

The Future of Newcastle's Parks and Allotments



Consultation Report

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1. Introduction

This report presents the main findings from our consultation on our proposals on the future of Newcastle's parks and allotments. It presents the views of residents and stakeholders: their priorities, concerns, and suggestions for how parks and allotments can be preserved and maintained for the future. It also describes how many people and organisations took part and how they did this.

Background

Over the past seven years, Newcastle City Council's parks budget has reduced by over 90%, meaning that finding new ways of financing and running the city's parks is essential. This needs to be done whilst staying committed to improving how the parks service is delivered, keeping parks in public ownership, ensuring they are safe and free to use, and making sure that local people, community groups and partners are fully involved in the future delivery of this service.

To help us find new ways of maintaining and improving our parks, Newcastle City Council has been working with the National Trust. We wanted to benefit from their experience in preserving national heritage across the country, to help us find a way forward for Newcastle's parks service.

We have researched the possibility of transferring the operation, delivery and maintenance of a large proportion of the city's parks, and possibly allotments, to a new Parks Charitable Trust. The full details of what this would entail can be found in the full proposal which accompanies this report. To summarise, we chose to explore the possibility of setting up a parks charitable trust because we felt it could offer the following advantages:

- Independence from Newcastle City Council, and thus not being under the constraints imposed on local authorities
- Legally protecting and preserving parks in Newcastle for public use
- Enabling more active involvement of the community, partners, stakeholders and staff
- Maximising opportunities for income generation to sustain the enterprise (not purely for commercial gain), and
- Greater potential for trade and enterprise
- Securing the best human, environmental and social outcomes
- Unlocking new opportunities for accessing alternative funding sources.

In light of the need for change described above, and having established that within the current environment a parks charitable trust could be the best solution, Newcastle City Council decided that this would be a change so fundamental to how parks are run that we should immediately seek out the views of the public and other key stakeholders. Although we have not yet fully developed a business case, we consulted on the principles of this proposal as early as we possibly could, and the consultation which followed approached the public on that basis.

Core Principles

Our core principles for the future of parks are as follows:

1. **Council Priority:** although parks are not a statutory service, their successful future is a high priority for Newcastle City Council.
2. **Existing Groups:** existing groups will be integral to ensuring the future of parks in Newcastle, and will be part and parcel of any new solutions.
3. **Free Access for All:** parks should be free to access and use, but we expect charging for some facilities or activities to continue and grow.
4. **No Privatisation:** parks will not be transferred to a commercial entity, but rather to an entity with charitable and community objectives, which will preserve parks and use available income sources (including commercial sources), to run them.
5. **One City:** securing equality of resources and visitors' enjoyment across all the city's parks with no "single park" solutions.
6. **Public Ownership:** parks should remain in Council ownership.
7. **Safe and Clean:** parks should be clean, and visitors should feel safe and be safe.
8. **Your Parks:** no decisions should be made without engaging, listening, problem-solving together, and feeding back to people and organisations who use parks.

Our consultation approach

We needed to consult on this proposal because if it was accepted it would be a significant change to the way we have provided public parks and allotments in the past. We needed to give the public and our partners the opportunity to understand the proposal, reflect on it, ask questions about it, raise their concerns and help shape the way forward.

Inspired by the budget consultation approach taken earlier in the year, which used a "People's Budget" online simulator to gather views, we adopted a mixed-methods approach, combining online and offline methods to publicise the consultation and support people to take part in it. Online methods included Twitter discussions, an online survey using Let's talk Newcastle Online, and quick polls on the newly-created Let's Talk Parks website. Offline methods included having consultation forms available in parks, banners in parks to publicise the consultation, drop-in discussion sessions and meetings with stakeholders, and in-depth workshops organised by the Open Lab team at Newcastle University. The advantages of the methods we chose were:

1. **Attendance at existing meetings:** where we were invited, we went along to speak directly with various groups such as the Elders Council and Allotments Forum, and facilitate their giving feedback on the proposals.
2. **Community drop-in sessions:** these were held in local communities and allowed people to have an opportunity to speak to council staff one-to-one, hear about the proposal, and understand how they could get involved in shaping it.
3. **Park drop-in sessions:** these allowed people to access information about the proposals and ask questions "off-line" at a time that they chose, in an informal and friendly setting. Past experience has shown that drop-in sessions can be a more inclusive and informal means of engaging with the public, particularly for people who are less comfortable participating in (or cannot attend) formal meetings or question-and-answer sessions. Having drop-in sessions allows us to hear from a wider range of people.

