

Peckham Rye Park former bowling area

September - October 2020 consultation
report

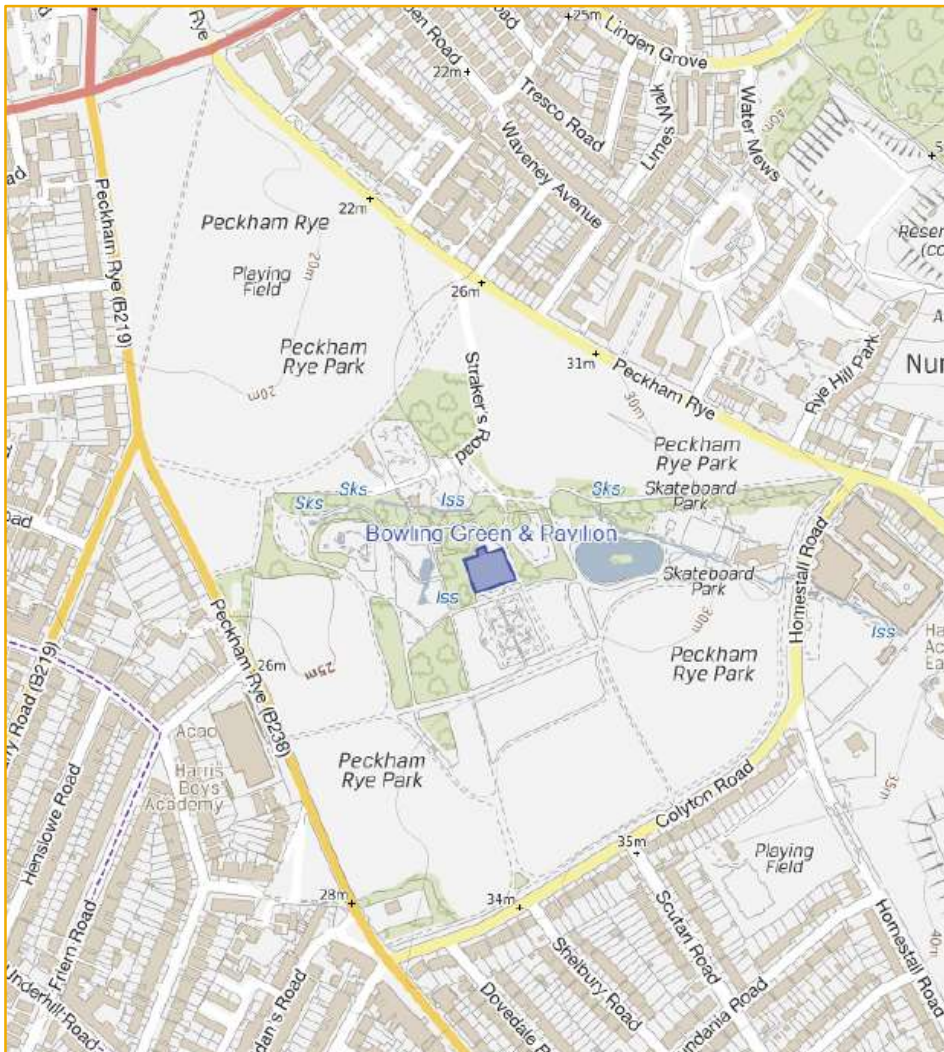


Summary

1. Introduction

The former bowling green and pavilion are located centrally in Peckham Rye Park, as shown by the map below. The facility is currently closed and unused while still requiring ongoing maintenance costs. Southwark Council Parks and Leisure Department advertised a commercial lease opportunity in 2018 and amongst others, a mini golf operator put forward a proposal. Subsequent consultation revealed that some key stakeholders were not in agreement with mini-golf in this location, naming the following reasons:

- Concern that visitors would need to pay to play mini-golf
- Opinion that a mini-golf facility is not in character with a grade ii* listed park
- Opinion that mini-golf is a playground facility for young people and families and that Peckham Rye Park has sufficient provision of these.
- Preference for a community or charity use, preferably for older people



Location plan

Officers approached local charities and community groups in early 2020 but unfortunately none of the proposals received were possible due to lack of funding.

The facility cannot remain derelict at cost to council. Ongoing budget challenges mean that the council either needs to generate income, or reduce spending on facilities management, repairs and maintenance.

