

CONSULTATION



RESIDENT SURVEY

This section provides a summary of the “Fields for the Future” survey conducted between 4 November 2019 - 9 December 2019 where residents and community groups in Kenilworth were invited to have their say on “Fields for the Future” in a public consultation. The idea of the consultation was to receive feedback on how people use, enjoy and envisage the future of Abbey Fields to ensure the Management Plan is in tune with the end users. The consultation summary can be found in Appendix 4. The summary of Land Use following this consultation has been included within Section 11.

Warwick District Council organised seven drop-in events, where the public were encouraged to take part in an information gathering exercise for Abbey Fields. 540 members of the public attended the drop-in sessions over the course of the month-long consultation. Additionally consultation surveys could also be completed online.

The drop-in sessions took place from 9 to 30 November 2019 at Abbey Fields Swimming Pool, Castle Farm Recreation Centre, the Kenilworth Centre and the Holiday Inn. At these events staff from the WDC Green Space Team and representatives from the contract team (Idverde) were available to answer questions and encourage visitors to complete the consultation questionnaires with the aim to gain the opinions of Abbey Fields users.



In 2021, an additional heritage consultation was undertaken with key stakeholders, the findings of which have been included within this section.

Questions not covered in Section 11, included:

- **Do you currently visit Abbey Fields?**
- **If you don't visit Abbey Fields, what is your reason?**
- **What is your main mode of transport to Abbey Fields?**
- **Please rate the features at Abbey Fields 1-5**
- **Please rate the accessibility of features at Abbey Fields 1-5**
- **Do you feel safe when visiting Abbey Fields?**
- **Please give your thoughts on Cycling at Abbey Fields**
- **Do you have any further comments you would like to make about the future management and maintenance of Abbey Fields?**



INSIGHTS

A large percentage of consultees visit Abbey Fields, with only a small percentage not visiting as they use facilities elsewhere, are new to the area or they would like to cycle there but there are no cycle friendly routes through the Fields.

Nearly 50% of consultees walk to Abbey Fields and just over 22% cycle to Abbey Fields, showing that it is well used by local residents. Over 27% of consultees drive to the Fields. Some people park elsewhere and walk to Abbey Fields, which may suggest that parking at Abbey Fields may be an issue in peak times, people may not want to pay for parking in the car park or they combine use of different green spaces.

With regards to the features at Abbey Fields, consultees were generally happy with the Abbey Fields landscape and historical features as well as its general cleanliness. However facilities such as tennis courts, toilets, café, parking and signage were less favoured or received very mixed reviews. It appears that the maintenance of Abbey Fields and its appearance are important aspects to visitors of Abbey Fields and in the main are being undertaken well. The feedback intimates that improvements are required to structured facilities and information dissemination.

Access to and within Abbey Fields had a mixed response. Access to the café and toilets were of greatest concern, with further remarks in relation to the accessibility and content of signage and noticeboards as well as paths around the Lake causing some access issues. As part of the Management Plan, access and infrastructure audits have been undertaken of Abbey Fields and the findings detailed within Sections 8 and 9 with recommendations in the Action Plan (Section 15).

Safety within Abbey Fields was highly rated. However, a small percentage raised concerns with regards to safety in evenings. Most of these relate to accessing the Leisure Centre after dark. There are also concerns about safety of crossing roads into Abbey Fields. This has been raised within the Access Audit (Section 8) as a key priority.

In relation to cycling, over 80% of respondents were in favour of cycling provision within Abbey Fields for reasons such as avoidance of busy roads, as a direct response to the climate emergency, opportunity for children to learn to ride within a safe environment, and to join up the existing cycle route. Just under 19% were against cycling within Abbey Fields raising concerns over safety and loss of peaceful attributes of Abbey Fields.



Comments with respect to the future management of Abbey Fields included

- **positive praise for Abbey Fields and retain its management as a natural and historic asset**
- **improvements to signage and interpretation particularly for habitats and wildlife,**
- **provide all weather, wider accessible paths around the lake and historic assets**
- **create cycle paths linking within the national network with better bike racks**
- **better parking, improve the café and toilet facilities**
- **Encourage and create a wider network of volunteering opportunities**
- **Create a more sustainable Abbey Fields with joined up cycle routes, reinstate the water fountain to fill up water bottles and improve wildlife connectivity**
- **Preserve the biodiversity of Abbey Fields**
- **Involve schools in Abbey Fields to learn about its wildlife and management.**

Impact on the Management Plan

The consultation raised some important aspects in relation to how people use, value and wish to see improvements to Abbey Fields.

The findings of this consultation are in line with the findings from the consultants' surveys that have been undertaken at Abbey Fields during the preparation of this Management Plan. The recommendations and actions that are detailed within the Actions section (Section 15) consolidate these findings with recommendations for their delivery.

HERITAGE CONSULTATION

Further to the 'Fields for the Future' consultation it was evident that additional consultation was required specific to the historic assets within Abbey Fields. In January 2021, key stakeholders were consulted on the Heritage Management within Abbey Fields. This is included within Appendix 5 of this plan.

REVIEW



REVIEW

The Management and Maintenance Plan will be continually reviewed, revised and re-written. The cycle for the Management and Maintenance Plan is to:

- **Write and adopt the Management and Maintenance Plan**
- **Operate according to the aims and objectives held within the plan**
- **Monitor the operation of the Management and Maintenance Plan**
- **Review the working of the Management and Maintenance Plan**
- **Revise and improve the Management and Maintenance Plan where necessary to reflect ongoing developments such as visitor survey feedback, revised financial projections, changes in policy.**

Warwick District Council will be responsible for carrying out monitoring to ensure that maintenance work has been carried out satisfactorily. The Green Space Development Officers will be responsible for the day to day implementation of the Management and Maintenance Plan and will monitor maintenance standards within Abbey Fields. They will also ensure that all other relevant WDC Officers are involved in monitoring and review of management and maintenance work and the plan itself as necessary.

In addition the following methods of monitoring and review will be implemented:

- **Site user surveys will be undertaken after 5 years to monitor the success of the management plan.**
- **The Green Flag Award annual feedback will be used to guide review of the Management Plan if an application for the award is implemented.**
- **An annual report will be presented to the Stakeholders who will feed into the monitoring and review of the plan and general standards of management/ maintenance.**

The Management Maintenance Plan covers a period of 10 years. It will be subject to continual review as it is used and Warwick District Council will prioritise and update the Action Plan annually, if required. A formal review and update of the balance of the plan will be undertaken every 10 years.