

Powis Square Gardens – Feedback on summer opening and closing times and dog use

Analysis of stakeholder consultation

March 2023

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Introduction

Background

Powis Square Gardens is a small open square containing a free hard play area and children's play area.

This consultation focuses on whether the opening and closing times should be amended during the summer months, April through to August, and how dogs should use the Square and how this should be controlled or managed.

Summer opening and closing times

Powis Square is currently open to the public from 7.30am every morning and closes when dusk falls. The Council has received requests from residents to review the opening and closing times during the peak summer months. The Parks Project Team, on behalf of the Council, carried out this consultation to see if the proposed reduction in times is more widely supported. The current opening and closing times for this period are displayed below:

Time periods	Opening and closing times
4 April to 24 April	7.30am – 8pm
25 April to 8 May	7.30am – 8.30pm
9 May to 29 May	7.30am – 9pm
30 May to 24 July	7.30am – 9.30pm
25 July to 14 August	7.30am – 9pm
15 August to 28 August	7.30am – 8.30pm
29 August to 4 September	7.30am – 8pm



Introduction

Dogs using Powis Square

Dogs are currently allowed to use and access Powis Square. The views from residents and park users vary greatly from dog owners wishing to use the area to exercise their dogs, some park users wanting dogs to use the space and some park users totally against dogs being in the space or wanting an enclosed dog area installed. The Council wished to consult residents on how dogs should use the Square and how this should be controlled or managed.

Consultation methodology

An online survey was promoted via the Council's Consultation and Engagement Hub and was also advertised on Nextdoor. A paper booklet containing the survey was sent to those living closest to the park and hard copies were also available from the Tabernacle. Two drop-in sessions were also carried out in Powis Square. The exercise opened on 9 January 2023 and closed on 23 February 2023 with a total of 267 responses.

Report

A total of 267 surveys were returned by the deadline, quality assurance was undertaken on submissions to mitigate the risk of multiple responses being submitted by individual respondents, this has resulted in a small number of submissions being removed. This report contains an analysis of survey responses. Where graphs do not total 100 per cent, this may be due to computer rounding or where respondents have chosen not to respond to a question.

A separate appendix report is available on request, which details all comments made by respondents to the questions within the survey.

Acknowledgements

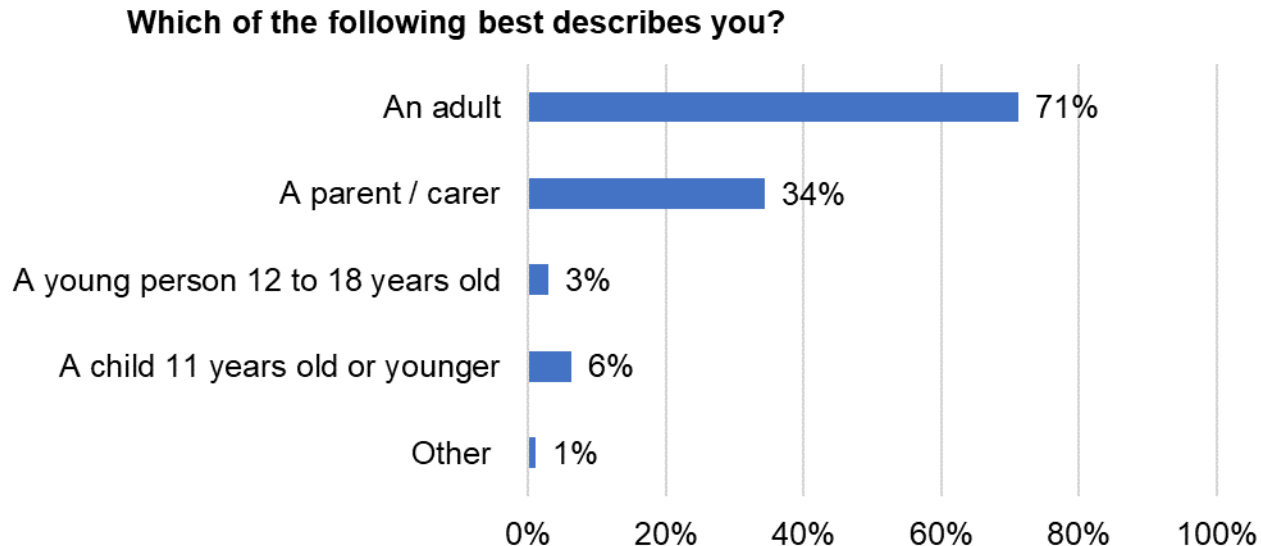
The Council would like to thank all residents and stakeholders that took the time to feedback their views.



Who took part

Respondents were asked to select the answer that best describes them, they were able to select all answers that applied.

- A total of 71 per cent of respondents were adults
- Just over a third (34 per cent) were parents or carers
- Nearly one in ten (nine per cent) of respondents came from children and young people.

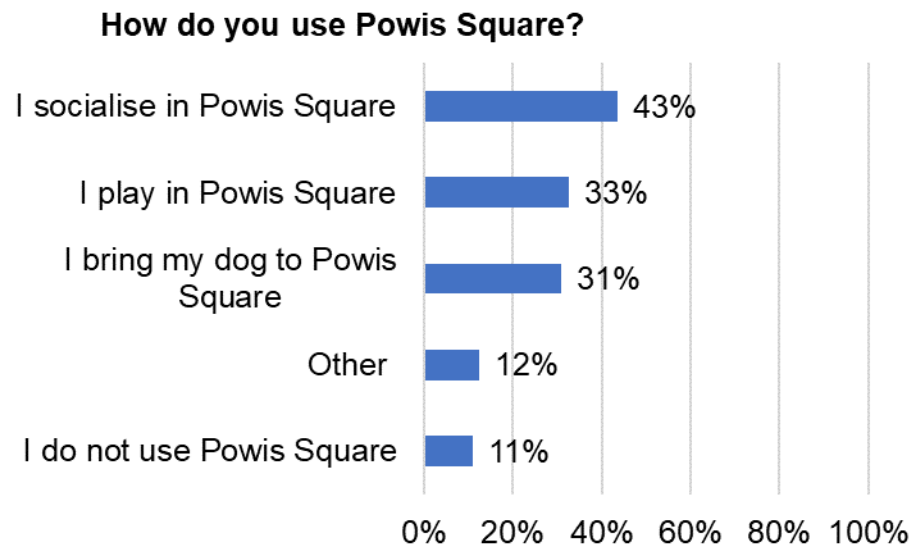


Base: All respondents (267)

Use of Powis Square

Respondents were asked how they use Powis Square. Respondents were able to select more than one answer.

