



WERRINGTON BROOK PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

FINAL REPORT FOR PETERBOROUGH CITY COUNCIL, JUNE 2019

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WERRINGTON BROOK PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

INTRODUCTION

PECT was approached by the Werrington Brook project team to undertake the annual engagement survey aimed at residents and users of Werrington Brook and surrounding tributaries, in advance of the final phase of works to be carried out later in 2019/20.

Results of this engagement work will be used to help inform the benefits assessment as part of the improvements work, with a specific focus on assessing community awareness, understanding and value of the improvements. The information will also be used to capture the awareness of the improvements and the wider benefits of the scheme, including the monetary value placed on these by residents.

The engagement work was undertaken using surveys with a range of qualitative and quantitative questions to capture the required information. The aim was to survey a sample size of between 100-150 people within each reach of the improvement work.

Postcode data was collected from individuals to assess if they are local residents or from further afield.

PROJECT METHODOLOGY

The project team developed a survey based on the questions and results obtained from the initial survey undertaken in early 2018. The survey was the same as those used in previous engagement activities enabling us to compare results, with a slight change in the phrasing and change in the age collection data. A copy of the survey can be found in **Appendix A**.

Over a three-week period, PECT staff undertook engagement surveys with members of the community, varying times and days to get a wide cross section of users and therefore views and opinions.

Surveys were carried out at the following times:

-  Tuesday 26 March – 12.30pm-3.30pm
-  Monday 1 April – 8.30 am -12.30pm
-  Monday 15 April – 3.00pm-6.00pm

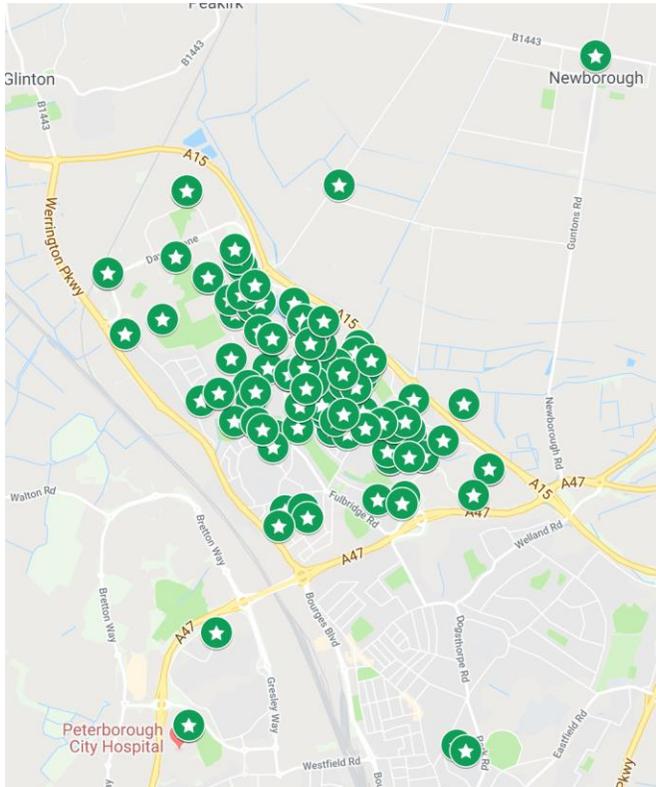


As requested by the Werrington Brook project team, PECT staff engaged with residents who were using the amenities within the vicinity of the reaches being surveyed along the latest phase of the works near the underpass at Fulbridge Road. 164 people responded to the survey. This exceeded our target of engaging with 100-150 people, thus making the survey more statistically robust.

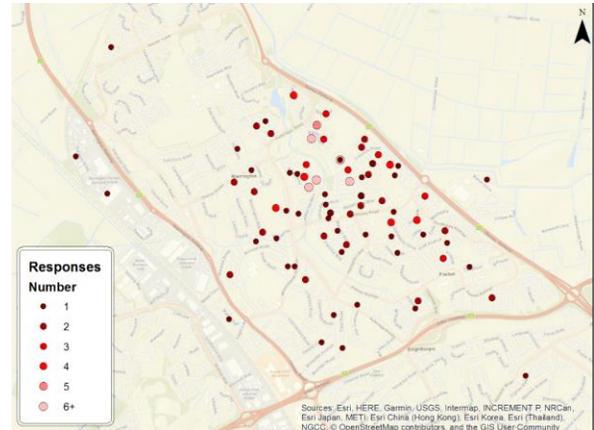
Surveys were manually undertaken, with results transferred to a secure online excel file. No personal data was collected.