The council is guided by the London Plan, and policy 3.16 states that London requires additional and enhanced social infrastructure provision to meet the needs of its growing and diverse population. The building cannot be demolished due to the negative environmental impact as it is only 10 years old.

This public consultation was held to better understand the wider views of the diverse communities in Peckham; what they think about potential future uses of the building and green, and to seek their ideas for the facility.

2. Public consultation

This engagement took place from 27 August to 11 October 2020 with an online survey. Unfortunately no face-to-face events could be held due to COVID-19. The consultation was promoted by posters in the park. Local community groups and forums were also contacted and it was promoted on Southwark council's social media pages.

305 responses were received. The full anonymised responses are shown in the appendix.

3. Executive summary

The key responses to the consultation and how we will take them forward are described below.

Mini-golf or similar activity

There was public support for mini-golf or a similar light sporting activity-based facility, with 38% in support. Positive comments about mini-golf included 'mini-golf is great' 'mini-golf would suit all ages' and 'mini-golf is good for families'.

39% did not support mini-golf in this location for various reasons. 16 respondents mentioned that they 'don't like commercial use of this area' however any utilisation of the site would need to find a use for the building and generate enough to maintain it, therefore some income generation is essential. Due to budget constraints the council now needs to generate income as a way to offset costs, so it can continue to provide services and manage parks and green spaces to a high standard. Without income generation there is a risk that services will need to be reduced and the quality of parks will be impacted negatively.

A commercial-use such as mini-golf would require payment to use the facility. There is a need to put measures in place to ensure any new provision does not exclude people on low incomes including elderly people. A previous mini-golf proposal included discounted rates for those on low

incomes including anyone receiving a pension. Payment by those who can afford it can subsidise access for those who would not normally be able to afford to benefit from such a facility, and the council has the chance to ensure this through the contract.

15 respondents felt it was 'not in character with a heritage park'. Both Southwark Council's Design and Conservation team within the Planning Department, and Historic England have been consulted and were of the opinion that an outdoor leisure facility such as mini-golf could be appropriate providing it was sensitively designed and retained the square shape of the original lawn.

12 respondents felt that it 'won't appeal to whole community', which can be said for many facilities including sports, cafes and play areas; this should not prevent us providing a variety of facilities that appeal to different people in our diverse community. 10 respondents suggested that it 'won't warrant repeat visits'; officers have undertaken research with other local authorities and found that mini-golf has proven to be a financially sustainable and popular activity in other parks including Battersea Park, Wandsworth Park, Acton Park and Castle Park in Colchester.

Pop-up bar

Public support for a pop-up bar type facility was favoured by a slight majority at 52%. The most frequent positive comments on pop-up bars were 'good idea / it will be well used' 9 responses suggested that a 'bar should support an activity or entertainment' and this could be the case should mini-golf, or another light sporting activity provider operate on the site. Similarly others said the 'bar should support bowls' and an operator could include running a bowls facility with a bar if they wish, should they have a good business plan.

35% were not in support of a pop-up bar. Most frequent reason given (30 responses) is 'there are enough bars and pubs in the area, no need for this' which contrasts with the view it would be well used and the high level of interest the council has had from potential operators. 'Extra noise and extra litter' was raised as a concern however a potential lease would make the bar operator responsible for clearing litter and providing security staff where required. Any noise impact is likely to be similar to the café on a busy day, and the facility would be required to close at dusk when the park closes. Others commented that a 'bar is not appropriate use of this space' but did not elaborate about why they felt this way.

We acknowledge that a pop-up bar may not appeal to some cultural groups, and a range of non-alcoholic drinks and snacks would also be available, to satisfy different visitors.

Other suggestions

The most frequent suggestions in 'other ideas for the area' were as follows;

- Music venue / performance area (46 responses). This would be considered if the council receives a sound business plan proposal from a potential operator, in response to a further letting exercise. Thus far, no proposal has been received for this type of activity.
- Keep as lawn bowls (41 responses). Lack of use in recent years has demonstrated that there is insufficient demand for bowls at this location to support and sustain its current use.

Governing body Bowls England have advised that sufficient clubs operate in the local area to meet local demand, and there is no appetite for a further provision to be provided at Peckham Rye Park.