- More than 40 per cent of respondents said that they use the Square to socialise
- A third (33 per cent) use the Square to play
- Nearly a third (31 per cent) bring their dog to Powis Square
- One in ten (11 per cent) indicated that they do not use Powis Square
- A total of 12 per cent of respondents indicated that they use Powis Square for another reason this is explored on the next page



Base: All respondents (267)



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Those not using Powis Square

Those that selected 'I don't use Powis Square' were asked to explain why. There were 34 comments to this question.

Comments made have been themed and are summarised in the table below. Examples of comments can also be seen on the next page, with the full list of themes and comments found in the appendices.

Theme	Count
Because of dogs/dogs' waste	11
Not suitable for their need/age group	9
Users of Powis Square	6
Not enough green spaces/sitting areas	6
Noisy	4
Not close enough to home	2
No reason	1



Comments – Those not using Powis Square

“Not really for my age group.”

Not suitable for their need/age group

“Because of the dog poo everywhere and the smell of dog poo.”

Because of dogs/ dogs waste

“I bring my children to play I also play basketball there.”

User of Powis Square



“I am a resident. There is nothing for me. More garden, more trees please.”

Not enough green spaces/sitting areas

“Dogs are allowed to roam around unleashed which I do not agree with.”

Because of dogs/ dogs waste

“I don't have children or pets. I appreciate having the square nearby though. It contributes to a pleasant atmosphere and makes my walks just a bit more scenic.”

Not suitable for their need/age group

“There is nowhere else for people who just want to sit in the area. Dogs, ball games and children's play area only.”

Not enough green spaces/sitting areas



Other uses of Powis Square

Respondents that indicated they use Powis Square in another way were asked to specify how they use it. There were 34 comments to this question. Comments made have been themed and are summarised in the table below.

Examples of comments made can also be seen on the next page, with the full list of themes and comments found in the appendices.

Theme	Count
Children/grandchildren play or use the playground	30
Live near Powis Square	6
Exercise/Sport	4
Sit in the park	3
Walk through the park	2
Dog owner	1
Not a relaxing place	1
Dogs should not be permitted in the park	1



Comments – Other uses of Powis Square

“My child plays in the park.”

Children/grandchildren play or use the playground

“I live directly on Powis Square on the flats adjoining directly on Powis Square. Due to no balcony or garden this is my outdoor space.”

Live near Powis Square

“I live here.”

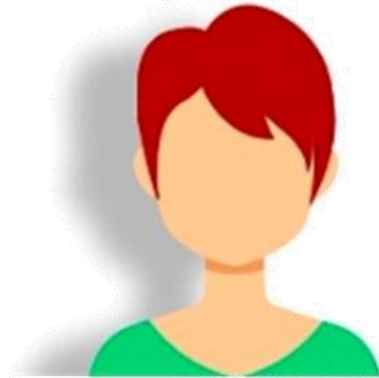
Live near Powis Square

“I like to sit in Powis Square when shopping on Portobello Road.”

Sit in Powis Square

“I play basketball/football with my son.”

Exercise/Sport



“I walk through it very regularly.”

Walk through Powis Square

“I exercise in Powis Square.”

Exercise/Sport

“I take my grandchildren to play in the park in the square.”

Children/grandchildren play or use the playground

“It is not a relaxing place to sit.”

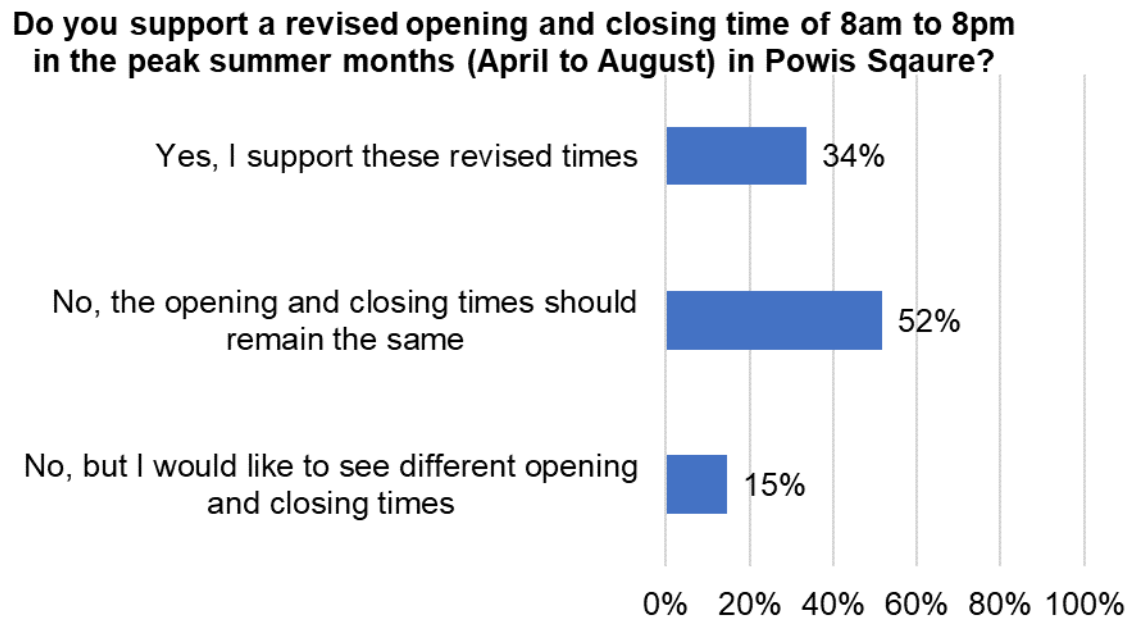
Not a relaxing place



Summer opening and closing times

Respondents were asked if they supported the revised Summer opening and closing times, 8am to 8pm (April to August), in Powis Square.

