

LEYBOURNE LAKES COUNTRY PARK 2010 MARKET SURVEY RESULTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This document contains the findings of the 2010 Market Survey of Leybourne Lakes Country Park
- This study was undertaken to profile the users and meet the need to consult them on issues related to the park, to ascertain users' satisfaction with aspects of the park and identify any potential improvements.

THE RESULTS OF THIS SURVEY SHOW THAT:

- Users were both male and female though more likely to be female, with ages ranging from the under 16s to the over 75s, although the former were the most numerous and the latter the most rare. As part of the survey coincided with the school summer holidays the preponderance of children could be expected.
- Users were drawn from a wide catchment area with 64% resident within 5 miles of the park, and 36% living 5 miles or more away, of which 15% lived 20 miles or more. This shows that the Country Park is predominantly a local facility.
- Close to half the users (47%) travelled to the park by car or minibus, 43% came on foot, 7% cycled, leaving just 3% to use a motorbike or public transport. The high percentage that walk to the park demonstrate its local popularity.
- Just over half (52%) of the users visited once a week or more often and are described as frequent users.
- No significant differences could be identified between users in 2005 and those in this survey.
- Most visits (72%) last less than 2 hours; just over one in four stay longer.
- Just less than one in ten of the respondents said they had an illness, disability or infirmity that had troubled them over a period of time. Positive comments were made in relation to access including for wheelchairs; no visitor reported any difficulty in access.
- The two main reasons given for visiting the park were to walk (42%) (including walking the dog and just walking through) and to use the play area (26%). One in ten came to enjoy the countryside. Cycling, jogging, angling and water sports (scuba diving and canoeing) accounted for 16% of the activities visitors undertook during their stay. Occasional users were more likely to be on a family trip which often included a picnic.

- A high 97% were satisfied with their visit overall, including 83% who were very satisfied. This represents an improvement on the 2005 survey which showed 92% were satisfied with their visit overall, of which 66% of visitors were very satisfied.
- 99% of the users were satisfied with most of the park's features and facilities including the cleanliness of the park; the attractiveness of the park; the number of litter bins; the condition of the path surfaces; the Play Area; the number of seats/benches; signage in the park; on site interpretational signage and the balance of recreation/wildlife.
- Other features that nine out of ten were satisfied with included the presence of wildlife, facilities for the disabled, the Ranger Service provided and safety and security on site
- Where dissatisfaction was expressed, the three features that were identified most were the catering facilities, the toilets and car parking. Users want improved refreshments, better maintained toilets closer to the Play Area and less expensive car parking fees.
- All of the nine possible improvements suggested in the survey gained some support from the users but one outstripped all of the rest, a Visitor Centre described as including a café, water sports centre and educational facilities would be popular with 70%. If this could not be achieved improved refreshment facilities was the next most supported improvement followed by more activities/facilities for children and more circular walks/walking routes.
- Three out of four respondents were aware of the Green Flag Park Awards and 68% were aware that Leybourne Lakes holds the award.

THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES COMING OUT OF THIS SURVEY ARE:

- A high 97% were satisfied with their visit overall.
- High priority needs to be given to maintaining the cleanliness and attractiveness of the park and its many features that user's appreciate and will expect to continue to cater for their needs and the very high standards that have been achieved so far to be maintained.
- Although users value the Country Park as it is, the opportunity is there to satisfy the needs of many and to introduce additions and improvements that could make visits last longer and be more enjoyable. The introduction of a Visitor Centre including a café, water sports centre and educational facilities would be the most highly desired improvement that would satisfy 70% or more of the visitors.
- Improvements to the toilets and some modification to car parking fees is also a desired improvement and if the Visitor Centre cannot be achieved development of the refreshment facilities should be considered. It should however be noted that dissatisfaction levels were relatively low, being only 12% (refreshments), 17% (toilets) and 21% (car parking) respectively.