4. **Press and general communications** helped us to spread the word and raise awareness of the consultation, encouraging people to let others know. We also took particular care in the development of a brand, “Let’s Talk Parks” and tagline: “help shape the future of Newcastle parks”.
5. **Twitter Hour** discussions run by the Open Labs team allowed people to take part in a more focussed discussion online. Each Twitter Hour focused on a different question and provided opportunities to take part in dynamic polls on possible alternative futures for Newcastle’s parks.
6. **Workshops run by the Open Labs** team at Newcastle University allowed more focussed time for people to think through some of the challenges raised by the proposal, and offer the opportunity to provide guidelines and ideas on how parks services could be run in the future.

The full public consultation period ran from 13 February to 23 April 2017, and can be divided into two phases:

- **Phase 1 – Have Your Say Online, drop-in sessions, and letters:** The first phase, beginning on 13 February, focussed on publicising the proposals, and invited people to take part via drop-in sessions, the quick polls on the Let’s talk Parks website, and Let’s talk Newcastle Online. We also had meetings with stakeholders such as the various “Friends Of” groups who look after local parks, allotment holders, the Elders Council, Disability North, and many others. People also sent in feedback by letter and email.
- **Phase 2 – Let’s Talk Parks workshops, website and Twitter:** In phase 1, we asked people to give us their details if they wanted to take part in a more in-depth consultation about the future of parks and allotments. Phase 2 consisted of six workshops and four “Twitter Hour” online discussions run by the Open Labs team, who also created the Let’s talk Parks website. Phase 2 began on 23 March.



1. Participants at a Let's talk Parks workshop

The two phases overlapped, with the Have Your Say online survey remaining open until the end of the consultation period on 23rd April. We received around **4,300** responses to the consultation via various methods such as the online survey, workshops, letters, and so forth. A full breakdown is available on p.4.

Publicity

We began by publicising the online Let’s talk Newcastle consultation, which gave people the option to provide us with their contact details so that we could invite them to take part in workshops where issues could be discussed in more detail. We promoted the online Let’s Talk Newcastle survey, the drop-in sessions, Twitter Hours, Let’s Talk Parks website,

and workshops widely on social media, using videos, Facebook posts and Twitter. In addition to emailing stakeholder groups connected to parks, we also aimed to reach local residents by putting banners in parks, sending out flyers and leaflets to households and community buildings, and visiting events in parks to encourage people to give us their views. Any questions about the content of this report should be addressed to **Louise Reeve**, Policy and Communications Business Partner in the Policy and Communication Team, telephone: 0191 277 7508 (internal ext. 27508), or email at: louise.reeve@newcastle.gov.uk.

Feedback to people who took part

The Project Team will be feeding back to the public in late July and August on the outcome of the consultation, what we are doing with the findings, the Council's Cabinet decision and position, and the next steps we will be taking. These will be presentation-led and held in locations and times to get the best coverage across the city. This will be accompanied with press releases, web information and social media, and an email to people who took part via Let's talk Newcastle online and the Let's talk Parks website and workshops. Information about this will be available via the Newcastle City Council website in due course. We would like to thank all the individuals and organisations who took the time to give us their views.



2. Workshop participants using the board

game style kit to explore issues



3. A young person's thoughts about what they wanted to see in parks.

2. How many people took part?

We received just **over 4,300 responses**, including completed online surveys on Let's Talk Newcastle Online, emails, letters, formal responses from stakeholders, paper questionnaires, Twitter Hour participants, stakeholder group meetings, and Let's Talk Parks workshops run by OpenLab. We also know that many more individuals have viewed information about the proposals online, but did not choose to comment. Part 6 of this report describes how we publicised the consultation both online and off-line.

We received feedback from the following organisations: Armstrong Allotments Association, Dinnington Parish Council, Disability North, the Elders' Council, the Freeman of Newcastle, Friends of Jesmond Dene, Tyne and Wear Joint Local Access Forum, Newcastle Parks Forum, Parklands Ward Councillors, Tyneside Croquet Club, Wingrove Scouts, the Heaton Pavilion Border Group, and members of the Parks Forum including: Tyne Riverside Group, Friends of Gosforth Central Park, Friends of Heaton and Armstrong Parks, Friends of Havannah, Friends of Iris Brickfield Park, Friends of Sugley Dene, Friends of Spital Tongues Green, Fountain Row, and Friends of Outer West Parks.

Method of engagement	No of responses
Twitter Hours – engagements	1,989
Let's talk Parks website users	1,174
Let's talk Newcastle Online Surveys, including paper questionnaires	430
Drop-in sessions	307
Children and Young People's Event	163
Let's Talk Parks Workshops	143
Emails and letters, including stakeholder responses	46
Scouts meeting	30
Elders Council meeting	15
Disability North meeting	15
Totals	4,312

Please note that the total above is an indication of the complete number of responses, but not necessarily the total number of people who provided them. This is because some people will have taken part several. For example, someone could complete an online survey, take part in a Twitter Hour discussion, and then attend a workshop. It is therefore not possible to calculate the exact number of people and organisations who took part, but if we were to assume that all participants took part using two different methods of engagement (this is a very conservative approach), the total would be around 2,150 individuals. The total is probably higher, but cannot be definitively calculated.