PROJECT RESULTS

SURVEY COVERAGE 2019



SURVEY COVERAGE 2018



We successfully engaged with a wide spread of people, including those who did not live in the immediate vicinity of the works. As in 2018, almost all respondents were within half an hour walking distance of the site. The map above shows the location of respondents based on postcode data¹.

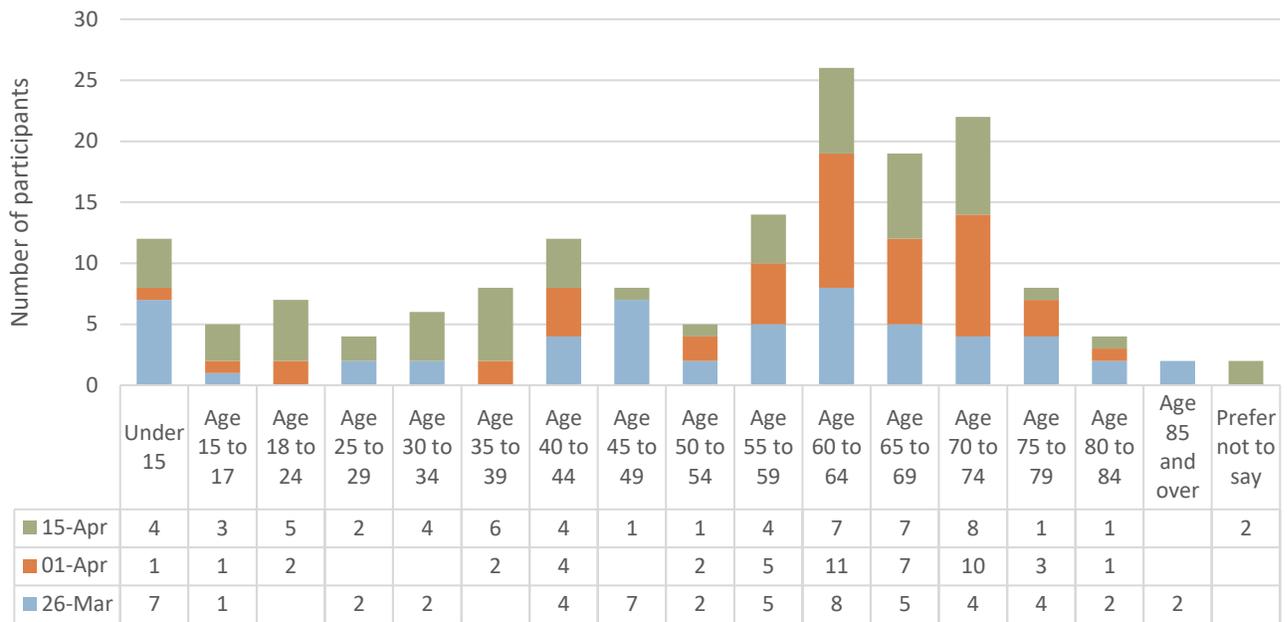
DEMOGRAPHIC

Age categories for this survey were modified from previous years to be in line with those used by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

Survey participants ranged in age from under 15 to over 65. The majority of users were aged between 60-74. As would be expected, under 15s were not using the space during school hours and most of the young people surveyed were commuting home from school. However, a small number used the space for recreational purposes and were enjoying being outside during the Easter holidays, particularly during the traditional working and school hours.

