

Report on the consultation on proposals to control parking in Preston Park 01 September to 07 October 2011.

Background

Parking within Preston Park is currently uncontrolled. Surveys have shown that a large proportion of cars in the park do not belong to people using the park, but instead belong to commuters, residents and visitors to the city. This problem has worsened since the introduction of the Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) which runs along one side of Preston Park.

The council has received complaints that:

- parking causing problems for pedestrians and cyclists entering and using the park
- cars parked on the park's internal roads are a visual intrusion and impact on the overall tranquillity of the park
- cars driving through the park make it unsafe, particularly for children
- the current level of parking creates congestion for park visitors

In addition to this the current level of cars in the park is causing more damage to its roads and paths.

In January 2011 a cross party working group of ward councillors asked officers to explore options to control parking with the objectives of:

- Limiting parking to the areas known as The Gallop and The Ride (and excluding parking from the internal roads and along the London Road side of the park)
- Preventing parking by non-park users
- Ensuring that genuine park users are still able to park in the park
- Ensuring the park remains fully accessible to disabled visitors
- Extending the maximum length of stay along parts of Preston Park Avenue from 4 hours to 11 hours to give commuters, residents and visitors alternative parking options.

The view was that any scheme should not be funded from the maintenance budget for the park, but that instead it should be self funding.

Proposals to meet these objectives were drawn up and were subject to consultation with park users, local residents, businesses and sports groups who regularly use Preston Park as well as local conservation groups and other stakeholders.

In addition, the Brighton & Hove Federation of Disabled People (The Fed) consultation group, The Get Involved Group (GIG) carried out the consultation amongst their members and extended this to the membership of the Fed.

This report summarises the results of the consultation. It will be used to further develop and inform the proposals for parking in the park.

Methodology

515 information leaflets and questionnaires were mailed to residents in roads surrounding Preston Park. Supplies of leaflets were also left at The Chalet and Rotunda cafes in the park and a staffed half day exhibition was held at the men's bowling club. Posters were displayed at sites around the park and in local shops. Sports groups known to use Preston Park were contacted about the consultation by letter and email. The consultation was advertised on the Council's web pages and City News and an on-line version of the survey was available through the council's consultation portal.

The Get Involved Group support worker, emailed the survey to 59 people, mailed out to 9 people and invited the Fed's membership to take part in the consultation through posting details on their Facebook wall.

Sport group representatives and conservation bodies the Brighton Society and Preston and Old Patcham society, were asked if they were affected by the proposals and if they would send us details of their specific needs and affects of the proposals on their members.

Results

Profile of respondents

510 responses were received, 201 by mail, 217 on-line responses, 8 by email and 1 through Facebook.

Postcode analysis of the results showed that 53% of responses came from the immediate area, BN1 6 postcode and 7.2% of responses from the adjacent BN1 5 area. 8.7% of responses did not give a postcode and the rest of the responses were fairly evenly spread over 36 different postcodes.

50% of respondents were female and 41% were male and a further 9% preferred not to say. Most respondents were aged between 35 and 64 years. 16% of respondents have a disability.

The majority of people (81.5%) who responded were using the park in a casual and informal way, many were also local residents who would be affected by the proposals (43%).

The responses show that a large proportion of journeys to the park are made on foot (63.4%) or by car (48.5%). There were also a large number of journeys by cycle (12.5%) and a surprisingly low number by bus (5.0%). Respondents were allowed to tick more than one response to this question.

Sports groups and their members were well represented in the responses with 25.5% of respondents taking part in organised sporting activity in the park; football, tennis, running, cycling, bowling, cricket and basketball, British Military Fitness and Healthwalks.

Most people (61%) stayed in the park for between 30 minutes and 2 hours. A further 18.4% stayed in the park for more 2 hours and 11.4% stay for more than 4 hours.

Detailed comments were received from British Rail Bowling Club, Carlton Bowls Club, Brighton Bowling Club, St Peters Cricket Club, Brighton & Hove district Football League, Preston Park Soccer School and from Preston Park Youth Cycling Club, British Military Fitness and Sussex Cycle Racing League and the Preston and Old Patcham Society.

A petition was received from a local resident, Say No to Pay and Display which gathered 239 signatures.

Response to questions

Q1 Do you agree that the current parking situation in Preston Park is a problem that needs to be addressed?

