

Consultation Report for Open Space, Sport, and Recreation Study

The aim of the consultation was to collect information on the attitudes of the local community to open space, sport, and recreational facilities in the borough. In addition it was to find out from the main user groups of open space their views on the quality, value, accessibility and management of sites that they use.

Wigan Residents Survey

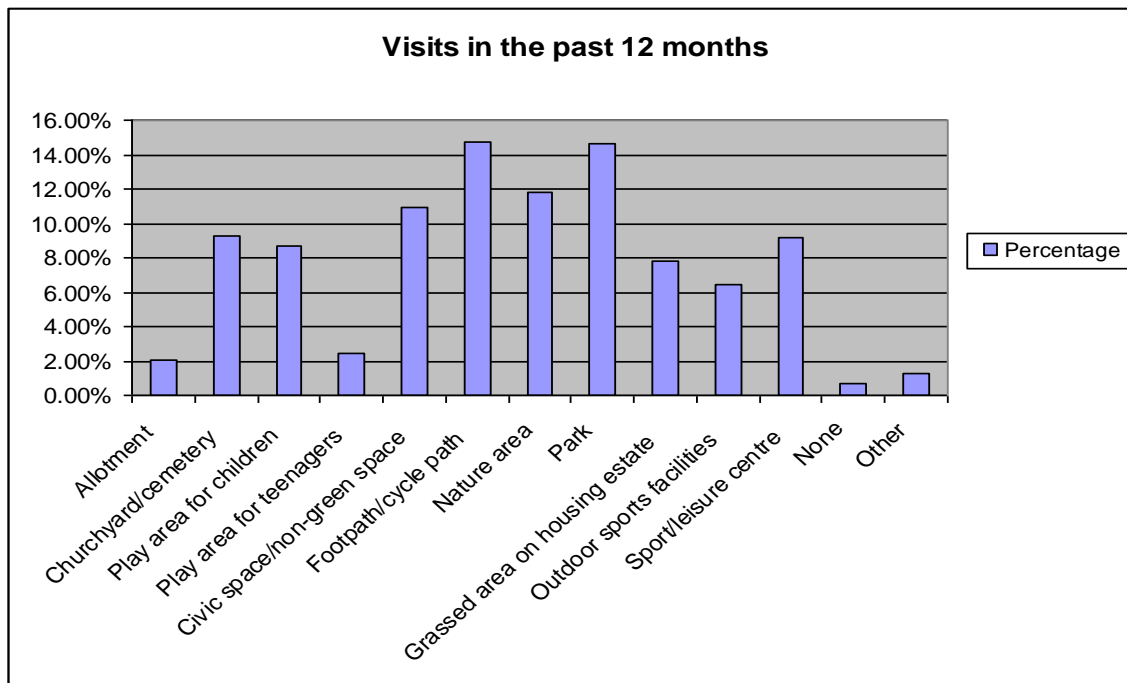
The resident's survey was conducted from 12 September 2013 to 18 October 2013. It was advertised by a press release, articles in Borough Life, posters, and emails to known community groups. The survey was also marketed to Council staff on the intranet. In addition, consultation events were carried out at Wigan Bus Station, Leigh Bus Station, Wigan Youth Zone and Wigan and Leigh College campuses. A total of 912 responses were received.

Wigan Borough has been divided into analysis areas reflecting the former township areas. These have been adopted to create a more localised assessment of provision and for examination of open space/ facility surplus and deficiencies at the local level.

54% of respondents are female and 42 are male. The age range is broken down as:

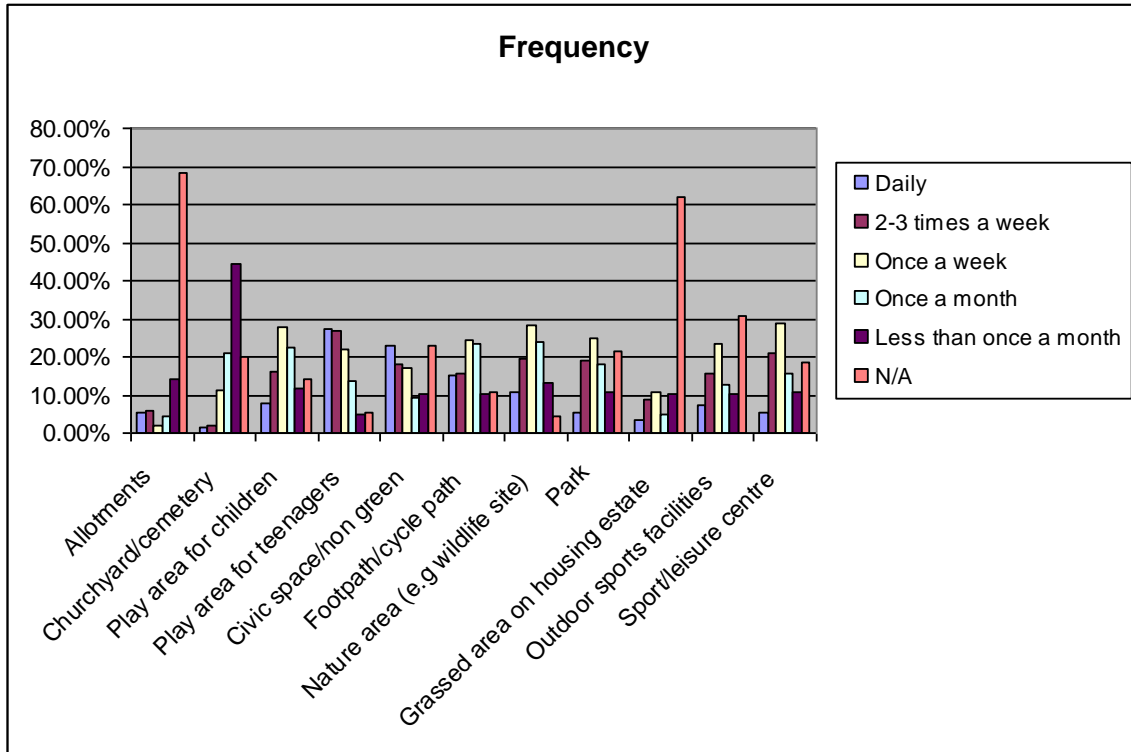
- Under 18 58 (6%)
- 18-24 288 (32%)
- 25-44 364 (40%)
- 45-64 121 (13%)
- 65+ 51 (6%)
- Not given 30 (3%)

When asked which of the open spaces, sports and recreational facilities in Wigan Borough people had visited in the last 12 months the results were as follows:



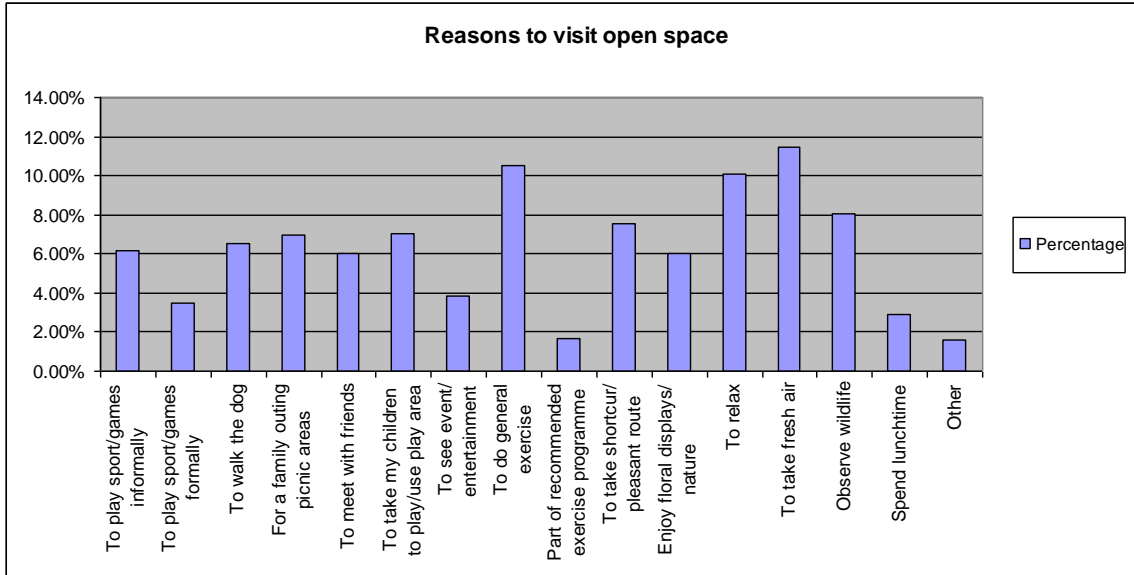
The most commonly visited typologies were parks (14.6%) and footpaths (14.6%). The borough is well served with parks with over 57 in the Borough. The least visited were allotments (2.1%) and play areas for teenagers (2.4%) and less than 1% said they did not visit any open space at all. This suggests a lack of provision for these typologies. Wigan Councils Allotment Strategy highlighted that Wigan had 4.9 allotments per 1000 household and is the equal lowest ratio across AGMA. The low visiting numbers for teenage play facilities could be attributed to the fact that only 6% of people surveyed were under 18.