- Over half (52 per cent) of respondents were against the proposed revised times and felt that the opening and closing times should remain the same.
- On the other hand, just over a third (34 per cent) of respondents support these revised times
- A total of 15 per cent do not support the proposed time, but want different opening and closing times. Suggested alternative opening times are explored on subsequent pages.

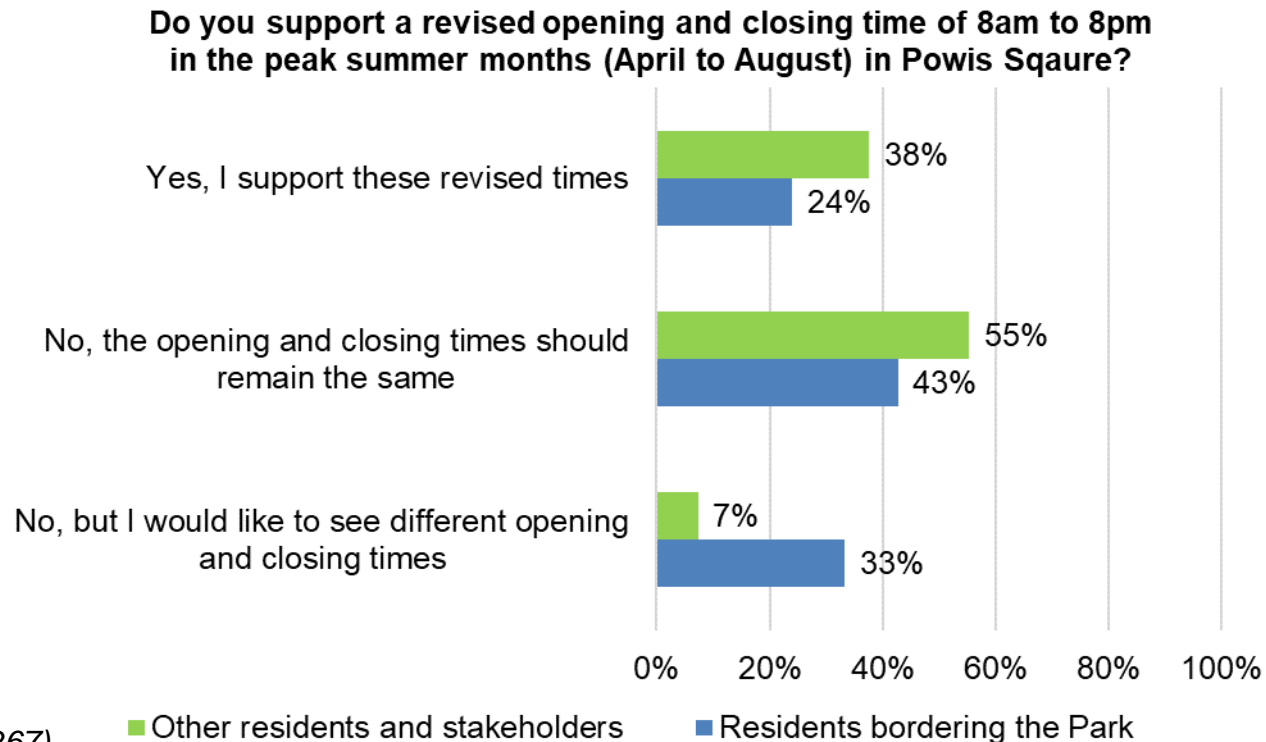


Base: All respondents (267)

Opening and closing times – geographic breakdown

In order to understand if the views of those living closest to the park differed from other residents and stakeholders, the results of the exercise have been broken down by proximity to the park. Five postcode areas have been considered to be 'bordering the park', this amounts to 75 respondents. Results for this group have been compared to anyone living outside that area.

- Residents bordering the park were slightly less likely (43 per cent, compared to 55 per cent) to indicate that the opening and closing times should remain the same. But this was still the most selected choice for both groups.
- Almost a quarter (24 per cent) of those bordering the park supported the revised times, compared to 38 per cent of respondents from elsewhere.
- A much larger percentage (33 per cent compared to seven per cent) of those bordering the park do not support the proposed times, but want different opening and closing times.



Other proposed opening and closing times

Those that didn't support the proposed revised times, but wanted to see different opening and closing times, were given the opportunity to explain what they would like to see.

There were 36 comments to this question. Comments made have been themed and are summarised in the table below.

Examples of comments can also be seen on the next page, with the full list of themes and comments found in the appendices.

Theme	Count
Close later	10
Open earlier, close later	6
Open same time, close later	5
Open later, close later	4
Open same time, close earlier	3
Open later, close earlier	3
Open earlier, close earlier	1
Open later, close same time	1
Open earlier	1



Comments - Other proposed opening and closing times

“7.30 am to 7pm would be good as residents are also entitled to some down time and quiet time as well.”

Open earlier, close earlier

“8am to 7pm”

Open same time, close earlier

“From 8am 7pm. I'm living right above this park and sometimes I have non stop migraine. Sure the council and those entitled parents can consider vulnerable people who lived around the park.”

Open same time, close earlier

“Open earlier similar to Kensington gardens so we can use for exercise before work.”

Open earlier



“It should open earlier and close later as there are many people that walk dogs earlier before going to work, and there are some parents that need to push their prams for their babies to sleep”

Open earlier, close later

“9am-7pm or dusk if earlier.”

Open later, close earlier

“I want it to close later because in the night my older sister likes to meet her friends there.”

Close later

“8:00am- 8:30pm”

Open same time, close later

“7am until 9pm throughout summer months”

Open earlier, close later



Opening and closing times

Respondents were given the opportunity to add any further comments about the proposed closing and opening times. There were 94 comments to this question.

Comments made have been themed and themes with six or more comments are summarised in the table below. Examples of comments can also be seen on the next page, with the full list of themes and comments found in the appendices.

