, this included table tennis tables, outdoor chess boards, a fitness gym in the north of the park, and other adult games such as Pétanque. The participants noted diversifying the range of sport and recreation facilities would make the park more multi-generational. Increasing the number of amenities for teenagers was a vital area of improvement for the attendees as it allows teens to make more use of the park, feel included and have a safe place to go after school. To encourage teenagers to use the park attendees proposed increasing the amount of outdoor seating, picnic tables, Wi-Fi spots, cycling facilities, and creating a skatepark near Gomm Road where there is little housing so residents will not be disturbed.

Attendees proposed a number of ways to improve the current sport and recreation facilities in the park such as a fully functioning cricket pitch, an accessible athletics track, online bookings for the park’s facilities, increasing the number of outdoor gym equipment and running markers for joggers. Also, improving the maintenance of the amenities

including cleaner sports facilities and controlling the flooding near the Athletics Tracks along with other areas of the park if necessary.

A number of participants proposed to make the sports centre accessible to children, including removing charges for local primary and secondary schools as this “means the local schools have more options and children can have a more diverse and exciting experience with exercise”. Furthermore, attendees suggested building upon facilities for children to make the park more family friendly such as introducing a nature or activity trail and making the signage more accessible to children by allowing the children to create the signs.

## 2.4. Culture, Art, & Community

The attendees commented on the management of the park which comprised of a strong emphasis on transparency and clear information on who and how to contact the park management so it is easy for any concerns park users have to be raised and discussed openly. Introducing a community notice board with more information on local events and activities was also suggested. Furthermore, participants proposed advertising the park more such as increasing the signage in local areas and nearby public stations.

Improving the security in the park was noted by multiple attendees as it is important for them to feel safe whilst using the park. It was suggested to install CCTV across the park, introduce assigned patrols and ensure there are staff other than gardeners monitoring the park such as wardens or park rangers. Also, preserving the history of the park through negotiations with English Heritage was proposed by participants.

Transforming the old café building so that it is utilised further was noted by a number of attendees. Suggestions included tying it in with other amenities in the area such as using it as a place to change wellies, for educational purposes where activities for children can be held or converting it into a community room. One participant stated renovating it into a community room could allow the park to work with local groups and “lease it for community events to generate income for the park”. Finally, attendees would like to see an improvement in the Art Gallery by hosting activities such as art exhibitions and painting classes.

### 3. Outcomes from the youth workshop

**Total attendees:** 13

#### Lighting and security

A number of participants noted that lack of lighting led them to feel unsafe, particularly after daylight hours. This meant that visibility of the paths was reduced. Lighting that had more imaginative installations as opposed to just lampposts could create vibrant walkways that made people feel safer. There should also be more CCTV to cultivate a safe environment and deter anti-social behaviour.

#### Signage

Engaging with signs and educational material greatly depends on how the information is laid out in terms of colours, graphics, imagery, and language which should be vibrant, eye-catching, and engaging. Most young people are busy or preoccupied so would not notice signage, citing no large bodies of text and use of QR codes. Community noticeboards were not a huge source of information for young people, but information should be more clearly targeted.

#### Seating and shelter

According to several attendees, there are few activities for young people and little to engage with in the park. They felt that due to lack of seating and shelter, the only way to enjoy the park was to walk through it but otherwise it is not a destination that compels them to stay.

Seating provides them with an opportunity to meet and socialise with friends. In lockdown, this has become more important as other spaces have been closed. Young people were keen to see sheltered outside spaces where you can sit down and study. Sheltered seating and tables would be useful as some young people may not be able to study at home, or it can provide them with space outside the home, particularly during national lockdown.

#### Art and colour

The young people's sense of the park was directly linked to the vibrancy and aesthetic appeal of the environment from a visual standpoint. Currently, the scenery blends in with the benches and trees, with a number of respondents describing the park as 'dull'. More colours could be implemented through flowers, artwork/street art, and designed or painted benches for vibrancy and to open up spaces. Artistic contributions could involve the local community and encapsulate reflections on the park's history. Artwork should continuously evolve and change to continue to attract people in the long term. Comparisons were made to successful street art commissions in Brixton and Camberwell.