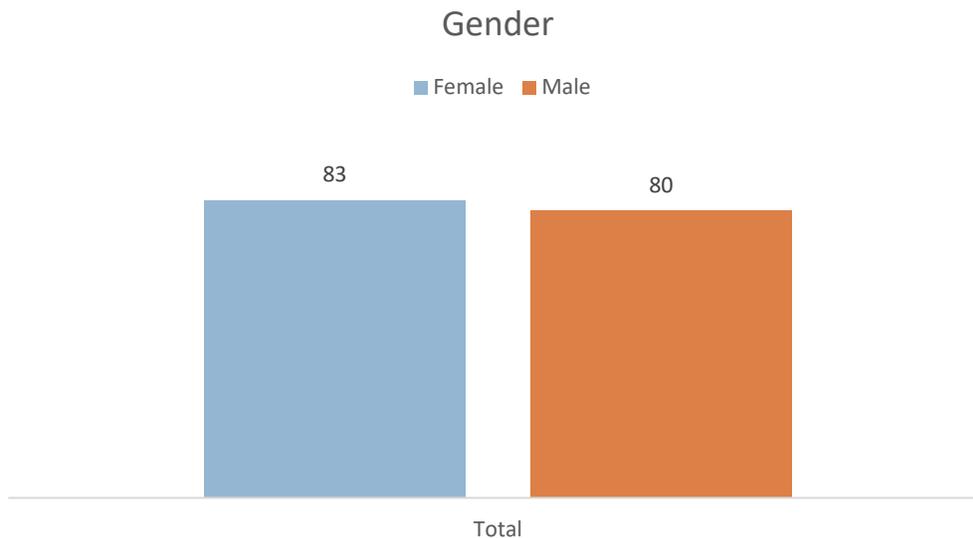
¹ One respondent was visiting from London and is not represented on the map above.

Age of participants by survey date

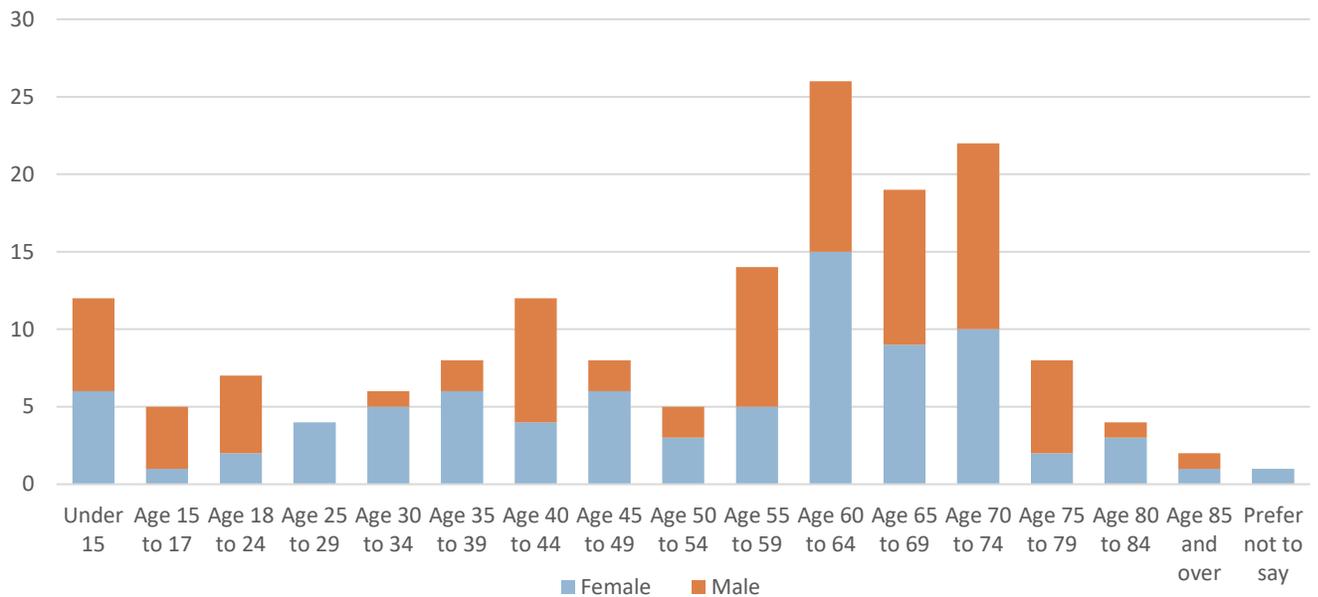


GENDER AND AGE

The following graph shows the gender uses of the areas. The results showed the space is used by around the same number of females to males.



Gender and Age



Respondents were split evenly by gender, although when this is broken down by age, there are a number of variances worth noting: 15 out of 18 respondents (83%) aged between 25 and 39 were female. This is likely to be because many of the women were with children or picking up/dropping off children at school.

64% of respondents aged between 55-59 were male which is surprising as this age category had been predominantly female in the previous survey. The even split amongst respondents between the ages of 60 -74 could be explained by the fact that many used the space as a couple.