3. Summary of findings

These are the key themes from Phases 1 and 2 of the consultation.

Key Themes

No	Theme	Summary
1	Financial Sustainability	Whether the proposed charitable trust would be able to generate enough income to maintain parks was an issue people consistently raised during the consultation. Participants recognised that the proposed charitable trust might be able to access sources of funding not open to the Council, but this was accompanied by uncertainty around the potential sustainability of those funds. A common question raised was “what would happen if the trust were to fail”? Some felt that the risk of this occurring was significant enough that they did not want the proposal to be implemented for this reason.
2	Commercialisation and Privatisation	Linked to the financial sustainability theme above, there were queries about whether a trust would be able to remain “ethical” in its pursuit of funding, and not become dependent on sponsorship from businesses which are not seen to be compatible with an ethical approach (for example, tobacco and alcohol companies). People are concerned that the pressure to generate income could result in what some participants described as “over-commercialisation” or “creeping privatisation” and that ecological conservation and preserving public access could become less of a priority. They were also concerned that this could lead to a decline in parks maintenance. Participants made very detailed suggestions about the need to set parameters for what is acceptable regarding commercial activities and sponsorship, and to have a robust process for assessing whether applications are accepted or rejected.
3	The Ethos of Parks	Most participants expressed a general feeling which one person termed the “ethos of parks”: that parks fulfil vital needs for city residents and visitors: socially, ecologically and aesthetically. Respondents describe this in terms such as “escaping the city centre”, “getting away from the pressures of modern life”, and “getting closer to nature”. Crucially, parks are seen as a space which should be equally available to all, and free from advertising and the pressure to spend money. Some participants contrasted this with what they saw as the potential negative consequences of the proposal, in which parks could become commercial spaces, indistinguishable from the urban environment. Children and young people commented that they saw parks as being for play, for having fun, and as a space especially for them.

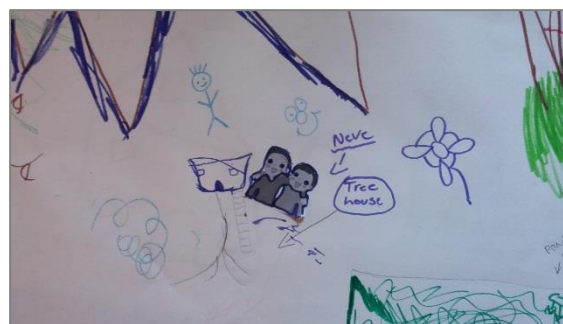
No	Theme	Summary
3	The Ethos of Parks (continued)	Some people felt that the status of parks as a public good was important enough that they did not want the proposal to be implemented, but for the parks to continue to be run by the council.
4	Equality	<p>Two major concerns participants had are, firstly, that parks must remain free to access for everyone. The cumulative impact of public sector spending cuts among people in less affluent or deprived areas and households was mentioned in this context. People felt that parks are especially important for the health and wellbeing of those affected by cuts, and children and young people are often mentioned in this context. Secondly, people were concerned that without a deliberate attempt to avoid access to parks becoming unequal, the proposal could mean that parks that are already doing well – for example, having large numbers of volunteers, a good location and suitable facilities for income generation through events and sponsorship – will get the most income under the new proposals, whereas those in less affluent areas or in a poorer state of repair will suffer.</p>
5	Governance and Decision-Making	<p>People stressed the need for transparent decision-making, having clear parameters for assessing whether applications for events, sponsorship and so forth should be approved, and balancing community interests with the need to generate income to run the parks estate efficiently and sustainably. Another question raised was how the community and existing groups will fit into this. When discussing the role “community values” should play in the proposed charitable trust’s board of directors’ decision-making, many people acknowledged the difficulties of mapping these values, since Newcastle contains many communities with different values that may conflict. They suggested that the proposed charitable trust should involve communities in a large-scale exercise to map out what matters to them.</p> <p>Many people raised questions about how to ensure that a new trust is accountable to residents and other stakeholders. Some appeared to be happy with a governance model resembling the National Trust model (more “top-down” decision-making), recognising that participatory decision-making can be lengthy and could impede the proposed charitable trust in achieving its objectives. Others saw the creation of a parks charitable trust as an opportunity to revive democratic decision-making. They wanted to see the running of parks structured in ways that put volunteers and communities at the centre of decision making. The decision-making process used by the Allotments Working Group was suggested several times as a good potential participatory model for the proposed charitable trust.</p>