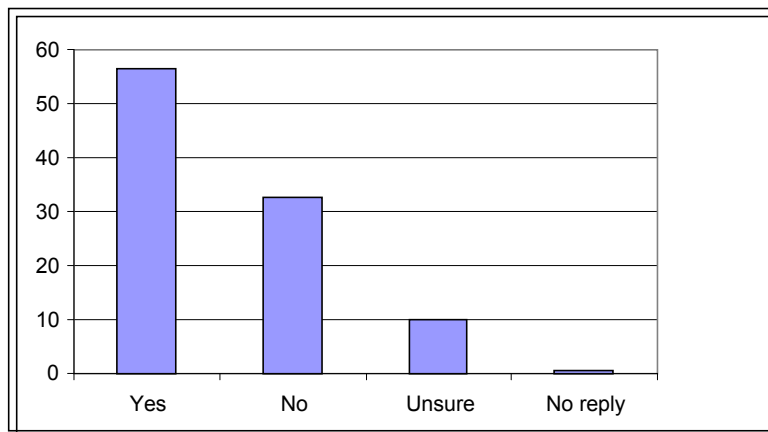


Chart 1 Q1 Do you agree that the current parking situation in Preston Park is a problem that needs to be addressed?

56.4% of people said Yes the current parking situation is a problem that needs to be addressed. 32.7% of people said No and 10% were Unsure.

A cross tabulation of question 7 'Main reason for visiting the park' as a casual visitor, taking part in sporting activity, a resident or a local worker showed that 64.1% of local residents and 56.8% of casual visitors thought that parking was a problem. Sports users were almost equally split on whether parking is a problem, 45.7% saying yes and 48% saying No. Of those working locally (64.1%) did not think that parking in the park is a problem.

A cross tabulation of question 5 'How long do you stay in the park?' showed that the longer people stayed in the park the less likely they were to think that current parking situation is a problem.

Q2 Do you agree that parking should be limited to the two designated parking areas shown in the proposal plan?

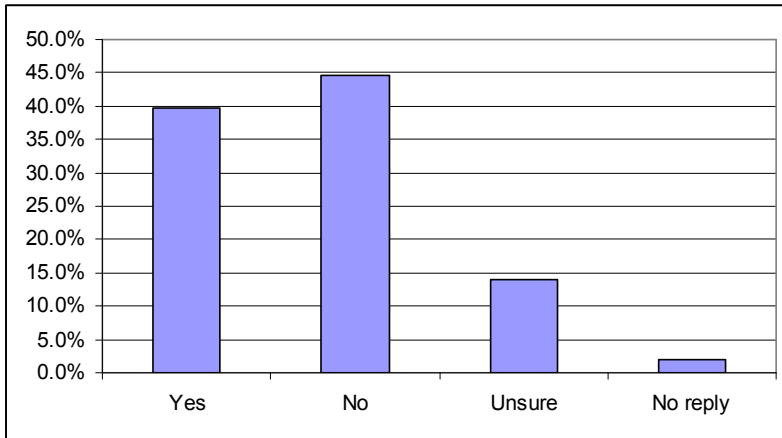


Chart 2 Q2 Do you agree that parking should be limited to the two designated areas.

44.5% of people said No they did not agree that parking should be limited to the two designated parking areas shown in the proposal plan. 39.6% said Yes they did agree and 13.9% were Unsure.

A cross tabulation with question 7 '*Main reason for visiting the park*' showed that local residents (46.1%) were in support of the parking being limited to two parking areas, casual park users (39.5%) were against parking being limited to 2 areas, as were sports users (64.6%) and those working locally (76.9%).

A cross tabulation of question 5 '*How long do you stay in the park?*' showed that there is an inverse relationship between support for parking being restricted to the 2 areas and visitors length of stay in the park. The longer people stayed in the park the less likely they were to support the parking being restricted to 2 areas.

Q3 Do you agree that the southern section of parking on Preston Park Avenue should be increased to maximum 11 hour stay?

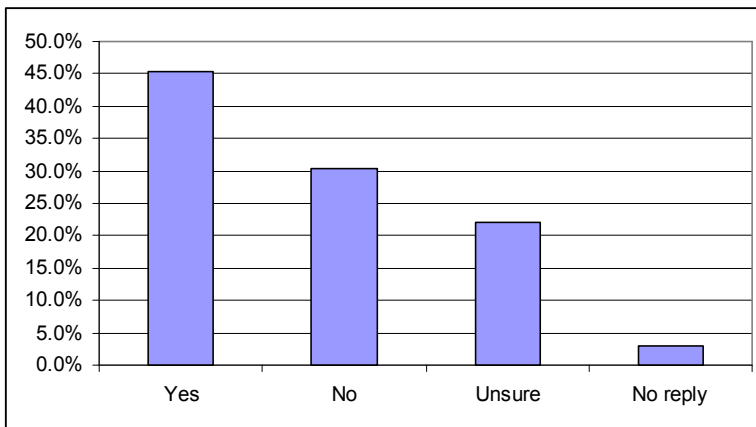


Chart 3 Q3 Do you agree that the southern section of parking in Preston Park Avenue should be increased to maximum 11 hour stay.