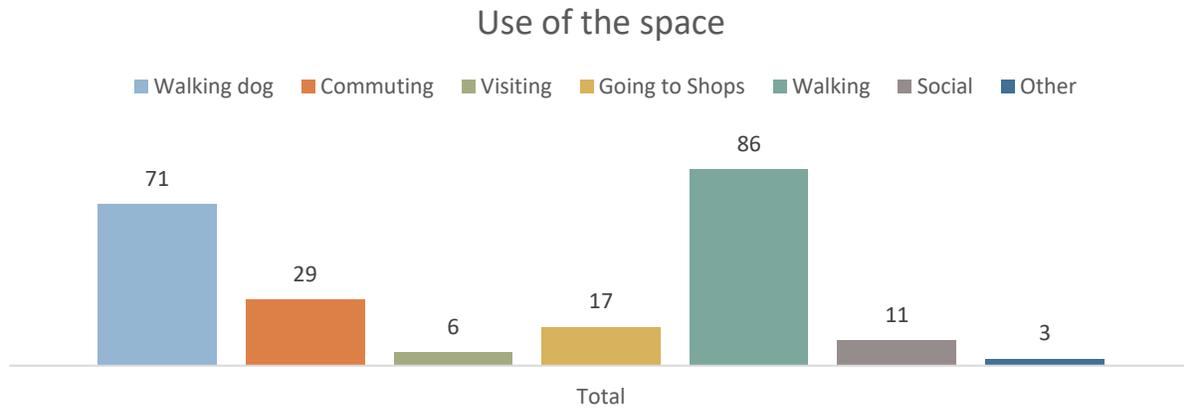
At the end of the survey, respondents were asked to categorise their level of general health, ranging from poor to very good. The graph below shows that the vast majority of users were in very good or good health; in 2018, 162 respondents felt they were in good or very good health (83%) compared with 133 (81%) in 2019.

General Health



USE OF THE SPACE

The following graph shows the number of people who use the space and their reasons for use. Some people use the space for more than one reason, and this is reflected below.

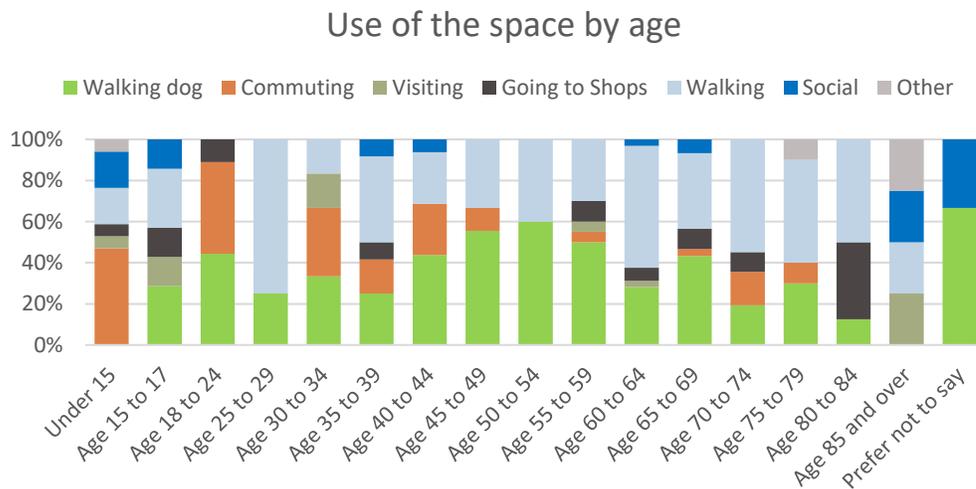


Results for use of space are similar to those undertaken in the previous survey, although there has been a slight increase in people using it to commute to and from school or work.