The graph below summaries how often people visit open space.

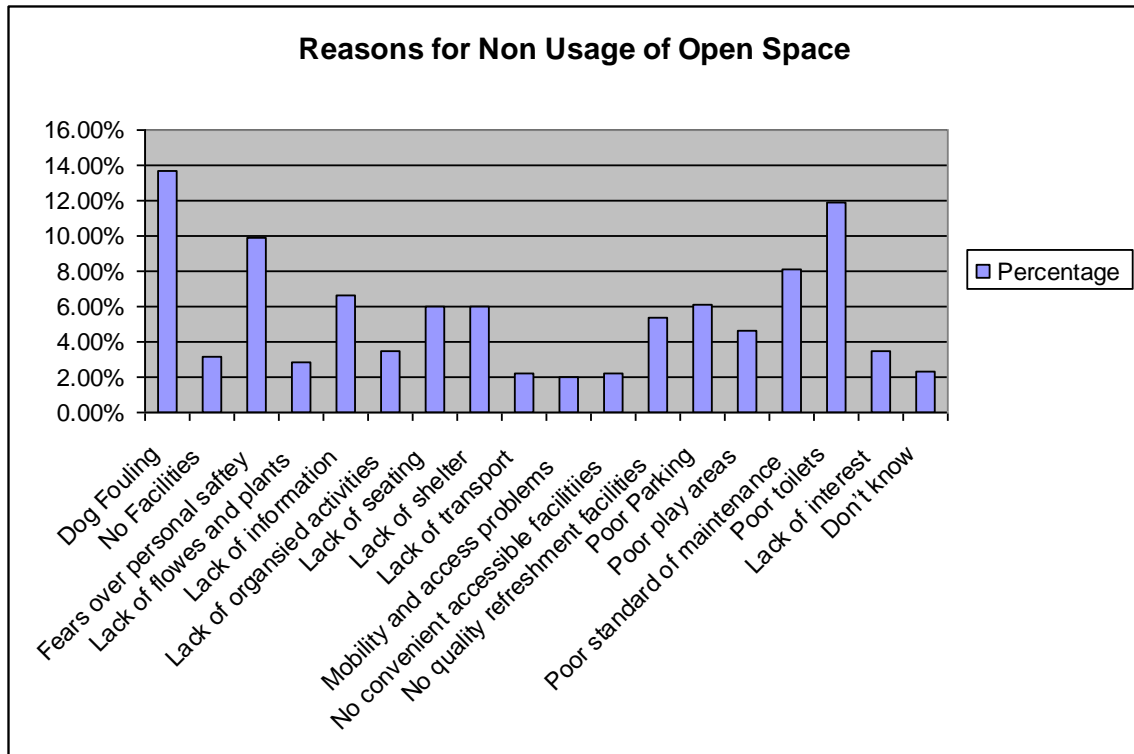


The most frequented open space is teenage play facilities with over 76%. Visiting at least once a week. Over 58% visited nature areas at least once a week. The Borough has a good supply of natural spaces with the Green Heart project at the centre of this. Over 68% of people did not comment on visiting allotments. This suggests that a large proportion of respondents do not visit allotments. 44% only visited churchyards or cemeteries less than once a month. This is consistent with the types of visits you expect to see at a churchyard.

People visit open space for a range of reasons. These are summarised in the graph below:



The most popular reasons for visiting open space were to get some fresh air (11.6%), to do general exercise (10.5%), and to relax (10.1%). The least popular reason was as part of a recommended exercise regime.



The most common reasons preventing people from using open space are dog fouling (13.7%) and poor toilet facilities (11.9%). Less than 3% of people stated that there were no convenient accessible facilities, suggested that the number of open space facilities in the borough are meeting

the needs of residents. However it is the management and maintenance of these spaces that prevent people from visiting.

The below table rates the availability of each typology.