## Nature and the environment

The young people spoke positively about accessing opportunities to engage with nature in the park. Suggestions to create allotments that were maintained through community engagement was a popular suggestion, and they would like to see these managed in a way that granted access to local groups, schools, and educational programmes as opposed to an individual, first come first served basis. Speaking broadly on the natural and environmental composition of the park, a general consensus formed that there should be more plants, flowers, shrubs, and fruit trees with vibrant signposting as these would attract more people back to the park and cultivate local pride in the natural environment.

## Sports facilities and physical exercise

Attendees felt that there were not enough sport facilities to support the needs of the community. Many noted that facilities were overused by the same people which meant access was often limited. The park would benefit from a fairer booking system for the track, tennis courts, and other facilities. Costs to book courts can also be prohibitively expensive for young people so prices for people of school age should be low-cost or free, or particular hours in the week set aside for use of the facilities by young people.

Attendees also noted that the table tennis tables were poorly maintained and lacked shelter from the elements, so any upgrades or new facilities should focus on being all-weather to maximise accessibility. Grass areas were also uneven and have a number of hidden potholes, litter, and natural debris that can make them unsafe. In addition to smoothing out the grass pitches, a multi-purpose surface area could be introduced for outdoor activities, group classes, sports, and events.

## Community

Tension may be caused by older people who have preconceptions about groups of young people being up to no good, efforts could be made to tackle this to open conversations. They would like to see young people more actively invited to further consultations on the park.

# Youth Consultation Poll Results

	Yes	No	Some what	Don't Know
I feel that there are enough public spaces that are designed with me in mind	33%	42%	25%	0%
It is important to me that the look and feel of a place is appropriate to my age group	73%	42%	27%	0%
I would like to see more in the way of gardening and spaces to work with the natural environment?	59%	8%	25%	8%
I usually read signs and information about things that I can see to learn more about what I'm looking at?	42%	25%	33%	0%
Spaces for learning and education are important to me	100%	0%	0%	0%
Social spaces designed with lots of room for physical activity are important to me	77%	15%	8%	0%
I like to use things like community notice boards to get a sense what's going on in the area?	42%	25%	33%	0%
Street art and art created by the local community would make me want to visit a park?	73%	9%	9%	9%
If there was a community hub or space in the park, I would use it?	36%	10%	36%	18%

	Yes	No	Some what	Don't Know
It's important to me that there are opportunities to learn and grow in any new developments the park?	83%	17%	0%	0%
I find it easy and accessible (such as booking spaces, or knowing when I can use facilities) to use the park for sports	27%	45%	10%	8%
Do you like the idea of table tennis tables?	59%	8%	25%	8%
Would you use spaces that are dedicated to boardgames, like chess, checkers, etc?	50%	33%	17%	0%
I find the park boring	18%	64%	18%	0%
The park is well maintained and looked after	30%	20%	50%	0%
There are enough places to sit and relax in the park?	18%	64%	18%	0%
Southwark Park is a fun and exciting place to be	30%	10%	60%	0%





# Part Three: Southwark Park Vision and Framework



Community  
Southwark

# 1. Summary of findings

Throughout the consultation activities, we received an impassioned response from residents who see Southwark Park not only as an important local and historical landmark, but as a locus of pride in the community and a significant part of local identity. We had 461 responses to our survey, and 53 attendees over the three workshops. Indeed, the importance of Southwark Park to local residents is undoubtable. Our consultation showed that while the park may face challenges in the present, respondents were enthusiastic about its future and role in the wider green recovery for Bermondsey, Rotherhithe, and the wider catchment area.