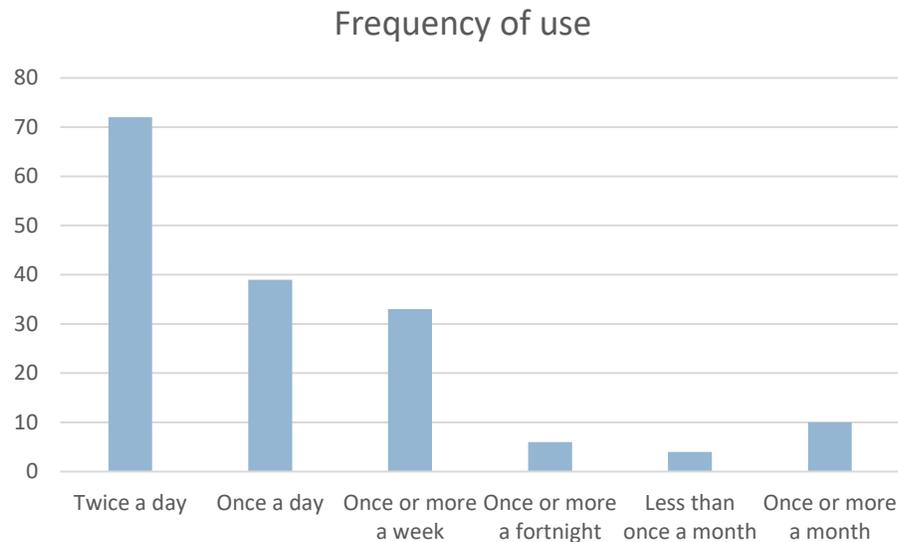
Comparable to last year's results, the majority of respondents used the space for walking or walking the dog. However, there was a reduction in the number of dog walkers and an increase in the number of people using the space for walking; 43% of respondents used the space for dog walking in 2019, compared to 51% in 2018 and 52% of respondents used the space for walking in 2019 compared to 41% in 2018.

Surveys were carried out slightly later in the year than last year and the weather was considerably warmer. However, the space was still not used widely for social reasons despite the surveys being carried out over the school Easter break. Similar to 2018, only 11 respondents (6%) used the space socially, indicating an opportunity for initiatives to engage with increasing numbers of people through expanding activities in this area.

The graphs below shows the frequency of use of the space by respondents, with a breakdown of use by age in the first graph.



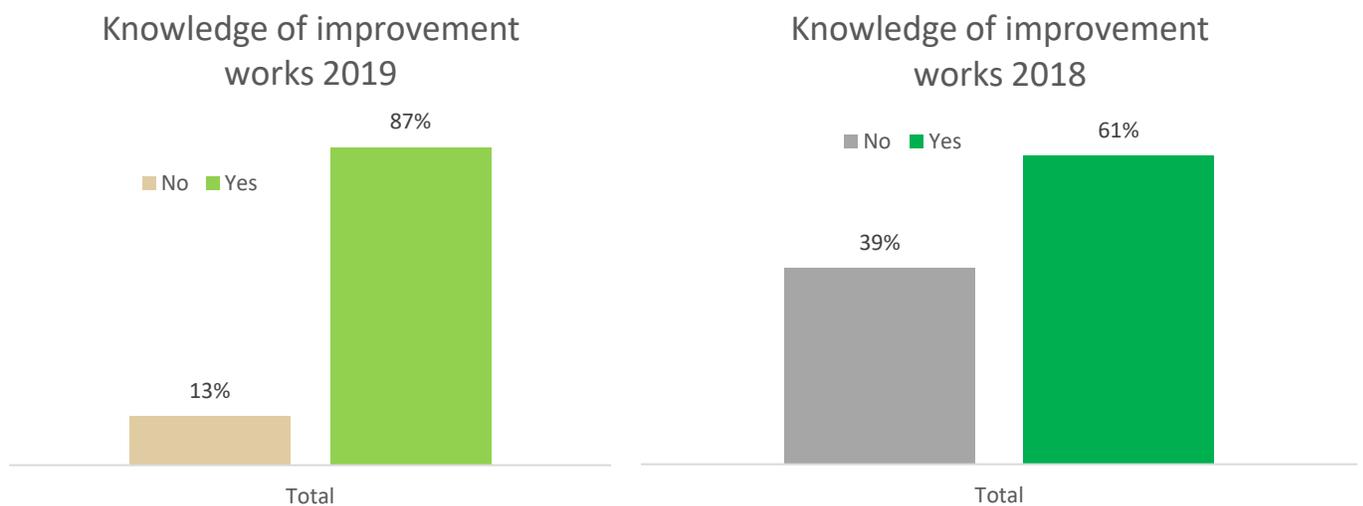
With the exception of the under 29s and the over 80s, dog walking was the most popular activity, followed by walking. Only those under 15 and over 85 did not use the space for dog walking, with walking, commuting and socialising cited as the main reasons for use.