No	Theme	Summary
6	Conservation	Several participants stressed that not all parks are the same in terms of the wildlife and different ecosystems they support, that biodiversity is very important and that, conservation should be a key priority for the proposed charitable trust.
7	Allotments	People were uncertain about whether the proposed charitable trust should contain allotments, and why they were included for consideration. Allotments were generally seen as quite different to parks in that they are not free-to-access public spaces. Many people thought that the proposals offered an opportunity to promote include food-growing activities and skills in parks, perhaps even repurposing some areas of parkland, but they did not want implementation of the proposals to have a negative impact on allotments and allotment holders.
8	Public Health and Wellbeing Benefits	People had a generally high level of recognition and respect for parks as having significant health and wellbeing benefits. Many people drew a direct link between prioritising wildlife, aesthetic values and environmental conservation activities, and protecting the public health benefits of parks.
9	Volunteers	Volunteers are seen as bringing a high added value to the running and maintenance of parks. People recognised the potential to increase their numbers by offering volunteering opportunities to more diverse communities and individuals, as well as providing opportunities to volunteer in different parks, should volunteers want to do this. There were mixed views about mobile volunteering and skills accreditation schemes. People acknowledge that for some volunteers this could be appealing, but for others it would be off-putting. They suggested that such schemes should be provided on a voluntary basis only.
10	Education	Participants saw educational opportunities and activities as one of the benefits parks provide, including both formal and informal education. These are seen as opportunities that should be open and accessible to all. People were therefore cautious about the idea of income generation of educational activities in parks, feeling that these should not be profit-making activities.

Phase 1 – Have Your Say Online, and stakeholder letters

We can summarise the findings from the Let's Talk Newcastle online consultation, meeting notes and stakeholder letters as follows:

- Their **two main priorities** for parks and allotments were to generate income to keep them maintained (**28%** of those taking part said this), and for community groups to have priority for usage (**25%**).
- When asked to comment about **future priorities** for parks and allotments in Newcastle, the following topics were mentioned most often: that parks should be free to access, there is a need to generate income to maintain them, that protecting biodiversity and wildlife should be a priority, and that community groups should have priority for parks usage.
- **Children and young people** said that the main reason parks exist is “for people to play in them”, and they also thought that this was the main reason why people in general go to parks. When asked what the most important aspects of parks were to them, children and young people replied “play equipment”, “grass and plants” and “being able to play football”. They thought that the **following aspects of parks could be better**: “more equipment”, “less litter”, and “maintenance”. When asked “what could a park do for you?” the most common responses are “to get more fresh air”, “it’s a place to go” and “to make friends and socialise”.
- People’s **main concern** about the future of parks and allotments in Newcastle was that all parks would fall into a state of disrepair and become unsafe: **39%** of respondents said this.
- When asked to comment about **their concerns** for the future of parks and allotments, the main topics from respondents’ comments were that green spaces are important for physical and mental wellbeing and they were concerned that this could be lost, that parks could decline and become “no-go” areas, and that all the issues listed in the question are relevant concerns.
- People made the following suggestions about possible **positive outcomes** from the proposal to create a charitable trust to run Newcastle’s parks and allotments: that parks could be kept clean and well-maintained, that they could be safeguarded for the future, and that parks could have better facilities.
- They said that they had the following **additional concerns**: that parks will become too commercial in appearance, and whether the trust would be able to generate enough income to sustain itself and preserve the parks.
- Their suggestions for **improving the proposal further** included ensuring community engagement at all stages if it is implemented, that there protect nature and biodiversity must be a part of this, and that not everyone is clear about what exactly is being proposed.



2. One young person's illustration of what parks are for

Phase 2 – Let's Talk Parks Website, Workshops and Twitter Hours

We can summarise the findings from the Let's talk Parks Workshops and Twitter Hours as follows:

- 1. Where should the money come from?** Participants came up with a wide range of suggestions for generating income, were concerned about ensuring that income generation fitted what they called the “ethos of the parks”, and wanted to see a robust mechanism for scrutinising how income is generated, and full-time staff employed to oversee it.
- 2. Car parks** – When asked about the possibility of generating income from car parking charges, people's views were mixed, but most were against the idea of creating new car parking spaces on existing park land. They suggested that charging for existing car parking spaces and ring-fencing the resulting income for parks improvements would be an acceptable alternative.
- 3. Events** – When asked “would you have more events in parks?”, many people commented that this could be an effective way of raising income, and that there were already examples of this working well, such as the Mela and Heaton Community Festival. However, there were also major concerns over the environmental implications of events, such as noise and litter, and also whether generating income from events meant that some parks would receive more income than others. Another concern was whether having too many commercial events would change the “feel” of the parks as a non-commercial space in Newcastle. People said that if this goes ahead, there should be a system for effective events management, and for equitable distribution of income from events among all the parks.
- 4. Sponsorship, leasing and licensing** – People had mixed views when asked if raising funds through increasing business sponsorship of parks facilities, and leasing businesses to operate them, would be a good way forward. Some did think that advertising and sponsorship, especially from local businesses, would be good way to generate income. However, ethical and aesthetic issues were raised by many participants. Some participants felt that this would spoil the experience of visiting the parks and lead to partial privatisation. They commented that the proposed charitable trust would need to have a robust system for assessing proposed advertising and sponsorship, and for equitably distributing the resulting income.
- 5. Trading** – When asked “how much do you think trading should be guided by community values?” respondents generally strongly supported the view that community values, such as promoting health and wellbeing, should be the main guiding factor in trading decisions. Several of them argued that this was integral to the parks' long-term future, as if people felt that parks were not being run in accordance with these values (including trading) they would be less willing to visit them. However, others were concerned to strike a balance between this and the need to generate income. Another issue was how to resolve a situation where community values might conflict with each other, whether it would be possible to have one set of “community values” covering all the parks, and how to avoid making decision-making too unwieldy.

Priorities

- 6. What activities parks should support, and health hubs** – How could a Parks Charitable Trust contribute to increasing community health, education and wellbeing, and what should parks prioritise: health and wellbeing, or wildlife and conservation? Many participants felt that both of these options should be priorities, that different parks and areas within them vary in terms of how well they are suited to promoting these priorities, and that contact with nature is very beneficial for health and wellbeing. Several people made suggestions for how to promote both of these outcomes, such as having “green gyms” in parks, and “zoning” the parks to create areas dedicated to different priorities.
- 7. Education** – Views on whether parks should charge groups who use the park for educational reasons were mixed. Some participants did favour this, but others were strongly opposed to the idea. One view was that the creation of the proposed charitable trust was an opportunity to emphasise the educational value of parks for people of all ages, and think about how this could form part of a strategy for the future. People made several suggestions about how educational activities could be funded, such as grant applications, asking for donations, partnership working with schools and businesses, and developing educational resources that could be charged for.

Structure

- 8. Decision-making and community values:** We asked our respondents to think about this question: “Decisions in a Parks Charitable Trust would be made by trustees and directors, but how this works and how the trust’s decisions are made are very important questions. How closely should the proposed parks charitable trust stick to the values of local communities?” Many participants commented that it was very important for the proposed charitable trust’s decision-making to be open, transparent and publicly accountable. Some saw this as an opportunity to clearly articulate what people in Newcastle value most about parks, and establish these value as a basis for decision-making. Others were concerned to ensure that the views of all park stakeholders were heard, and that groups with special interests or the “loudest voices” did not dominate decisions.
- 9. Board of directors and prioritisation** – When required, which should the board of directors prioritise: income generation, or community ownership? Whilst most respondents felt that community ownership should be the priority, people were realistic about the need for some income generation to preserve the parks, and that sometimes the board would need to strike a balance between the two. Accountability was a major concern, who commented that Newcastle City Council, as the current parks manager, can be held accountable through the electoral system, whereas a charitable trust could not be. Having suitable representation on the board – for example, for local residents and community organisations – and a robust process of engagement were suggested as ways of ensuring the boards’ decision-making strikes the right balance.
- 10. Allotments** – Should allotments be included in the proposed charitable trust? Some participants thought this could lead to greater income generation and opportunities for skills-sharing. However, others were concerned that allotments could be seen as a means of generating income for parks, and allotment holders would suffer rent rises. They also felt that the allotment model of “paid membership” and the parks model of “free access for all” would not work well together. Many participants expressed the view that allotments are not public land, are very different to parks, and have different

interests. People suggested that affiliating allotments to the proposed charitable trust, or the two working in partnership with allotments remaining independent, could be a possible way forward.

11. Decision-making and community involvement – We asked people to consider the question: “On one hand, deep community involvement ensures parks reflect the wishes of communities, but on the other, this can take time, money and be difficult to organise across the city. How should communities be involved in decision-making?” People had mixed views, with some favouring direct community involvement in all decisions, and others saying “it depends”. One concern was that whilst many people strongly supported this in principle, they were concerned about how to prevent decision-making either being “hijacked” by some groups or becoming too slow and inefficient. Another issue is how the proposed charitable trust would resolve a situation where different communities had conflicting values and priorities.