## 1.1. The research sample

- The sample predominantly comprised of regular users of Southwark Park with 274 (59%) of survey respondents identifying themselves as using the park at least 'every day' or 'a few times per week'.
- The remaining 41% of people who identified as the other three options are considered as, for the purposes of this report, 'non-regular users'. We analysed differences between the trends expressed by these two groups at the outset. Data analysis did not reveal much in terms of why people may not use the park to the same extent as other park users to the point that we could make general statements of these two groups and make them a legitimate point of comparison.
- Both groups, however, identified similar themes and issues with the current state of Southwark Park. Usage more likely reflects different lifestyles, commitments, or Covid-19 as factors in their decision-making as one might expect in a diverse population of park users. It is also important to note other contextual factors that may have influenced decision making in this survey. Weather and Covid-19 will have undoubtedly influenced how many respondents use the park.
- 70% (323) of respondents use the park predominantly for walking (based on the total sum of people who selected 'walking' or 'walking the dog'). If we incorporate respondents who selected jogging, the figure rises to 89% (392).
- Respondents notably did not select places in which one would typically linger, suggesting that their time in the park was a more transient experience and they likely use the park for brief episodes.
- 86% (278) of respondents who selected 'walking' or 'walking the dog' then skipped to the next question without elaborating additional usage habits in the 'other' field which adds weight to the conjecture that the majority of respondents do not tend to linger in the park.

- Only 2% of respondents were ages between 18–24, and there were no attendees from this age group in our initial workshops. We therefore held a workshop with the Southwark Young Advisers to redress this imbalance.
- 0 respondents mentioned sitting to appreciate nature as a reason to come to Southwark Park. On the contrary, most noted the lack of seating, particularly in the northerly end of the park, by the bandstand, and around the paths, or any single dedicated area with few places that were appropriate for people with mobility issues to stop and relax.
- Most expressed an appreciation for green spaces, the natural environment, and opportunities to reconnect with nature within the urban sprawl.
- Broadly speaking, Southwark Park is not seen as a cultural destination.
- When asked about what activities they would like to see in Southwark Park, 34 (9%) respondents to this question were happy with the activities already offered at the park and felt it was not necessary to introduce anymore activities.

## 1.2. Concerns

**The research raised the following concerns from respondents:**

### ... The paths were not fit for purpose

19% (87) of responses to the question concerning barriers to the park explicitly mentioned crowding of the paths to some capacity. There was the feeling that paths were not well equipped or wide enough to handle increased traffic and footfall. Respondents felt that they could not enjoy the park because they were constantly uneasy by the lack of social distancing on the paths, or what they perceived to be low-level dangers posed by cyclists, joggers, and e-scooters.

### ... The sports facilities were hard to access

There are not enough sports facilities to support the needs of the community. Many noted in the group workshops that the facilities were overused by the same people which meant access was often limited. Respondents also expressed frustration that the sports track was not typically open to the public and it could be opened to alleviate congestion on the paths by attracting joggers.

### ... The removal of the beehives was of great concern

When surveyed if they had any other comments, 46% (126) of respondents showed their concern for the beehives in Southwark Park and added they would like them to stay. This is by far the single greatest sentiment expressed by respondents to this question and is 40% higher than the second most expressed sentiment, i.e., residents enjoyed the park at 6% (18).

### ... More could be done to enhance the natural environment

29 (7%) respondents commented on the poor drainage in the park including areas such as the sports pitches, paths and lake. Some suggested the lake should be drained or cleaned as it has an unpleasant appearance and parkgoers would not enjoy sitting and lingering near the lake. A number of qualitative responses in the survey and feedback in the workshops noted that the area surrounding the lake, the Ada Salter Garden, and areas with plants and shrubs, generally appeared uncared for and overgrown. 25 (6.5%) respondents mentioned that either the Rose Garden or the Lake area needed improvement including clearing the reeds and adding more colour to the garden.

### ... The grass pitches are no longer up to scratch

Over 9% (36) of respondents commented on the need to improve the quality and maintenance of the sports pitches in the park. The pitch that most participants commented on was the cricket pitch, 7% (29), many highlighting the need for better quality wicket nets, grass pitch, and lines. The grass pitch is uneven and have a number of hidden potholes, litter, and natural debris that can make them unsafe to use. Damage to the pitch is caused by continual usage from sports and there is currently no resting period on the pitches in between the various sporting seasons. There are also not enough alternatives areas or seating to discourage park users from using the grass pitches to meet socially.

### ... There's not enough available for children and young people

Qualitative survey feedback and outputs from the workshop showed residents concern that there is not enough to engage children of primary school age besides the children's playground, meaning that they were excluded from opportunities to engage and learn.