87% of respondents said they used the space on a regular basis, with 44% using it twice a day or more. These are comparable to the figures in the 2018 survey where 92% said they used the space on a regular basis and 41% used it twice a day or more and are unsurprising given the high number of dog walkers that responded to the survey.

KNOWLEDGE OF IMPROVEMENT WORKS

We asked respondents if they were aware of the works taking place, and what they knew about them. The graph below shows that the vast majority had some knowledge of the works.



87% of people surveyed were aware of the improvement works, which is an increase from 61% compared to 2018. Unsurprising given the scale and the timeframe of the project. The river works were completed in June 2018, so residents have ‘lived’ with the new and now established brook for nearly a year and are familiar with the works.

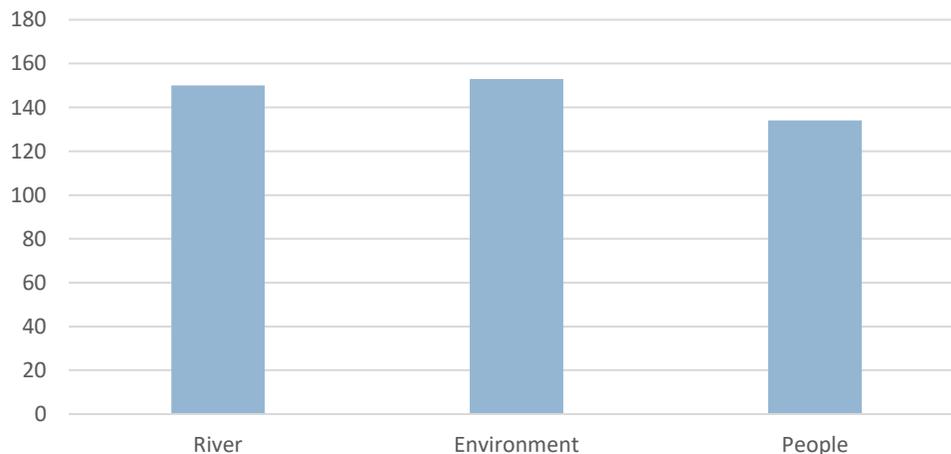
However, when asked what they understood had been carried out, a surprising number of people referred primarily to the new eco path that had just been laid; 31 respondents referenced the new path, with 14 of these only referencing the path and not the works carried out to the brook. This could be explained in part by the location of the survey, which was very close to the new path, as well as the newness of the path, which had only just been completed at the time of surveying.



Of those who mentioned the works to the brook, few understood exactly what had been done, basing their comments purely on the aesthetics of the works and ‘trusting’ that the Environment Agency know best. Many of those who knew about the works commented on the ‘change in shape’ of the brook, with only a small number fully understanding the reasons behind this change. This focus on the visual aspect of the works could be an indication that people are not fully aware of the environmental benefits of the changes taking place. Two interpretation boards will be erected this year that will help address this knowledge gap.

Where respondents were not aware of the works, we briefly explained before continuing the survey. The change in order of questions enabled us to do this at the outset of the conversation.

Benefits of the works

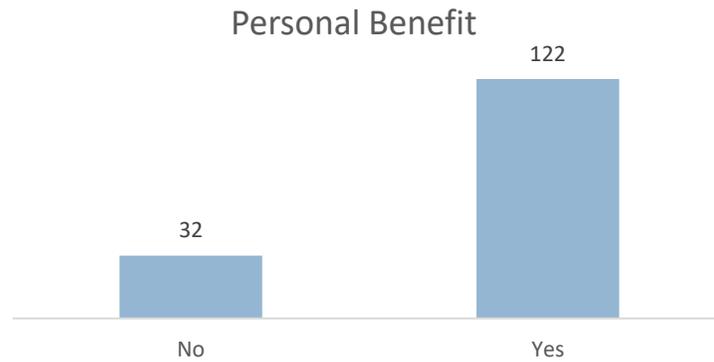


Almost all respondents (153) agreed the works would benefit the environment and wildlife, with only 134 considering the works to benefit the local community.

A number of respondents commented on the improvement to the water quality with several commenting on the visible increase in wildlife.

“The change in water quality has improved dramatically over the past two years and there’s more frogs and fish now”.

Survey participants were asked if they felt that the works undertaken would have a benefit to them personally.