Theme	Count
Longer opening hours	19
The Square is a valuable place for local people	13
No dogs	11
Dogs should be permitted in the park, but not in the children's playground	8
Stricter measures to keep the park safe for locals and children	8
Noise compliant	7
Shorter opening hours	6
Dogs should be permitted in the park	6
Prefer the current opening and closing times	6



Comments about opening and closing times

“The kids play area should be fenced off so that dogs cannot wander in the area.”

No dogs in the children's playground

“I wish dogs were not allowed in the park. They poo everywhere and sometimes they are fierce and frighten me.”

No dogs

“It would be great to have an enclosed area where dogs can run around off leash, with fencing that can keep small dogs in.”

Dogs should be fenced or on leads

“There needs to be a closer monitoring by the parks police and RBKC’s noise nuisance team, to ensure that people are not using the garden after closing time.”

Stricter measures to keep the park safe for locals and children

“Opening hours of 6AM - 9PM”

Longer opening hours



“If it’s open later I find the noise that echoes even as far as Colville Terrace, quite annoying in the evening”

Noise complaint

“The current arrangements for opening and closing work fine. There is no need to adjust the opening hours.”

Prefer the current opening and closing times

“Develop the basketball court to be multi-purpose. Also to fix the hoop of the basketball court.”

The park needs improvement



Dog access to Powis Square

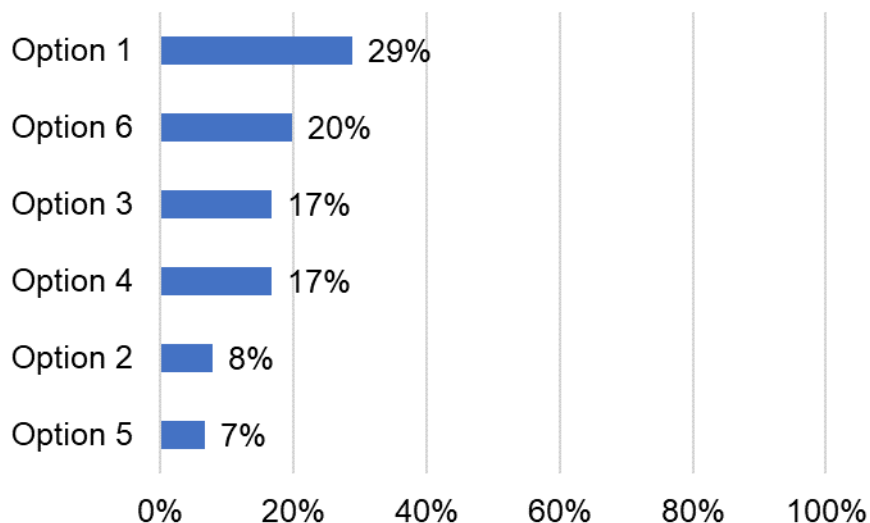
Six potential options of how dog access to the park could be managed were presented to respondents, these are summarised in the table to the right.

The most selected option was option one, this was supported by 29 per cent of respondents, the second most selected option was option six supported by a fifth of respondents (20 per cent).

More details about the options can be seen on subsequent pages.

Option	Description
Option 1	A dedicated fenced and planted dog area along the west side of the ball court
Option 2	A new fenced and planted dog area along the Talbot Road end of the ballcourt
Option 3	Children's play area and ball court fenced to prevent dogs accessing
Option 4	Children's play area fenced to prevent dogs accessing
Option 5	Dogs on lead only within Powis Square
Option 6	Dogs continue to use Powis Square as they currently do with the Council continuing to conduct engagement sessions on responsible dog ownership

Please indicate your preferred option



Base: All respondents (267)

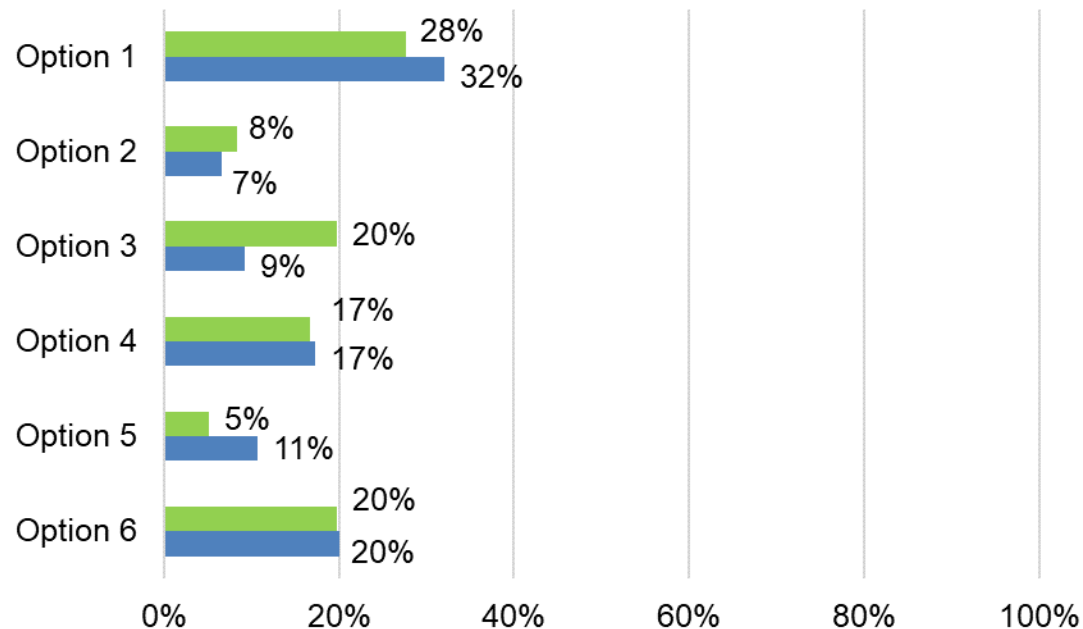


Dog access to Powis Square – geographic breakdown

In order to understand if the views of those living closest to the park differed from other residents and stakeholders, the results of the exercise have been broken down by proximity to the park. Five postcode areas have been considered to be 'bordering the park', this amounts to 75 respondents. Results for this group have been compared to anyone living outside that area.