### ... The park does not have a coherent community offering

Residents did not feel that the park had a coherent offering to the community. Key park spaces, such as the bandstand, old nursery, wildlife garden, old café, and the northerly area of park in general, were felt to be underutilised for community activities and thus the park was not reaching its full potential.

### ... Limited access to toilets can be a problem

Limited access to the toilets can, at times, lead to people using alternative areas of the park to relieve themselves which may include residential and or shared community spaces. Some residents who have had to do this have felt undignified in having to relieve themselves publicly, and other users are understandable frustrated that.

## 1.3. Young advisors

**The workshop with the Southwark Young Advisors showed:**

### ... There were not enough activities for young people

There are few activities for young people and little to engage with in the park. They felt that due to lack of seating and shelter, the only way to enjoy the park was to walk through it but otherwise it is not a destination that compels them to stay.

### ... Sports facilities were busy or expensive

Costs to book courts can be prohibitively expensive for young people which acts a deterrent for usage and precludes children who are financially unable from using the facilities. They also mentioned that a multi-purpose area for activities would really benefit their use of the park.

### ... Educational opportunities were important but limited

100% of the young people indicated in the youth workshop poll that space for learning and education is important to them, with 83% also saying that it was important to them that there are opportunities to learn and grow in Southwark Park.

### ... Colour and creativity needed to be brought to the park

The young people's sense of the park was directly linked to the vibrancy and aesthetic appeal of the environment from a visual standpoint. Currently, the scenery blends in with the benches and trees, with a number of respondents describing the park as 'dull'.

### ... More could be done to involve young people

Tension may be caused by older people who have preconceptions about groups of young people being up to no good, efforts could be made to tackle this to open conversations. They would like to see young people more actively invited to further consultations on the park to open dialogue with older residents.



## 1.4. Accessibility issues

**When we asked about accessibility issues in the park, we found...**

### ... Not everyone thought there were barriers to accessing the park

58% (229) of respondents to the question of accessibility of Southwark Park expressed that they felt that there were no barriers to accessing the park. Yet, in terms of the question of accessibility, we must accept that it could likely be the case that accessibility issues may be largely invisible to people without requirements.

### ... More could be done to improve access for all

Respondents who chose either 'ramps', 'steps', or 'physical accessibility of the park' as a barrier accounted for 9% (37) of responses. They also noted that the anti-motorcycle barriers made accessing the park challenging. As with many public spaces, some areas of the park are not fully accessible to people in wheelchairs or with limited mobility, so improving access will be a priority in any future development.

### ... Perceptions of crime was preventing people from visiting the park

18% (82) of respondents believed that crime prevented their access to the park, and a number of women expressed concern that a lack of lighting led them to feel unsafe, particularly in times of diminished sunlight or visibility.

### ... There were not enough quiet spaces

While many people felt that the park could become crowded which prevented them from relaxing, one park user noted a very important point which invoked the need for quiet spaces in Southwark Park for a different reason: "my son has autism and is scared of unfamiliar dogs especially ones off leads and come up to him, as he is unsure of them. He now refuses to go to the park which would be so good for his mental health."

### ... There were not enough areas for people with mobility issues

There were few spaces designed with people with mobility issues in mind. Some respondents felt that they would like to pause and appreciate in much the same way one might use a bench or seating area, but there were few accessible surfaces next to benches and viewpoints, or laybys on the paths.

## 2. The Vision and Framework for Southwark Park

### The Vision:

Southwark Park should be a place centred on the needs of the community; a place to unwind, to connect with people, to discover nature, to learn, and to grow.

### 2.1. Framework One

Repurpose the existing areas, improve pathways around the park, and create new facilities for visitors to Southwark Park.

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#### Suggestions:

##### Expand the children's areas

27 (5%) respondents commented that the playground is often overcrowded, suggesting that there is a need to expand the current one or build another in different part of the park. Other considerations include adding other novelty items around the park at child height.

##### Add more outdoor seating, picnic areas, and bins

52 (13%) participants suggested increasing the number of toilets, bins, and outdoor seating– in particular around the new café and bandstand so there are places for visitors to relax and enjoy the park.

##### Improve water drainage on paths and around seating areas

A large proportion of respondents complained of the minimal availability of these to gather socially, and water logging around seating after wet weather spells.