- Boules or Petanque (15); a potential new use similar to bowls. Initial financial investment would be needed to install a Petanque Piste, and while this was a popular suggestion from individual residents, no organised group or company has approached the council to date.
- Tennis courts (27). Significant capital investment would be required from the council which is not currently available. Sports courts do not offer a sustainable future use for the building.
- Lido (17). This too would require significant capital investment and very high management costs for the running these facilities, making this too expensive for the council to run.
- Community garden / community allotment and / or orchard, (15). This suggestion would need initial financial investment and ongoing community support to run the area. No suitable group has come forward as yet, however this use could be considered should a suitable proposal be submitted by a potential operator who has funding to support their idea, and be able to use and maintain the building.
- Space for exercise classes yoga etc. (14) this would need an individual or organisation to organise bookings and run the space, and include use and maintenance of the building.
- 10 responses suggested dog-related activities, such as dog training and dog grooming, which could be possible should a business plan be provided by a potential operator. Recent Research indicates that “many people are deterred from making more use of parks because they do not wish to interact with, dislike, or fear dogs, and many of those people are from religious or ethnic minorities” (Bridget Snaith; ['The Queen Elizabeth Park: Whose values, Whose Benefits'](#)). Dog owners and their dogs are important visitors to our parks, and although ownership in London is lower than the rest of the UK at less than 10%, dog walking is a popular activity in Peckham Rye Park. As some cultural groups do not favour dogs, we should be careful we are not excluding people on this basis. However there is already provision of a dog-free picnic area at this park. Should a good business plan for a dog-related use be provided by a potential operator during an open and fair lease process, this should be considered carefully.

Review of demographic of respondents

The council has a public sector equality duty, under the Equality Act (2010), to consider those with protected characteristics (age, sex, gender, disability, etc) under the Act and equalities data was collected as part of this consultation. The demographics of the survey respondents are detailed in part 2; they present the respondent profile against the demographic profile of the area.

Age

This shows us that 32% of respondents were in the age group of 35-44 which is almost double the area profile (17%); whereas people under 24 and those over 64 were under represented. Some respondents are likely to be parents of young children, who we would expect to represent the views of their family group, including younger children. However this does mean the views and opinions

of children and young adults (typically 16-24 years) and those over the age of 64 may be less well understood.

If we look at the 22 responses from the people aged up to 24, their view was slightly less in support of both mini golf and pop up bar than the average respondent. Nearly half of those aged 24 years and under requested a performance venue or space.

Older people aged over 64 were also slightly less in support of either facility with the most frequent comment being a request for croquet, which similarly to bowls is unfortunately not sustainable.

Ethnicity

The representation of ethnic groups responding showed a big difference from the local profile. 78% of responses were from White (66% White British and 12% White other) people. The local profile for Peckham and Nunhead shows 45% of local residents are White British/White other. In contrast only 3% of survey responses were from Black people, who make up 38% of the local population.

Visitor surveys carried out in the park in 2014 show a typical visitor profile of 71.6% White and 17.5% Black which are a little closer to the survey respondent profile. There is research (Bridget Snaith; The Queen Elizabeth Park: Whose Values, Whose Benefits) showing BAME (Black and Minority Ethnicity) people have less access to parks and visit parks less frequently, and are often inhibited from visiting parks, sometimes feeling excluded. If decisions on future facilities and uses of a park are based largely on feedback from current, mostly White visitors then the park will continue to only meet the needs of that group and not work towards breaking down the barriers which stop some local residents from using the park.

This is also true of designers and management as described as follows;

“Culturally situated actions and assumptions of designers and decision makers who create and control park space are certainly a part of the reason that people from BAME groups do not make use of this park space as much as white British people.” (Bridget Snaith, as above)

If we look at the responses from BAME respondents, there is no marked difference from the overall results, with opinion still being split roughly 50/50 regarding both mini-golf or a pop-up bar. However this is limited by the small size of the sample group in question, and we cannot be confident that this represents the wider BAME community. The same research also shows BAME groups visit parks for ‘programmed spaces’ that support social and active use, and social activities for collective groups, which mini-golf or a similar activity would provide.

Further work is needed to consider the equality impacts of any future provision. Therefore an initial Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken on any proposals.

Conclusion

The consultation set out to gauge the views of the diverse local community on potential uses for the former bowling green and pavilion building, and seek new ideas.