- The most selected option for both groups was option one, a dedicated fenced and planted dog area along the west side of the ball court.
- Option six, dogs continue to use the park as the currently do, was supported by both a fifth of those bordering the park and a fifth by other respondents.
- Option three, children's play area and ball court fenced to prevent dogs accessing, was supported by a smaller percentage of those bordering the park compared to other respondents (nine per cent compared to 20 per cent)

Please indicate your preferred option



Base: All respondents (267)

■ Other residents and stakeholders

■ Residents bordering the Park



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Option 1:

A dedicated fenced and planted dog area along the west side of the ball court

- This option was supported by 29 per cent of respondents (received the highest support)

Allows

- Dogs and dog owners to access the dog area by the separate gate provided.
- Dogs can be off their lead in the dog area.
- Dog owners can exercise and toilet their dogs, if they don't want to visit other local parks and dog spaces.
- Dog owners can sit down and socialise with other dog owners.
- Dog owners can view their children playing in Powis Square.
- Children can visit the dog area to play with dogs.
- Noticeboard for dog owners to share information.



Changes this will make to Powis Square

- The rest of Powis Square will be dog free, with no access for dogs to the rest of the Square, which would be enforceable.
- A new fenced and planted dog area along the west side of the ballcourt.
- The ball court moved across to the east side by about 0.5m.



Option 2:

A new fenced and planted dog area along the Talbot Road end of the ballcourt

- This option was supported by eight per cent of respondents (received the second lowest support)

Allows

- Dogs and dog owners to access the dog area by the separate gate provided.
- Dogs can be off their lead in the dog area.
- Dog owners can exercise and toilet their dogs, if they don't want to visit other local parks and dog spaces.
- Dog owners can sit down and socialise with other dog owners.
- Dog owners can view their children playing in Powis Square.
- Children can visit the dog area to play with dogs.
- Noticeboard for dog owners to share information.



Changes this will make to Powis Square

- The rest of Powis Square will be dog-free, with no access for dogs to the rest of Powis Square, which would be enforceable.
- A new fenced and planted dog area along the rear of the ballcourt.
- The dog area in this location would make the length of the ball court 5m shorter, reducing the playable space of the ball court.



Option 3:

Children's play area and ball court fenced to prevent dogs accessing

- This option was supported by 17 per cent of respondents (received the joint third highest support)

Allows

- The ball court and the play area to be dog free areas, which would be enforceable.
- Dogs can be off their lead in the rest of Powis Square.
- Dog owners can exercise and toilet their dog/s, if they don't want to visit other local parks and dog spaces.
- Dog owners can sit down and socialise with other dog owners.
- Children can interact with dogs, in the central planted area of the space.

Changes this will make to Powis Square

- The play area and ball court area will be enclosed by fencing and dogs restricted from entering these areas.
- Restricted free flow for children's play, to and from ball court to play equipment and central planted area.
- Unrestricted dog access to the other areas of Powis Square.



Option 4:

Children's play area fenced to prevent dogs accessing

- This option was supported by 17 per cent of respondents (received the joint third highest support)

Allows

- The children's play equipment to be a dog-free area, which would be enforceable.
- Dogs can be off their lead in the rest of Powis Square.
- Dogs will continue to have access to the ball court.
- Dog owners can exercise and toilet their dogs, if they don't want to visit other local parks and dog spaces.
- Dog owners can sit down and socialise with other dog owners.
- Children can interact with dogs, in most of Powis Square.



Changes this will make to Powis Square

- The play equipment will be enclosed by fencing and dogs not allowed in this area.
- Unrestricted dog access to the other areas of Powis Square.



Option 5:

Dogs on lead only, within Powis Square

- This option was supported by seven per cent of respondents (received the lowest support)

Allows

- Dogs will be allowed in Powis Square but must be on leads.
- Dogs can access all areas of the Powis Square, providing they are on leads.
- Dog owners can exercise and toilet their dogs, if they don't want to visit other local parks and dog spaces.
- Dog owners can sit down and socialise with other dog owners.
- Children can interact with dogs, in Powis Square.

Changes this will make to Powis Square

- Dogs will be allowed in Powis Square but must be on leads, which would be enforceable.
- No dogs allowed off leads anywhere within Powis Square.



Option 6:

Dogs continue to use Powis Square as they currently do with the Council continuing to conduct engagement sessions on responsible dog ownership

- This option was supported by 20 per cent of respondents (received the second highest support)

Allows

- None of Powis Square to be dog free for children, young people, and other users to play and socialise.
- Full access to dogs to all areas of Powis Square.
- Dog owners to sit down and socialise with other dog owners.
- Dog owners to exercise and toilet their dogs, if they don't want to visit other local dog spaces.
- Dog owners to view their children playing in Powis Square.
- All children can play with dogs throughout Powis Square.

Changes this will make to Powis Square

- Fence removed from all play equipment, as the new design for the play equipment allows a free flow for all ages of children to all equipment.



Other comments about the proposed options

Respondents were given the opportunity to add any further comments. There were 126 comments to this question. Comments made have been themed and are summarised in the table below.

Examples of comments made can also be seen on the next page, with the full list of themes and comments made found in the appendix document.

Theme	Count
Create a restricted dog area	41
Dogs should be allowed in the park	30
Dogs should not be allowed in the children's playground	24
Measures to keep the park clean from dog waste	19
Dogs should not be allowed in the park	8
The park/children's playground needs refurbishment	6
Noise complaints	5
Keep areas for physical activities	2
More green spaces for residents	2
In favour of the new design	1



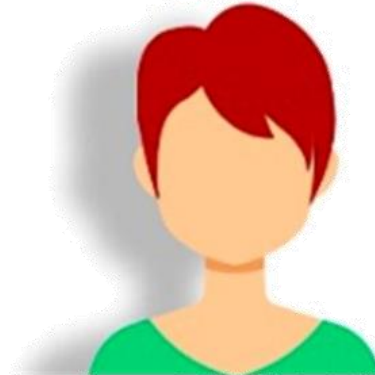
Other comments about the proposed options

“I played in this park as a child and continue to bring children in my family to this park. It would feel much safer if dogs had their own separate area away from unwanted contact with children. Not all dogs and dog owners are badly behaved, but it only takes one badly treated dog to attack a child.”