45.3% of people said Yes they agree that the southern section of parking on Preston Park Avenue should be increased to maximum 11 hour stay. 30.4% said No they do not agree with extending the southern section to maximum 11 hour stay. 22.2% were Unsure.

A cross tabulation with question 7 '*Main reason for visiting the park*' shows that all groups were broadly in support of the increase to maximum 11 hour stay. People working locally (69.2%), casual park users (46.4%), residents (44.7%) and sports users (33.1%).

Further comments

Further comments were received after each question and common issues received different levels of support depending on the question. The comments have been collated by identifying common issues and counting how many times these were referred to. A summary of these comments is included below.

All comments	No. of comments	%
The proposals will benefit the park/there are too many vehicles parked for too long in the park	376	32.6%
Parking is not a problem in the park	260	22.5%
The CPZ on Preston Park Avenue has caused the problem	159	13.8%
Restricting parking will have a detrimental effect on park usage	92	8.0%
11 hours is too long/ encourage commuters or travellers/overnight parkers	71	6.1%
Don't want to pay or first 1-4 hours should be free.	59	5.1%
Concerned about a reduction in parking spaces	50	4.3%
The proposals will cause displacement to nearby streets	43	3.7%
Preston Park Avenue parking specific comments	28	2.4%
Preston Park specific management comments	17	1.5%
Total	1155	100.0%

Figure 1 Summary table showing frequency of all comments received

When all further comments were looked at together the table above shows that the most frequent comments (32.6%) were in support of the control of parking. 22.6% of comments took the view that parking in Preston Park is not a problem.

The table also shows that many respondents linked the control of parking on Preston Park Avenue to parking problems in Preston Park.

In relation to question 1 '*Do you agree that the current parking situation in Preston Park is a problem that needs to be addressed?*' the most frequent comments (amounting to 53%) related to cars being parked for too long, too many cars in the park, that there are too many cars and they are causing visitors to feel unsafe.

In relation to question 2 '*Do you agree that parking should be limited to the two designated parking areas shown in the proposal plan?*' comments for and against the proposals were almost split evenly (29.5% in support and 28.7% said that parking is not a problem respectively). 23.7% of comments related to concerns about a reduction in parking spaces.

Comments that restrictions would be detrimental to park users (13.4%) and comments related to Preston Park Avenue SPZ/CPZ (4.5%) were of lesser frequency.

The most frequent comments relating to Q3 *Do you agree that the southern section of parking on Preston Park Avenue should be increased to maximum 11 hour stay?* were about Preston Park Ave (PPA) CPZ (40%), such as restrictions on PPA have caused the problem, CPZ needs to be changed, the whole of PPA should be 11 hours, 11 hours is too long.

The frequency of comments relating to concerns that the proposal will encourage commuters to park there or displace commuters to nearby streets was 11.7%.

Representations from Sports Groups and Stakeholders

Detailed comments were received from a number of sports groups and other stakeholders. These are summarised below.

- To place restrictions on parking in the park could inhibit children being able to get to training sessions and matches. The equipment needed by them involves heavy bags which are totally impracticable to bring when walking or on a bus.
- Some families travel long distances to take part in sporting activities at the park, with the events lasting all day. These are high profile events that feed into national championships. Any parking scheme should take account of the parking requirements of visitors to these events.

- Some sports activities involve long stays in the park. Would it be possible to allocate parking permits to allow parking for members of clubs.
- A decline in local bowling teams is thought to be in part due to introduction of parking charges around parks making an additional expenditure for teams playing there or visiting, namely Queens Park and Dyke Road Park. Elderly users will find it unaffordable to play and difficult to bring their equipment with them on the bus. The maximum 4 hours is also not long enough for match days.
- The restrictions may seriously affect the number of participants in sports training in the park because parents will not be able to sit in their cars and watch and therefore have a knock on effect with participants in sport in a year our country is holding the Olympics!
- A local conservation group welcomed the changes in Preston Park Avenue and favoured the banning of all parking in the park stating that that you cannot have free parking for park users if the streets around the park had pay and display.

Further work

Highways Survey

In order to give an indication as to how many non-park users park in the park a highways survey was commissioned.

The survey took place over Friday November 11th and Saturday 12th to count cars in the park on Friday evening and how many cars were remaining parked on Saturday morning.

The count identified 89 cars parking in the park on Friday night at 8.30pm, 58 of which were still present at 10.30am Saturday morning. There were a total of 206 cars parked in the park including these cars on Saturday morning. It was not possible to ascertain the number of non park users arriving on Saturday morning but either way a quarter of the cars in the park at that time were non-park users.