There was a good response with over 300 completed surveys, demonstrating the strong interest of park visitors and the local community in the future of this area and the wider park in general. A large number of responses could strengthen the case for decisions, however this report has shown that the response is not entirely representative of the diversity in the local community, as some groups are underrepresented and this should be taken into account.

The survey demonstrated split opinions with roughly equal numbers both in support and not in support for mini-golf or similar activity. Results were similar for a pop-up bar. Therefore concerns expressed by stakeholders regarding mini-golf prior to this consultation are shown to not represent a clear majority of the local community.

The consultation responses demonstrate sufficient local support for mini-golf or similar light sporting activity, or a pop-up bar in this location, and give us a better understanding of the concerns of those who are not in support.

The green and pavilion cannot be left unused and accruing ongoing costs and requires either a temporary use during the summer, or a permanent use all year round.

An open and competitive lease advertising process would need to be followed to find a suitable leaseholder, and mini-golf or a pop-up bar should not be ruled out, should a suitable business plan be provided and the plans are visually sympathetic to the park setting.

A new lease could be made available to start in the summer of 2021, should COVID-19 restrictions allow.

We acknowledge the opinion of those who have raised concerns about mini-golf or a pop-up bar in this location, and depending on what proposals are received it may be that a temporary “pop-up” use (which could be an activity, not necessarily a bar) is a good way to gauge the impact on the park without significant changes to the way the area looks. However it should be kept in mind that even a long-term use would require the leaseholder to return the area to the way they found it, at the end of the lease period, and should not be discounted.

A temporary “pop-up” activity use would also allow monitoring of equalities information, to see if the facility had a wide appeal, and if it encourages new visitors to the park.

Part 2. Review of responses

Q1. Would you like to see an outdoor activity such as mini-golf or something similar?

There were 299 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent	
Yes, I would use such a facility	93	30.49%	38.03%
Yes, although I might not use such a facility	23	7.54%	
No	119	39.02%	39.02%
Not sure	22	7.21%	20.98%
Other, please state below	42	13.77%	
Not Answered	6	1.97%	1.97%

Any supporting comments on mini-golf or something similar? Occurring 3 times or more