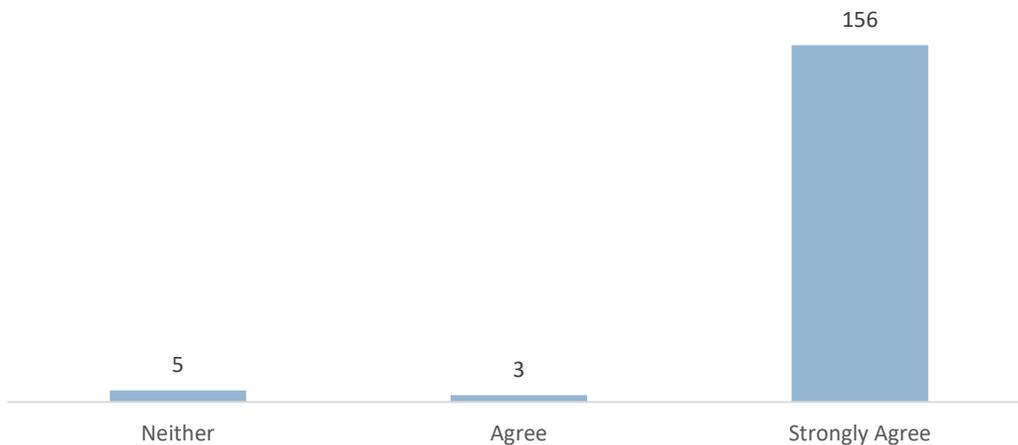


79% acknowledged that the improvement works could benefit them personally in some way. Interestingly, respondents who felt that the works would not benefit them in any way, still agreed that having access to quality green space had a positive impact on their health.

HEALTH BENEFITS

Users of the space were asked if they felt having access to the Werrington Brook green space had a positive impact on their health.

Access to quality green space has a positive impact on your health?



As in the previous year, nearly all participants agreed on the positive impact having access to green space has on health, not just on the physical aspect of being able to exercise in pleasant surroundings, but also on mental health.

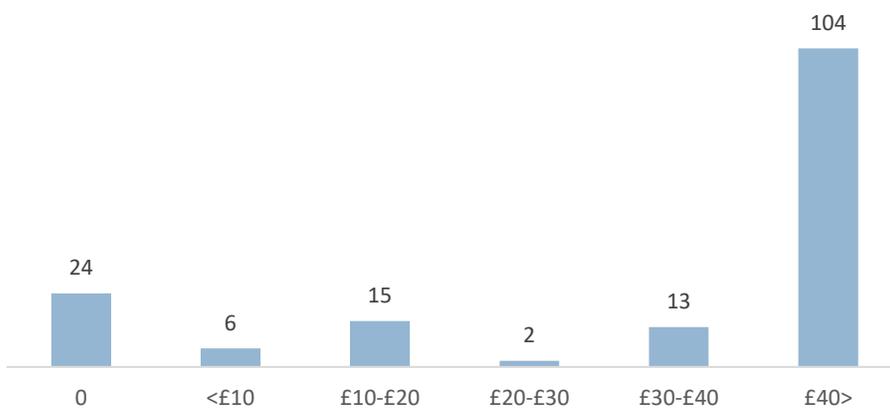
156 people strongly agreed that green space had a positive impact on their health. A number of beneficiaries made a point of highlighting the positive impact on their mental health that the space had, with one respondent saying how relaxed and calm the space made him feel.

“When I walk amongst the trees, my shoulders just drop.”

VALUE

The graph below shows the economic value that respondents placed on having access to the green space for a year. Those respondents who felt the space was priceless have been counted in the category that valued having access to the space at more than £40 per year.

Economic value of green space 2019



Economic value of green space 2018



Once again, the question about the economic value of the green space was hard for people to answer, either because they felt this kind of space was priceless, or because they felt paying for walking in a public area was beyond comprehension. However, when prompted, the vast majority of people considered having access to the space to be valued at more than £40. This equates to 63% of respondents, compared to the previous year when just 28% valued the space at more than £40.

However, there was also an increase in the number of people who didn't value the space at all with 24 people placing no value on having access to the space, compared to just 8 in 2018.

The average value per person was £29.20, an increase of from nearly £8 since last year; this equates to a total value of £413,530 when multiplied by the number of residents in North and South Werrington².

Despite not being prepared to pay for access, people evidently valued the space enough to want to move nearby.