Create a restricted dog area

“Dogs should not be allowed in the playground area. The increase in dangerous dog attacks on children raises concerns around the safety of children if dogs are allowed to use the space. Many dog owners allow their dogs to foul and do not clean the mess, meaning more danger to health. Dogs should be kept completely out of the playground area and on a lead at all times when in Powis gardens.”

Dogs should not be allowed in the children's playground



“Concerned that if any option other than a dedicated area for dogs is implemented, owners may carelessly (as is unfortunately the case) allow their dogs to foul and urinate in the wider park area. The only way to remedy this is to have a dedicated dog area.”

Create a restricted dog area

“The dog foul in the park has been out of control so responsible dog ownership to adhere to any area / rules set out is equally important.”

Measures to keep the park clean from dog waste

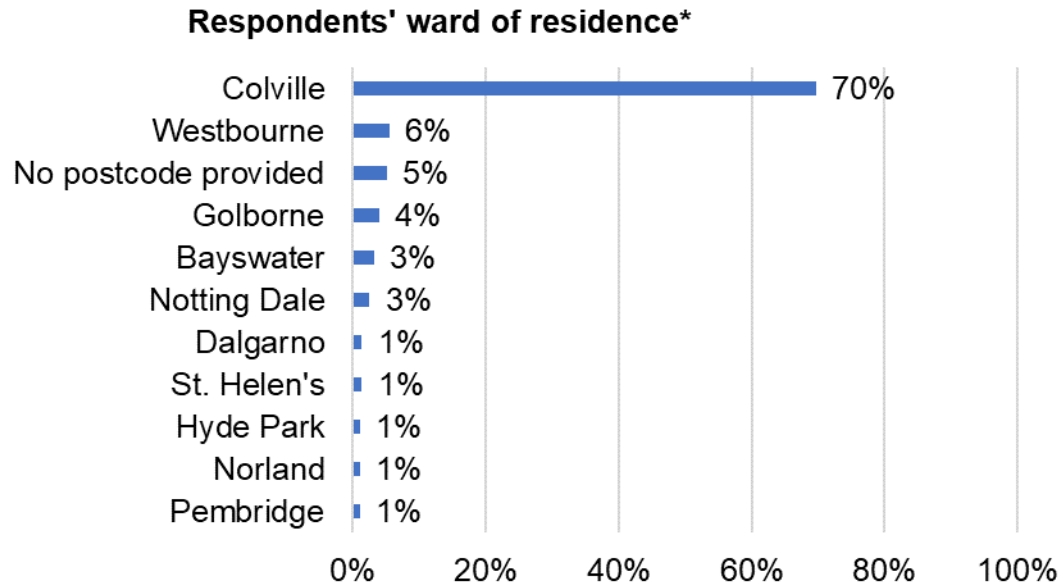
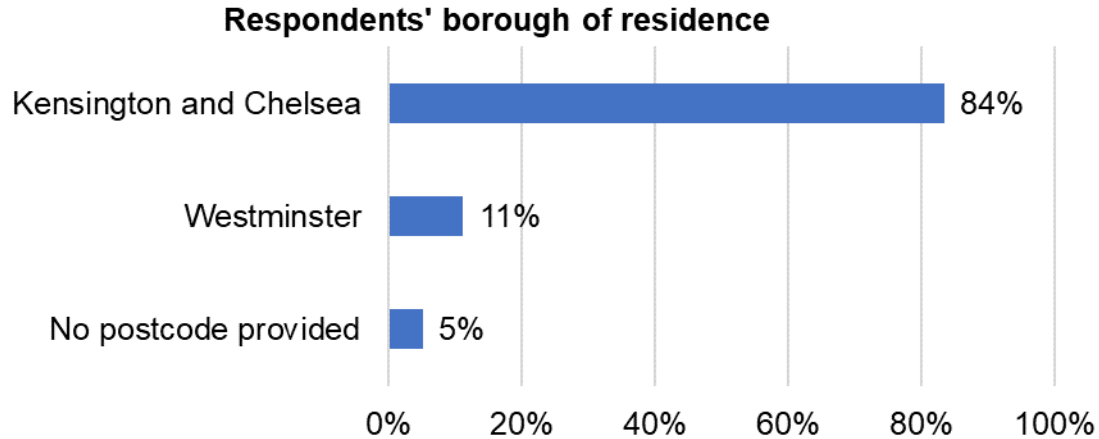
“Please re-turf the grass area or cover it in new material. The grass is in permanent bad condition and excessively muddy. The new wooden balance beams for the kids that go along the west fence are surrounded by mud.”