Volunteering

12. What role should volunteers play in parks? Some people took the view that creating a charitable trust would be an opportunity to formally recognise the importance of volunteers in maintaining and running parks, acknowledge their contribution, and perhaps encourage more volunteers who are children and young people, students, or on corporate volunteering schemes. Participants' concerns included the following: whether volunteers actually wanted to be more involved in running parks than they already are, that skilled paid staff would need to be involved, and that not all parks attract volunteers equally.

13. Should volunteering be mobile across the city? This suggestion divided opinion. Some people thought that this could help to solve the problem that not all parks attract equal levels of volunteering, and that it could allow volunteers a chance to see other parts of the city and learn new skills. Others commented that it could put people off volunteering as many people feel a connection to their local park and want to only volunteer in it, and whether the complexities of co-ordinating mobile volunteering would cause more work than it would save. One suggestion was that incentives for volunteering could help to attract more “mobile” volunteers.

14. Should volunteers earn accreditation and qualifications for learning skills? Again, views were mixed. Some people were in favour of this, citing how it could provide training and development opportunities, and help people in the city improve their employability. Another possible advantage was that it could increase the skills available to maintain parks. However, other people thought that this could put volunteers off, as some people do not want to do this and want to volunteer to escape the “pressure to achieve”. They thought that both skills accreditation and mobile volunteering should be optional.

15. Organising – We asked whether people thought that the proposed charitable trust should coordinate all parks volunteers across the city. Some people were in favour of this idea, seeing it as a way to maximise efficient use of volunteering hours and that it would help to solve the issue that not all parks attract equal levels of volunteering. However, other participants thought that this would be too bureaucratic, and that local organisations such as “Friends Of” groups were better placed to respond to local needs.

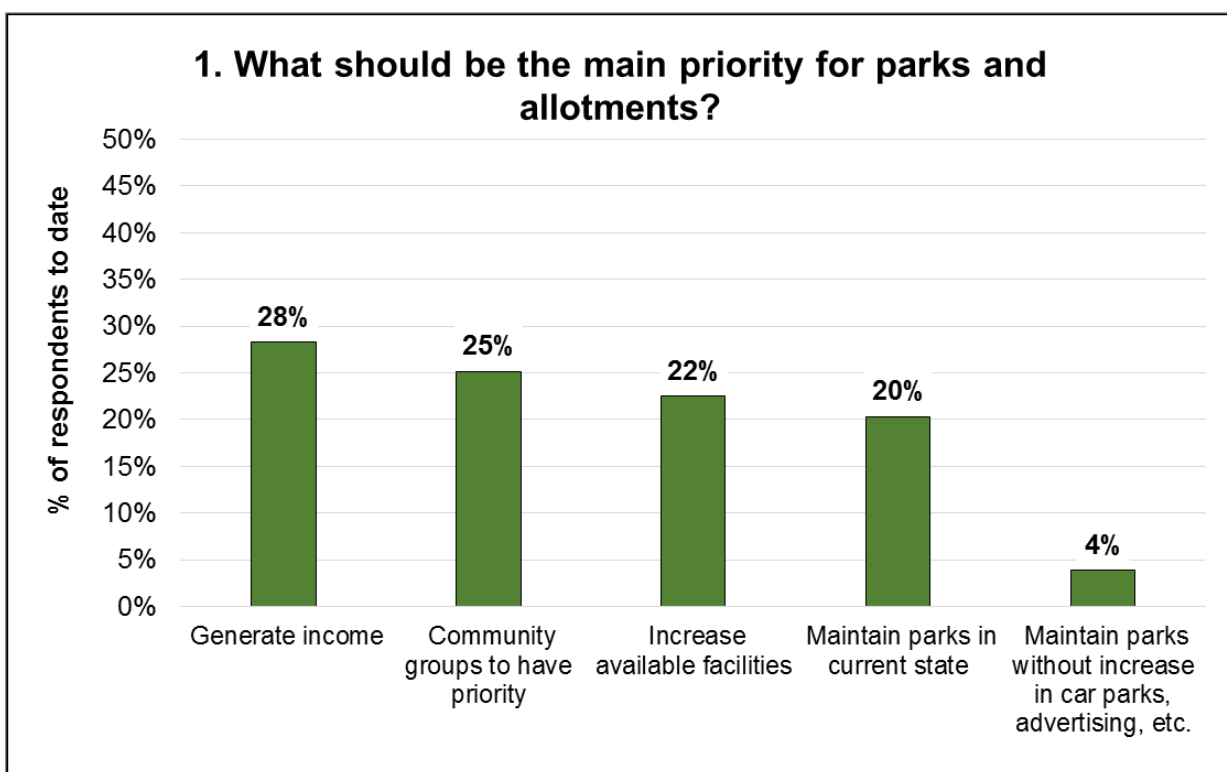
4. Phase 1 – Have Your Say Online, and stakeholder letters

During this phase of the consultation we explored more general issues relating to the future of Newcastle's parks and allotments, and how the proposals for a charitable trust could affect this. We asked about people's main concerns and priorities, what they thought could be a positive outcome if the proposals were implemented, and how they thought the proposals could be improved.

