

Friends of Wigmore Park Bank Holiday Survey 2020

During the August Bank Holiday Friends of Wigmore Park undertook a survey of park visitors. The responses are for either a single visitor, or a joint response for a couple, or group. As such, the total surveyed refers to either a single person, or a group.

Not all the visitors who describes themselves as local specified which particular area of Luton they lived in. Consequently, the 53 persons listed under Wigmore may not all have been from that specific area.

A smaller amount of respondents in the survey were from the playground/skateboard areas as the users were further away from our Friends of Wigmore Park base, consequently they are under-represented in the results. Additionally, we were not able to include park visitors who entered and left the park from areas away from the pavilion area.

Many visitors came to the park every day, or several times a week, and thus were able to provide both valuable negative, and positive, data on their experience.

On the negative side, a few parents remarked on how the play equipment was in need of updating and indeed had not changed since they themselves came as children. Despite travelling some way to skate in the skatepark an observation was that now it is an Olympic Sport the ramps and equipment should be updated, that the Skatepark at Dunstable was of much better quality and met an appropriate standard.. Other visitors, both adults and children, who had travelled from other areas in the town were part of the sports groups that are currently using the park for their training sessions.

Many visitors commented on the value of the park during Covid to both enable family meetings, and to bring their children during the long break they have had out of school. Additionally, several visitors said that during this time they have taken the time to walk further away, appreciating the quietness, and exploring the wildlife areas. One older visitor, whose nearest park is People's Park, travelled daily to Wigmore Park as she felt safer and she finds the people more friendly. The value of the open space, peacefulness, exercise, and wildlife, was mentioned

by many respondents during this time when there has been the opportunity to connect with nature.

A surprising number of visitors, who were local, were unaware of the Council’s plans for airport expansion onto the park. A young pilot out walking his dog felt it was not necessary for the Airport to be expanding.

Several respondents, both young and old didn’t use social media at all so had limited resource to local knowledge. Many used the park for both walking, bringing their children to use the equipment, and more recently for sports activities that have taken place in the park during Covid-19. The large area is very popular with dog walkers and indeed one dog walker, stated “my dog smiles whenever he comes here”!

Friends of Wigmore Park Bank Holiday Survey results 2020

Luton area	Wigmore	Stopsley	Round Green	Town centre	New Bedford Rd	High Town	Crawley	Ramridge
	53	11	9	4	1	4	10	1
Villages/towns	Tea Green	Breachwood Green	Caddington	Cockenhoe	Hitchin	Letchworth	Milton Keynes	Hemel Hempstead
	2	1	1	1	1	2	3	1
Reason visited	Dog Walk	Skate park	Playground	Football/sports	Walk/run/Cycle	Covid meet up	Flora/fauna	Open space/trees
	55	21++	18++	23	18	4	6	30
Airport plan awareness	Yes	No	Info wanted	No social media				
	20	32	31	8				
Virtual dog walk/litter pick interest								
	12							
Total no surveyed								
	105							

September 2020

SUMMER 2021 WIGMORE VALLEY PARK VISITOR SURVEY

Introduction

The summer survey took place on two separate occasions consisting of a daytime and evening survey. Overall Wigmore Park visitors appeared happy to take time to share their views and talk about their experiences in the park.

On both occasions in 2021 there were a mix of visitors, individuals, couples, and larger picnicking and sports groups. Prompt sheets were used to stimulate replies to key issues related to distance travelled, frequency of visit, reason for visit, and suggestions for improvement.

The response sheets recorded single/couple/group replies on one individual sheet.

The youngest visitors we talked with were 14-17 year olds using the skatepark in the evening survey. Views of younger children were not sought.

Distance travelled

As expected the majority of visitors came from the Wigmore area, however, others came from elsewhere in Luton, Bury Park, Hockwell Ring, New Town, and more locally from St Anne's, Round Green, Stopsley, and Vauxhall Park (Crawley). One visitor from the Midlands was visiting family locally.

Frequency

53% of responders said they came to the park most days, with 30% doing so several times a week and others less occasionally.

Reason for visit

The replies to this question led to the fact that people felt there was more than one reason for the visit. For instance, dog walkers may also be appreciating nature, green space and relaxing.

Someone from the town centre said she comes to Wigmore Park as there is so much space and it is not too busy. A lady who is registered blind said she comes to escape to nature and listen to the birds. A mother told us it was important for her to bring her children so they could have a good run around. One respondent came to watch the aeroplanes.

During this survey 58% had come to walk their dogs. 40% were coming to walk appreciating the green space and nature or exercise.

Suggestions for improvement

This question elicited many replies. Top of the list was the need for an official notice/information board, followed by suggestions for nature walks/kids trails, bat walks and orchid walks. Organised community picnics appealed to some and many people cited the need for a café and toilets. Litter was a frequent topic and the need for larger and more litter bins featured again and again. A larger car park was a request from those who were not close to the park and found they could not always find a parking space.

Playground/Skatepark

For visitors with children there was a clear need for the playground equipment to be updated. Users of the Skatepark explained that the surface is not suitable for some of the equipment that is being used. For instance scooters and BMXs and they felt this makes it quite dangerous. The skateboarders feel that now skateboarding is an Olympic Sport more needs to be invested in this type of equipment and the ramps should be re-designed accordingly.

Conclusion

The above information summarises the responses received. It is not possible to do a direct comparison with the survey from 2020 as this was a daytime and evening time survey. Covid was frequently mentioned in responses and visitors felt that since the restrictions people were taking more time to appreciate nature.

July 2021