Typology	Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Very good	Don't Know
Allotments	19.60%	18.75%	12.78%	7.39%	2.56%	38.92%
Churchyards	1.77%	3.94%	30.84%	35.05%	15.90%	12.50%
Civic Space	5.89%	11.78%	35.62%	25.39%	8.70%	12.62%
Footpath	5.31%	11.38%	27.31%	31.10%	20.10%	4.80%
Grassed area on housing estate	6.35%	14.36%	29.28%	21.55%	7.04%	21.41%
Nature Area	3.75%	7.89%	20.05%	31.18%	30.79%	6.34%
Park	5.71%	10.81%	23.48%	35.65%	20.99%	3.35%
Play Area	6.67%	11.37%	24.71%	32.42%	15.42%	9.41%
Play area for teenagers	19.80%	21.83%	16.01%	12.37%	5.53%	24.45%
Outdoor Sport Facilities	10.64%	13.92%	23.74%	27.01%	12.01%	12.69%
Sport/Leisure	9.47%	8.25%	25.44%	27.74%	19.49%	9.61%

Nature Areas have the highest availability with over 61% rating this as good or above. It is clear that the Green Heart regional park and other large nature areas such as Pennington Flash provide a good quality provision for the borough. Over 55% also rated the availability of parks as good or above. In contrast over 41% rated the facilities for teenagers as poor or below and 38% said the same about allotments. This follows the pattern that there is a perceived lack of provision in these facilities.

The below table rates the quality of each typology.

Typology	Average	Don't Know	Good	Poor	Very good	Very poor
Allotments	15.35%	55.38%	6.80%	9.49%	2.85%	10.13%
Churchyards	28.83%	19.58%	33.54%	5.01%	11.38%	1.67%
Civic Space	33.49%	18.15%	25.35%	11.42%	6.89%	4.69%
Footpath	32.66%	5.76%	28.92%	12.09%	14.24%	6.33%
Grassed area on housing estate	33.48%	25.00%	17.27%	12.42%	5.45%	6.36%
Nature Area	18.47%	11.11%	34.34%	6.20%	26.12%	3.75%
Park	27.39%	6.18%	30.90%	12.22%	16.57%	6.74%
Play Area	25.87%	13.66%	29.51%	12.06%	11.77%	7.12%
Play area for teenagers	17.45%	29.72%	11.95%	17.61%	5.35%	17.92%
Outdoor Sport Facilities	23.18%	18.48%	25.00%	11.36%	11.21%	10.76%
Sport/Leisure	24.17%	15.41%	26.74%	5.59%	19.64%	8.46%

Consultation with Stakeholders

A survey was sent out to all relevant stakeholders and groups for the open space typologies. This included friends groups, allotment societies, charitable trusts, residents associations, partnerships and networks. The consultation differed from the residents survey as it asked specific questions about the management of sites, quality, facilities, and any issues affecting the groups and the land in which they use. The consultation provided the opportunity for stakeholders and groups to provide comments on the land and raise any issues or concerns.

19 stakeholders were contacted with a survey. 14 responses were received and this achieved a 74% return rate. Further to this 70 groups were also consulted and 39 responses were received achieving a 56% response rate.

The stakeholders included bodies such as the Lancashire Wildlife Trust (LWT), The Woodland Trust, Greenheart Partnership and Red Rose Forest. The stakeholders provided comments and one of the main issues raised is the lack of funding for the maintenance and improvements of open space. One point raised the lack of funding to improve the canal towpaths in the borough. Another point was the lack of a visitor centre at Wigan Flashes. This is currently a priority for the Green Heart Partnership and will act as a base for LWT.

Comments and issues identified from the stakeholder survey have been commented on in the relevant chapters for open space.

Consultation with Sport Clubs

In addition to the stakeholder survey a questionnaire was sent out to local sports clubs for sport typologies included in the OSSR study. The survey was of a similar format to that of the stakeholders and asked questions about the quality and quantity of provision, number of teams, intentions for expansion, issues affecting the club. The response rate is set out in the table below:

Sport	Questionnaires sent	Responses	Response Rate
Football	89	22	25%
Rugby League	21	5	24%
Rugby Union	5	4	80%
Cricket	15	9	60%
Hockey	4	1	25%
Bowls	22	10	45%
Tennis	5	4	80%
Golf	7	2	29%
Total	168	57	34%

Any comments or issues raised in the survey by local sports clubs have been addressed in the relevant chapters.

Consultation with Schools

A spreadsheet was sent out to all Wigan schools to ask about their sport facilities and playing fields. 128 primary, secondary and specials schools were consulted. The response rate was low and we received feedback from only 20 schools.

One of the issues identified from the consultation with schools was that some primary schools did not have any outdoor green space on site. In addition schools with playing fields often suffered from bad drainage during the winter months.