416 people took part in the online survey on Let's talk Newcastle online, 163 children and young people took part in several events held especially for them, and we received 47 emails and stakeholder letters during Phase 1 of the consultation. This section presents what we learned from Phase 1.

1. What do you think should be the main priority for how parks and allotments are run in future?

We asked people to consider what their main priority for parks and allotments would be, asking them to choose only one. As is shown in the chart, the most common answer was "generate income to keep parks and allotments maintained" (28% of everyone who answered this question), followed by "Ensure that community groups, not commercial organisations, have priority for using the parks". 414 people answered this question (note that not everyone who took part in the online survey answered every question).



2. What do you want to tell us about what the main priority, or priorities, should be for Newcastle's parks and allotments?

We asked whether people had comments about this, or found it difficult to choose just one priority. 246 people made comments. The “top four” topics they raised were:

- Parks should be free to access (31 people)
- Need to generate income to maintain the parks (26 people)
- Prioritise protecting biodiversity and wildlife (25 people)
- Community groups should have priority for parks usage (25 people)

The main topics from their comments – those mentioned by more than five people – are shown in the table below. Another 230 topics were raised in people's comments, many of which were related to the main topics. For example, in addition to the 25 people who prioritised “protecting biodiversity and wildlife”, others raised the issues of “Ancient woodland must be preserved” (three people), and “Wildlife and ecological monitoring should have been included as an option” (one person). A full list of all comments and topics is available on request.

2. What do you want to tell us about your main priorities for Newcastle's Parks and Allotments?	Number of people
Parks should be free to access	31
There is a need to generate income to maintain parks	26
We should prioritise protecting biodiversity and wildlife	25
Community groups should have priority for parks usage	25
There is a need to balance income generation and prioritising community groups	19
We should generate income by holding events, or asking for sponsorship	16
I do not want to see advertising in parks	13
People's health will suffer without parks	10
The current state of repair of parks is not good enough, this should be improved	10
Parks should not be exploited for commercial gain	9
Parks should be an escape from the urban landscape	7
I cannot choose just one priority, there is a need to balance all of them	7
We must ensure that events do not limit access to areas of the parks	6
The parks need better facilities	6
Commercial sponsorship should be in line with the ethos of parks	6
<i>Other topics (mentioned by 5 or fewer people)</i>	230

Comments included:

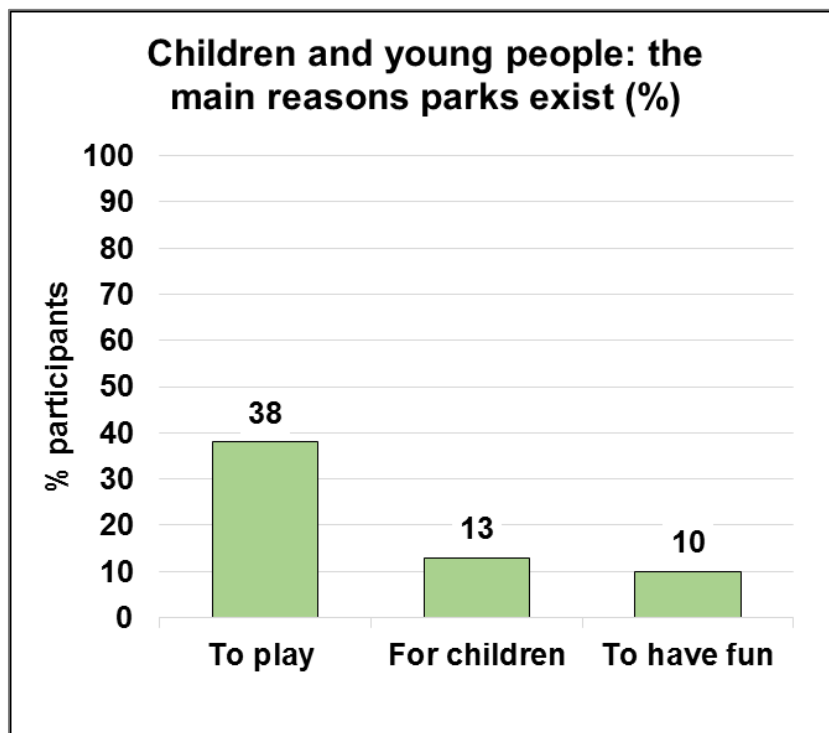
“Several of the options are important, but the main thing is to keep the parks open and free to residents. If money-making concerns have to be introduced, so be it. But then it's up to the public whether or not to purchase the goods or services on offer.”