The children's playground needs refurbishment



Profile of respondents

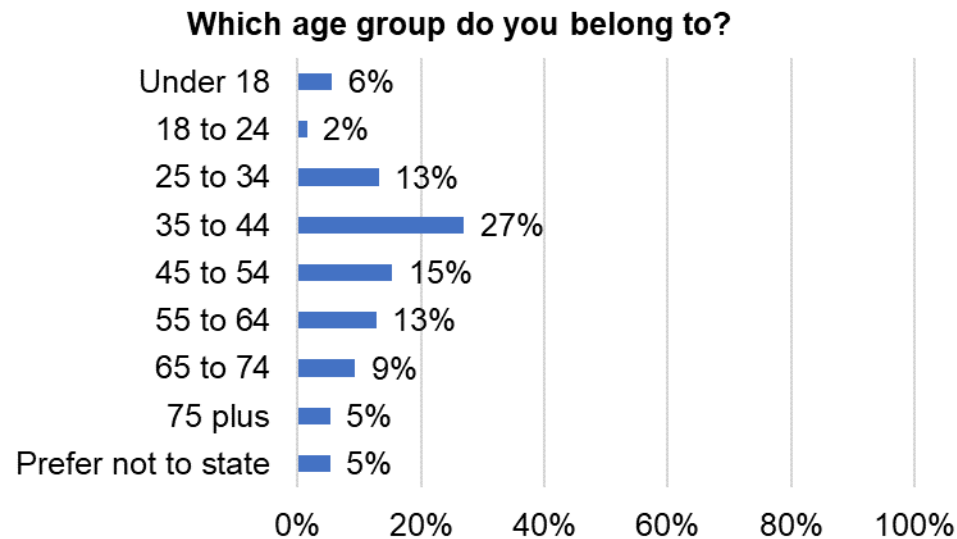
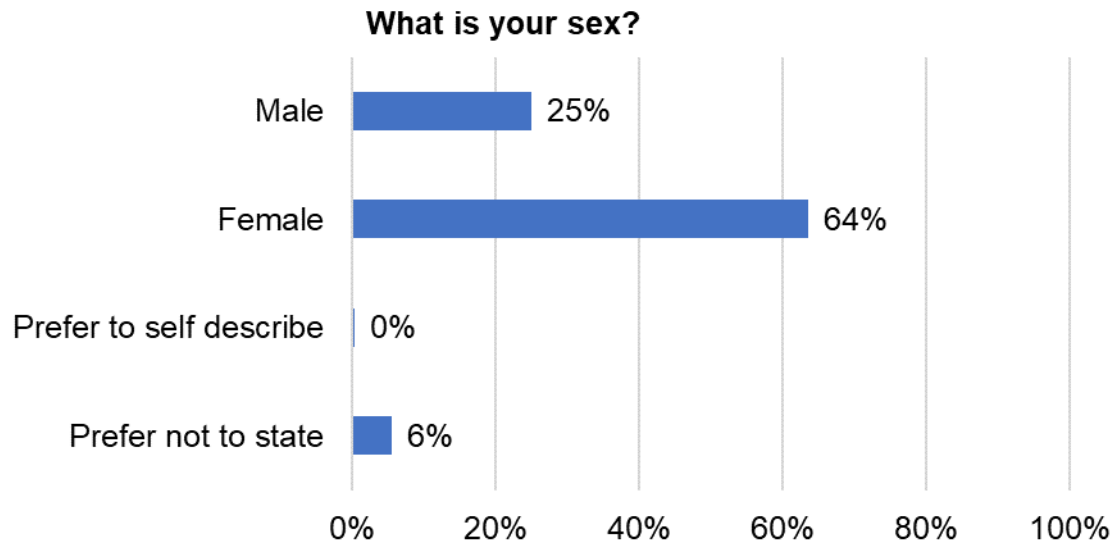
Respondents were asked a series of questions about themselves, to understand who had responded to the consultation.



Base: All respondents (267)

* Wards with less than one per cent not included in the graph

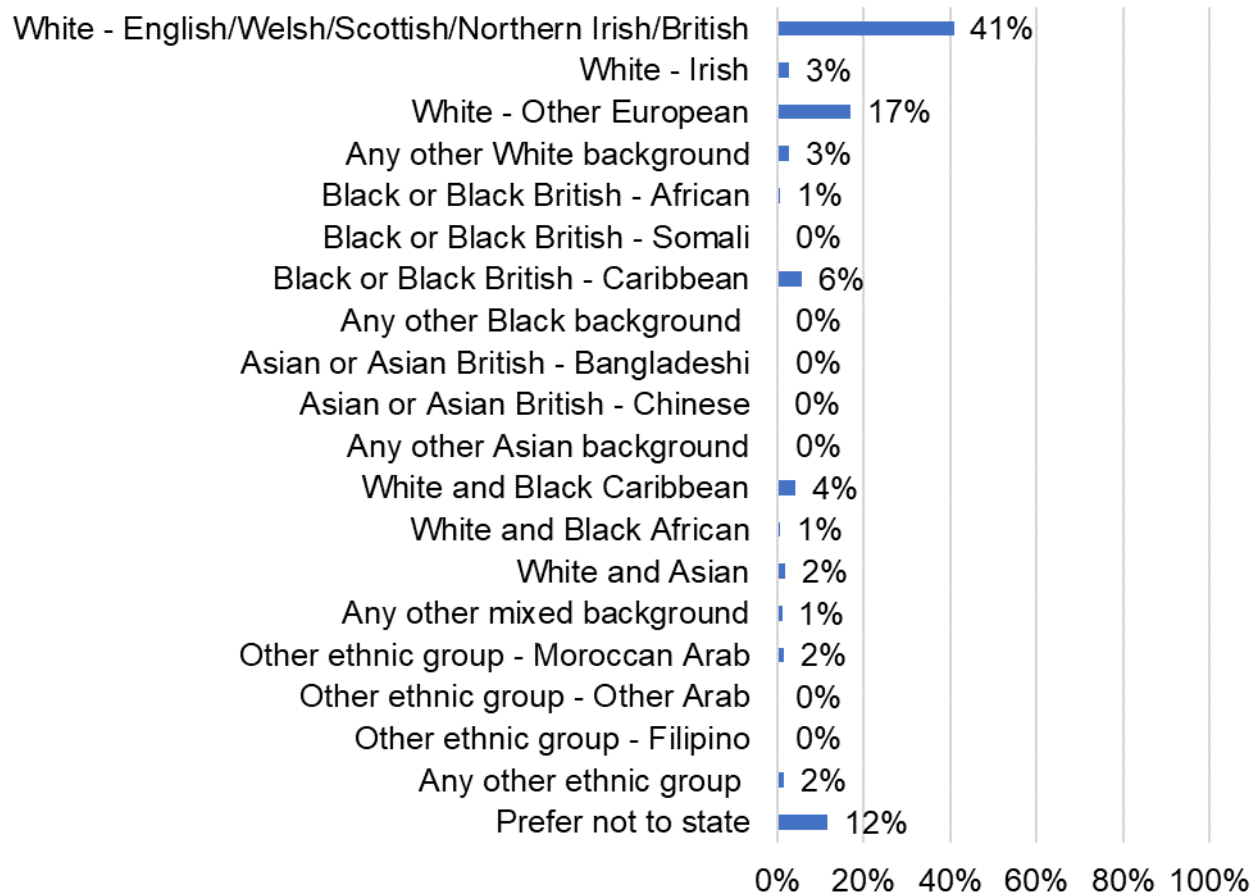
Profile of respondents



Base: All respondents (267)

Profile of respondents

How do you describe your ethnic origin?