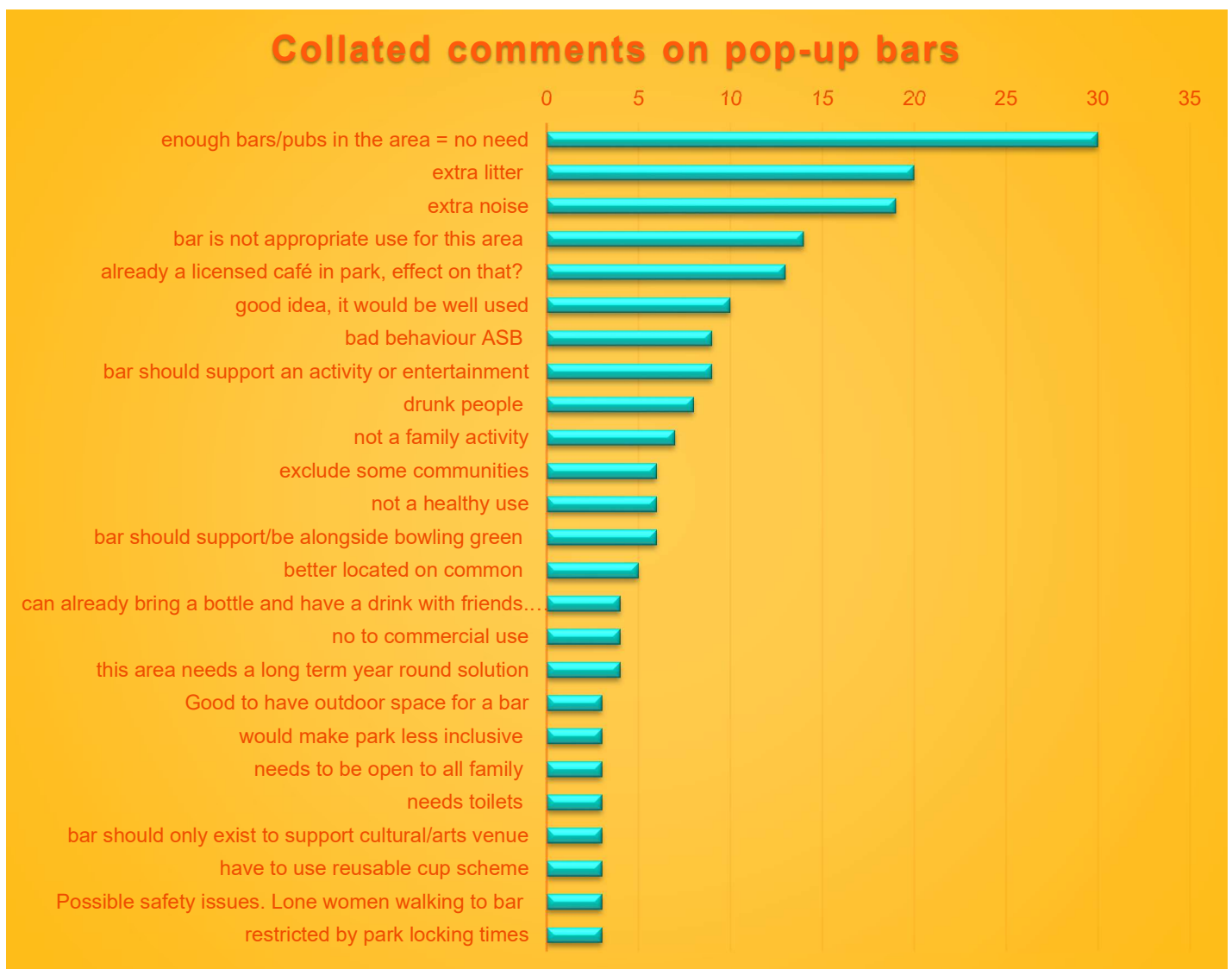


Q2. Would you support a pop-up licensed bar facility during the summer months?

There were 299 responses to this part of the question.

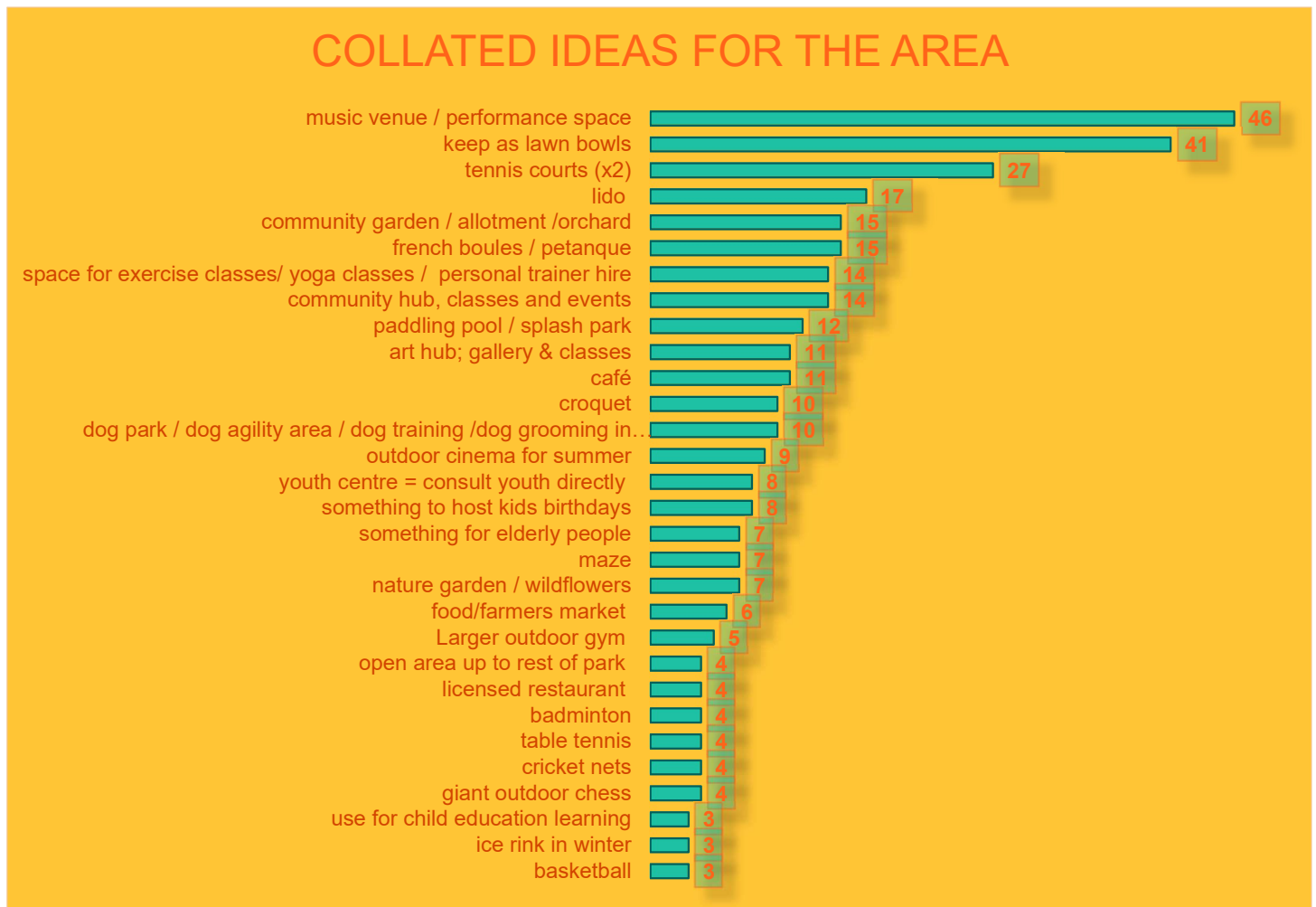
Option	Total	Percent	
Yes, I would use such a facility	141	46.23%	52.46
Yes, although I might not use such a facility	19	6.23%	
No	106	34.75%	34.75
Not sure	26	8.52%	10.82
Other	7	2.30%	
Not Answered	6	1.97%	1.97

