

HAYSDEN COUNTRY PARK – USER SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

In terms of the profile of users, Haysden Country Park continues to attract visits from a variety of local and non-local repeat users. The profile this year was dominated by adults, although with fewer older users (55+ years and over) than in 2007.

Users this year came predominantly from Tonbridge town centre; almost half (48%) lived within two miles. This survey demonstrated a significantly smaller catchment area than in 2007 when only 11% lived within two miles and 63% were five or more miles away from home; this year that was reduced to 25% who lived five miles or more away.

Most users still arrived by car, but significantly more – double the number than in 2007 - cycled. The economic climate with fewer people able to afford to travel any distance by car on a regular basis, the current popularity of cycling and the provision of a cycling route round the park may help to account for the one in five on a bike. One in every three users visited at least once a week although frequent usage was lower than in 2007. Most users this year made shorter visits to the Park with three out of four staying less than two hours.

Users come to the Park for many different reasons but a walk of some description accounts for the majority of visits. Walking the dog and engaging in long or short walks are the most popular reasons. To use the play area was important for those with children and enjoying the countryside or to sit and relax were other main reasons for using the Park. On the day of the interview, or on a previous visit, a range of facilities had been used: the most frequently used are the toilets, the play facilities, the cycle route and the two trails. Four out of every five respondents were aware that the Park holds the Green Flag.

Users rated their overall satisfaction with their visit at a high 4.8 out of a possible 5 points (97%). A cumulative satisfaction score with all the seventeen specifically identified features of the park gave another high score of 4.6 out of a possible 5. The most satisfactory features in this survey were the condition of the path surfaces, on site interpretation, facilities for the disabled and cleanliness of the Park with the path surfaces and cleanliness recording significant improvement since 2007 and no users reporting dissatisfaction with these features. Improvements were noted to many other features in the Park including the number of seats, car parking, the children's play area, the attractiveness of the Park, safety and security on site and the Ranger service. The two least satisfactory facilities are the toilets (4.34) and refreshments (4.00).

The majority of users do not want to see additional facilities developed in the Park although there were some suggestions to extend the cycle route, the trails and the use of the lakes. Dissatisfaction was expressed in relation to some features and, in particular, improvements to the refreshment service, the children's play area with more for older children and the toilets are seen as desirable as these aspects of the facilities still disappoint a number of users just as they did in 2007.

Overall Haysden Country Park continues to satisfy its users; high standards are maintained and the area is valued by visitors and local people alike.