##### Create all-weather areas

The young people were keen to see sheltered outside spaces where you can sit down and study or meet and socialise with friends. Sheltered seating and tables would be useful as some young people may not be able to study at home, or it can provide them with space outside the home, particularly during national lockdown.

### **Widen pathways and create separate paths for jogging and cycling**

24 (6%) respondents mentioned widening the pathways or creating cycle/running routes. The research into how people typically use Southwark Park (89% walking or jogging as the main activity) and issues experienced in the park suggests that there is high traffic on the paths making them a sensible area to invest in improving. Other respondents in the survey suggested creating a separate jogging track around the perimeter of the park.

### **Preserve the heritage and integrity of Southwark Park**

A number of respondents in the survey and workshops were keen to highlight the park's exceptional history and wanted to see meaningful consideration of this factor, perhaps by incorporating feedback from a qualified historian into subsequent proposals.

### **Repurpose the old café building**

The old café should be repurposed for community use. Some suggestions included using it as a place to store sports equipment and as changing rooms for people using the sports facilities. The old Café can include facilities that assist a visitor's stay in the park such as storage for belongings, an area for washing hands, changing rooms, and a toilet.

### **Consider the future of the old nursery**

The future of the old nursery is still uncertain which may be overcome by consulting the community of alternative design proposals after this report is published. Suggestions for the site include a multiple-use community area to host sports activities and community events such as markets, a "secret" garden, orchard, a new and improve nursery, and a picnic area- certainly, the development should strike a fine balance between nature and the community. Health and safety concerns have been raised with regards to poisonous hogweed growing in the vicinity.

## 2.2. Framework Two

Support a local green recovery through Southwark Park and boost engagement with the natural environment

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### Suggestions:

#### Keep the beehives

49 (12.5%) responders disagreed with the removal of the beehives in the Wildlife Garden and wanted to keep the bees and have a further explanation as to what is happening to the beehives. This was also by far the most mentioned comment in the 'other comment' section of the survey. It was echoed consistently throughout the workshops and the survey.

#### Plant varied flower beds

52 (13.5%) participants and a number of attendees at the workshops commented on increasing and/ or improving the quality of the flowerbeds throughout the park. Respondents recommended adding diversity in their composition and bringing purpose to their existence by, for example, having a wildflower garden, herb garden, sensory garden, and apothecary garden with educational signage. Certainly, respondents to both the survey and workshops would like to see more colour in the flowerbeds.

#### Hang flower baskets

Add hanging flower baskets on lampposts and signage around the park to bring natural colour and vibrancy throughout the communal walkways.

#### Plant more trees

Plant a small copse of indigenous woodland in the north area of the park with seating to provide a place of rest and natural shade for park users in the summer months. A few workshop attendees recommended adding more trees and shrubs around the perimeter fence to absorb noise and pollution to create haven from the surrounding urban environment.

#### Improve access to the wildlife garden

23 (6%) participants commented on accessibility of the Wildlife Garden and feel it should be open to the public or at least have allotted times to visit the garden. However, 16% (44) of respondents expressed the importance of allowing nature to flourish, therefore access should be restricted to cultivate optimal conditions for biodiversity and wildlife. One possible solution is to continue to prevent foot access through the wildlife garden but introduce viewing platforms or stations with signage around the perimeter so visitors can see and engage with the wildlife area's natural beauty from a distance.

### **Improve cleanliness of Ada Salter garden and the lake**

25 (6.5%) respondents mentioned that either the Rose Garden or the Lake area needed improvement including clearing the reeds and adding more colour to the garden. There were also mentions of reintroducing boats onto the lake.

### **Cultivate spaces for wildlife**

Create trail walks with bird boxes, dens, and spaces for urban wildlife.

### **New signage for existing fruit trees and indigenous species**

Create an official Southwark Park fruit-tree trail by labelling and mapping current fruit trees. Also inform users of their location in the park through noticeboards, leaflets, or on mobile phones. Finally, consider working with local talent, school, groups, children, and young people to design durable and sustainable tree labels.