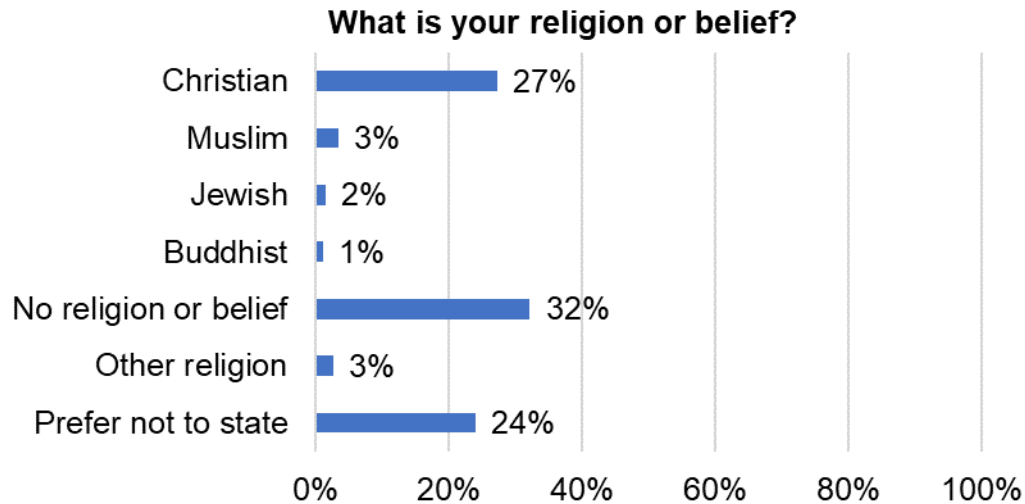


Base: All respondents (267)

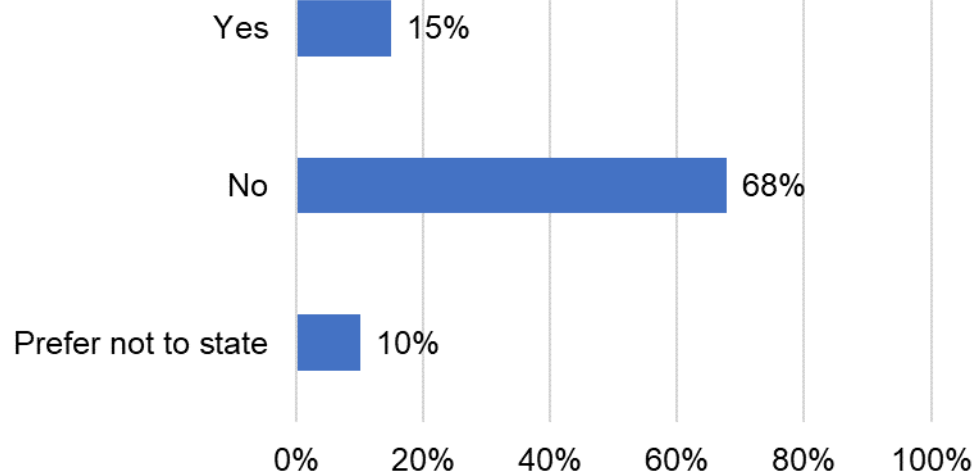


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Profile of respondents



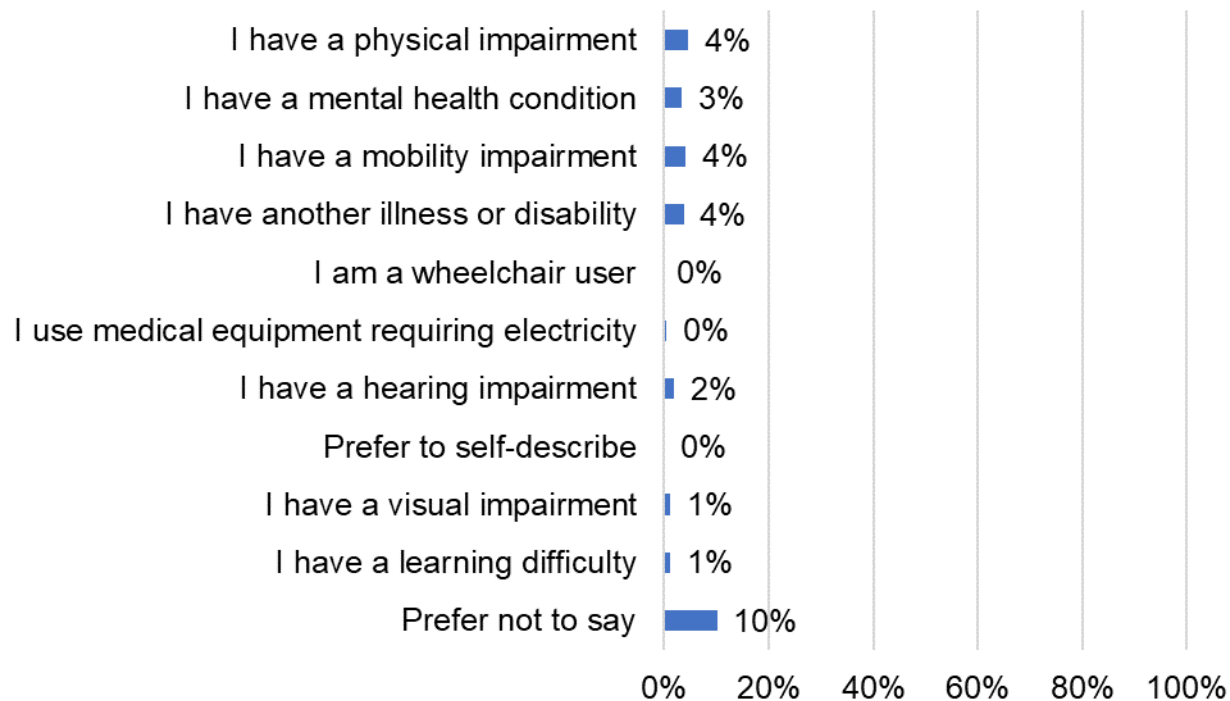
Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more?



Base: All respondents (267)

Profile of respondents

If yes, what is the nature of your physical or mental health condition or illness?



Base: All respondents (267)



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