Supporting comments on pop-up bar occurring 3 times or more



Q3. Do you have any other ideas for activities?

Collated and occurring 3 times or more.



Profile of consultees

Age	Total respondents	Percentage of respondents	*local area profile
Under 16	3	0.98%	22%
16 - 17	1	0.33%	12%
18 - 24	18	5.90%	
25 - 34	72	23.61%	20%
35 - 44	97	31.80%	17%
45 - 54	50	16.39%	13%
55 - 64	32	10.49%	7%
65 - 74	11	3.61%	8%
75 - 84	5	1.64%	
85 - 94	0	0.00%	
95+	0	0.00%	
Not Answered	16	5.25%	

***Peckham and Nunhead Community Council area profile**

Sex

Option	Total	Percent	*local area profile
Male	110	36.07%	49%
Female	180	59.02%	51%
Not Answered	15	4.92%	

Ethnicity

Option	Total	Percent	*local area profile	**Park visitor profile
White British, Irish, English, Scottish, Welsh, NI & other European	220	72.14	45%	71.6%
Other White (please specify if you wish)	19	6.23%		
Black British, Black Caribbean, Nigerian, Ghanaian, Sierra Leonean, Somali, Other African & other Black	8	2.62%	38%	17.5%
Asian British, Indian, Bengali, Chinese, Pakistani, Filipino and any other Asian	8	2.62%	7%	7.5%
Mixed white/Black Caribbean, mixed white/black African, mixed white/Asian & other mixed background	17	5.58%	7%	3.4%
Latin American	2	0.66%	3%	n/a
Gypsy, Roma or Irish Traveller	0	0.00%		
Other ethnic background (please specify if you wish)	7	2.30%		
Not Answered	24	7.87%	0%	

** Peckham Rye Park visitor surveys 2014.

Disability and health

Option	Total	Percent	*local area profile
Yes	28	9.18%	
No	244	80.00%	
Prefer not to say	16	5.25%	
Not Answered	17	5.57%	

***Peckham and Nunhead Community Council area profile**

A new fun activity for Peckham Rye Park

Have your say

The former bowling facility is closed and unused. We want to bring this area back into use, improving the range of activities available. Could it be a pop-up bar, used for mini-golf, or do you have other great ideas?

Tell us what you think at southwark.gov.uk/peckhamryepark

by 11 October 2020.

If you would like a paper copy of this survey, or to join the project mailing list, contact the Parks Team on 020 7525 1604 or parks@southwark.gov.uk.

Thanks for your help improving the park.



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