## 2.3. Framework Three

### Reimagine Southwark Park as a cultural destination by enhancing existing spaces and investing in new activities and events

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#### Suggestions:

##### Use technological solutions

Use technology in the park which includes QR codes for scientific information, and Munzee games for young people. The park would have a contemporary web space and improvement of digital infrastructure for learning about the park's culture and history, booking onto walking tours, using sports facilities, and seeing upcoming events.

##### Create inclusive signage

Create engaging signs and educational material greatly depends on how the information is laid out in terms of colours, graphics, imagery, and language which should be vibrant, eye-catching, and engaging. Most young people are busy or preoccupied so would not notice signage, citing no large bodies of text and use of QR codes to attract engagement from younger, techno-savvy crowds. Other considerations include brail, large text size, and variable heights.

##### New community noticeboard

More intuitive information on 'What's Happening?' in the park such as bulletin boards near the gates. The noticeboard should be vibrant and engaging to attract people to view it. Young people noted that this is something that they wouldn't use it but suggested they would use 'QR code noticeboards' throughout the park that they can access the same information on their mobile phones. Information on the noticeboards should also be targeted and accessible.

##### Consider multi-functional seating

Seating that could be used for sitting, socialising, eating, or reclining. One very interesting suggestion from a local group suggested incorporating a skate facility into the seating in an activity path (see appendix).

##### Bring self-led walking tours to the park

Introduce nature trails, walks, or tours to educate the community on the plants and wildlife in the park that are self-led. Park visitors can guide themselves around the park with a leaflet, phone app, web page, or physical signage.

### **Hold a monthly, hosted walking tour of the park**

Allow visitors to book onto a tour of the park with a park manager or other tour guide who can give a tour of the history and culture of the park.

### **Find or create a space to host regular markets**

24 (6%) respondents mentioned introducing activities such as street food markets or farmers markets like those in Camberwell Green, Dulwich, and other various localities—using local food and goods vendors. Surplus income generated from stall rental could contribute funds to the park's maintenance and other projects. Implementation of this should consider access to electricity.

### **Develop closer ties with local schools, community groups, and residents**

Respondents to the survey and the attendees at the workshop suggested opening a community allotment that was locally, and not individually, maintained, starting gardening classes, beekeeping courses, or using the beehives for other purposes. Some suggestions included starting a biodiversity project to increase the wildlife presence in the park and engaging local schools to develop environmental awareness in young people. Consider also developing a community garden to improve environmental engagement and education.

### **Hold cultural events in the area around the bandstand**

67 (18%) respondents mentioned to introduce live music concerts, theatres or open cinemas; this was by far the largest activity suggestion to the question; with particular interest in hosting these events near the bandstand so the area is utilised further. However, it is important to note that 7 (2%) responders mentioned they would not want loud music in the park, and 4 (1%) responders they disliked commercial activities such as the Alice in Wonderland event that was held recently. Again, there needs to be improved access to electricity to be able to use the bandstand and surrounding areas for these events.

### **Increase external art sourced from the community**

27 (7%) participants suggested increasing the number of art exhibitions and artwork across the park – particularly the idea to include local residents' art. This was an idea that was particularly popular with the young advisors. Respondents would like to see vacant walls turned into areas to host locally produced street art. Generally speaking, there needed to be a more imaginative and unusual approaches to incorporating art into the environment such as painting benches, lamp posts, pavements, etc., with vibrant designs and bright colours.

### **Better utilisation of the art gallery**

Improvement in the Art Gallery by hosting activities such as art exhibitions and community classes.

## 2.4. Framework Four

Improve access to the current sports facilities and develop more versatile spaces for sports and other activities.

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### Suggestions:

#### Add permanent, multi-purpose board game stations

More tables for table tennis, outdoor chess, and checkers boards. The youth advisors felt that these should be in shaded or covered areas to make them all-weather appropriate. Other facilities for adult games such as Pétanque to make the park multi-generational.

#### Develop multi-functional zones for sports and other events

Suggestions have been made to turn the old nursery into multi-use area (see previous suggestion), or at least finding other areas that can be made to have versatile use. Similar to an earlier suggestion, consideration should be made to incorporate seating and skating in a unified area. See appendix for activity trail mock-ups.