"You can't put a price on this space"

"I moved here because of the area."

OTHER

Respondents were overwhelmingly positive about the improvement works. The small number of respondents who were less positive had their doubts about the need for and the effectiveness of the works.

"I assume there must be benefits for them to have done it; only experts will know."

"I don't understand the need for the works, it was alright as it was".

Many respondents who were delighted with the works carried out, expressed concern about the long-term maintenance of the works, citing rubbish and overgrown weeds as major issues.

"They need to manage the plants in the river - it gets too overgrown. People still don't care and just dump rubbish everywhere."

The need for more facilities, such as benches, was once again mentioned; nine people felt that the space would be used by more elderly walkers if there were higher numbers of spaces to rest. The issue of dog poo and the need for more dog poo bins/rubbish was also mentioned by ten respondents.

Education and volunteer engagement were themes that came up four times, specifically when talking about rubbish and appreciation of the environment.

"We need to educate children on the value of the environment".

"The space needs the community to take ownership - it needs volunteers to maintain it."

"The place looks better now but I don't want to see it spoilt. We need to educate people to stop dropping rubbish!"

² This average was based on the lower figure in each category.

LESSONS LEARNT

Based on learnings from last year's survey, the order of questions was modified with the question around understanding of the works used as an opening line to engage with residents. This worked well although responses to the questions relating to benefits of the works were only really meaningful if respondents already knew about the works.

Respondents were still concerned about the question relating to attaching an economic value to the green space. People were much more likely to say the space was priceless, than attach a financial figure to it.

The location of the surveys worked well, as it was a busy junction where people were likely to pass when out walking. Although data on the number of people approached was not gathered, we estimate that 80-90% of people we spoke to agreed to do the survey.

CONCLUSION

Once again, the response to the improvement works was overwhelmingly positive by the vast majority of people surveyed, particularly those that live within the vicinity of the works and are regular users of the site.

95% of people strongly agreed that having access to green space had positive health benefits, with everyone who knew about the works considering them to be of benefit to the environment and/or wildlife.

The site was used predominantly by dog walkers and walkers with people keen to give us their views on the works.



"It looks so much better now - it's nice to have green space to walk in. We take it for granted but would miss it massively if it wasn't here"

"It's an amazing place to walk. The path is much better now. We're so lucky to have this on our doorstep."

"We've witnessed many positive changes over time. It used to flood, but it's great now. Shame about the rubbish but I'm impressed to see the people making an effort. It's nice to see it cared for."



APPENDIX A – SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. Are you aware of the river improvement works that have been taking place on the Werrington Brook?
 - Yes (please provide details below)
 - NoIf 'Yes' could you tell us what you know about them?
2. Do you think these changes will benefit the following and how?
 - The river
 - The environment and wildlife
 - People using the area
3. Do you think these works will benefit you and how?
4. What are your general reasons for using this area near Werrington Brook?
 - Walking my dog
 - Commuting to school/work
 - Visiting a friend/relation
 - Going to the shops
 - Going for a walk
 - Social/community e.g. picnics
 - Other
5. How often do you use this area near Werrington Brook?
 - Twice a day
 - Once a day
 - Once or more a week
 - Once or more a fortnight
 - Once or more a month
 - Less than once a month
6. Would you agree that having access to quality green space has a positive impact on your health?
 - Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Neither agree or disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree

7. There is no intention to charge for using the Werrington Brook areas, however, we are interested in people's views on its value. In monetary terms how much do you value having access to this green space annually?

- 0
- Under £10
- £10 – 20
- £20 – 30
- £30 – 40
- Over £40

To help with our analysis we now have a few questions about you.

8. What is your postcode?

9. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Other
- Prefer not to say

10. What is your age category?

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Under 15 | <input type="checkbox"/> Age 55 to 59 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Age 15 to 17 | <input type="checkbox"/> Age 60 to 64 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Age 18 to 24 | <input type="checkbox"/> Age 65 to 69 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Age 25 to 29 | <input type="checkbox"/> Age 70 to 74 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Age 30 to 34 | <input type="checkbox"/> Age 75 to 79 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Age 35 to 39 | <input type="checkbox"/> Age 80 to 84 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Age 40 to 44 | <input type="checkbox"/> Age 85 and over |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Age 45 to 49 | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Age 50 to 54 | |

11. How good do you feel your health is?

- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Very poor