#### Improve the cycle infrastructure

Increase the number of stands to park bikes. Also consider CCTV camera and other security devices in these areas to prevent bike thefts. As mentioned earlier, a separate cycleway should be created to ease congestion on the paths.

#### Introduce annual rest period for grass pitch

One of the greatest criticisms levelled at the grass pitches was their unevenness, and general damage/ litter on the surface as a result of overuse. A long-term solution to maintenance issues would be to remove tag-rugby from the pitch so it has time to recover. Position football and cricket as the primary focus of sporting activity on the sports pitches.

#### Improve and expand the cricket facilities

Cricket has a long and proud tradition in Southwark Park. There has been significant interest in expanding the cricket area in the consultation to complement its history in the park and serve the community. An enlightening feasibility study commissioned by Southwark Park Cricket Club sheds lights on some key consideration for this.

#### Increase quantity of outdoor gym equipment

11 (3%) respondents commented on the quality of the outdoor gym and exercise equipment, requesting to improve the quality of the equipment and/or to increase the



number of facilities by spreading new equipment out like that in Burgess Park. In addition to what's already there, calisthenics bars of variable height can be introduced like those seen in Ruskin Park and Clapham Common.

### **Increase public access to the running track**

A number of respondents, both in the survey and workshops said they would like to use the sports track to jog. Many felt that access was limited or unfairly distributed. Respondents who use the paths also requested that the sports track be opened to the public on a regular basis to relieve congestion on the paths.

### **Introduce periods of free or low-cost access for young people**

Make the sports centre accessible to children by removing charges for local primary and secondary school pupils and young people in the local area. This improves access to sports and recreation for disadvantaged young people and helps tackle childhood/adolescent obesity and mental health issues.

### **Bring back Park Run**

Bring back this weekly running event to Southwark Park.

### **Add an additional tennis court and improve current experience**

Competition for space on the tennis court was cited as a frustration for park users. This could be remedied by adding one or more tennis courts. Respondents also wanted to see a fairer booking system that gave universal access to the courts, i.e., by capping the number of sessions that people can book the courts in a week, or month. Finally, netting could be introduced around the courts to capture fallen leaves and debris to reduce slippage.

## 2.5. Framework Five

Engage with the local community to make Southwark park a safe and inclusive space for all residents

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### Suggestions:

#### Improve communications with local groups and connected ways of working

There was a strong emphasis on the management of the park and making it expressly clear who to contact and how to reach them regarding information, enquiries, and concerns. Connect the facilities with local groups from diverse communities to encourage community use of the park. Some respondents suggested the establishment of a community forum for anyone who uses Southwark Park and to be more active in including young people in these.

#### Increase advertising and signage outside the park

Advertise the park across nearby public stations, bus stops, business districts, and local groups. Also increase road signage directing people to the park.

#### Increase CCTV coverage

More CCTV is needed around the buildings and new plant beds to cultivate a safe environment and deter anti-social behaviour. This is an issue noted by the park manager (see appendix). Safety was also a prevalent concern of the young advisors.

#### Improve lighting in and around the park

13 (3%) participants highlighted the need to improve the security in the park, suggesting either increasing the lighting, having park wardens or increasing police presence. The Southwark Young Advisors would like to see more imaginative installations as opposed to just lampposts and could create vibrant walkways that made people feel safer. There should also be more CCTV to cultivate a safe environment and deter anti-social behaviour.

#### Introduced 'zoned' areas

Such as an area for dog walkers, dog-free areas, quiet zones, dedicated picnic areas, and areas prohibiting bikes and scooters. This increases the appeal of the park as it is offering spaces to suit people's needs. Quiet zones are greatly needed to support people with additional social care needs to access the park away from the sensory overload of other areas.

#### Improve access and spaces for users with mobility issues

Required in areas of transition such as spaces connecting the outside to the inside of

Southwark Park, and between areas such as paths, sports pitches, café, nature area, Ada Salter garden, et al. There should also be laybys on the main paths for people in mobility scooters or wheelchairs to pause and enjoy the park, much in the way someone would use a bench. New seating areas should also be inclusive and have wheelchair access, including additional length to new picnic benches that could accommodate wheelchair frames, accessible surfaces next to benches for wheelchairs, and laybys on the main paths. **(There is no appendix in this document).**