What are children and young people's priorities for parks?

Consultation with young people took place on a number of days until 22 April 2017, at the following locations:

- Farndale Park
- Walker Park
- Gosforth Park
- Elswick Park
- Nun's Moor Park
- Newcastle School for Girls.

163 children and young people aged between 3-16 years old took part; the largest number were aged between 8-10 (51 out of 163 – 31%).

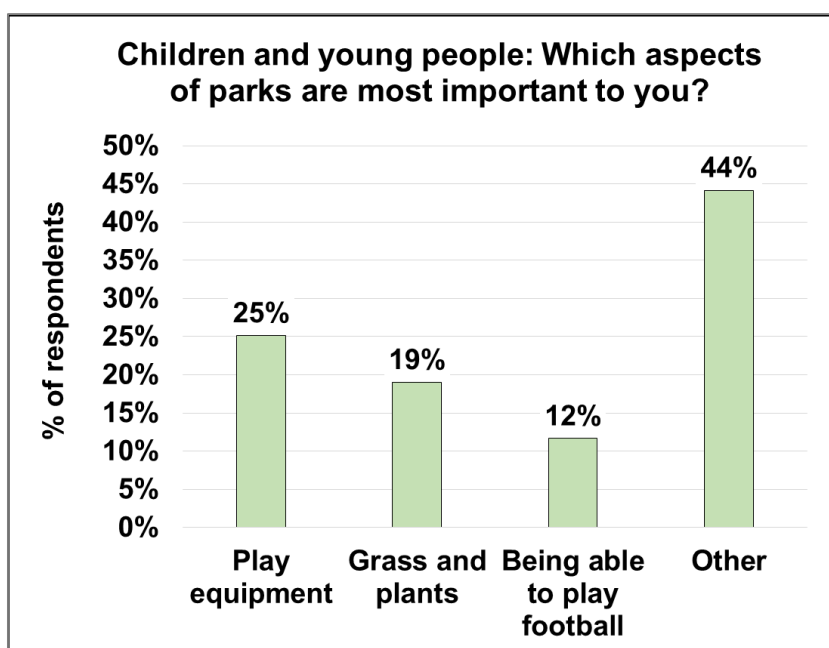


The most common responses from children and young people attending the Children and Young People's Parks Consultation said that the **main reasons parks exist** is "to play" (62 children and young people said this – **38%**), "for children" (21 responses – **13%**) and "to have fun" (17 responses – **10%**). They also thought that these were the **main reasons why people in general go to parks**. Some young people illustrated their thoughts about parks, as shown below!

When asked what the **most important aspects of parks** were to them, children and young people replied:

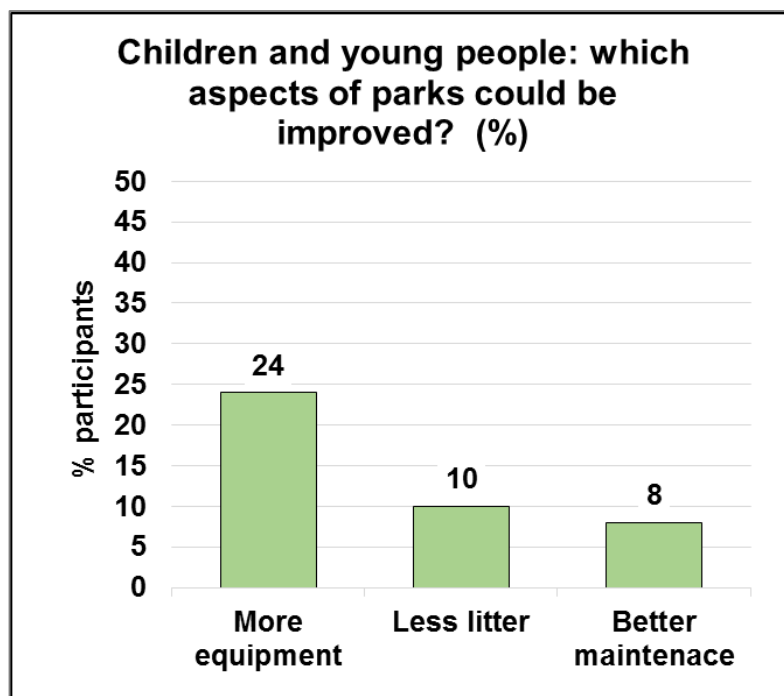
- Play equipment (41 responses)
- Grass and plants (31 responses)
- Being able to play football (19 responses).

The percentages are shown in the chart on the right.



They thought that the following **aspects of parks could be better** (percentages shown in the chart):

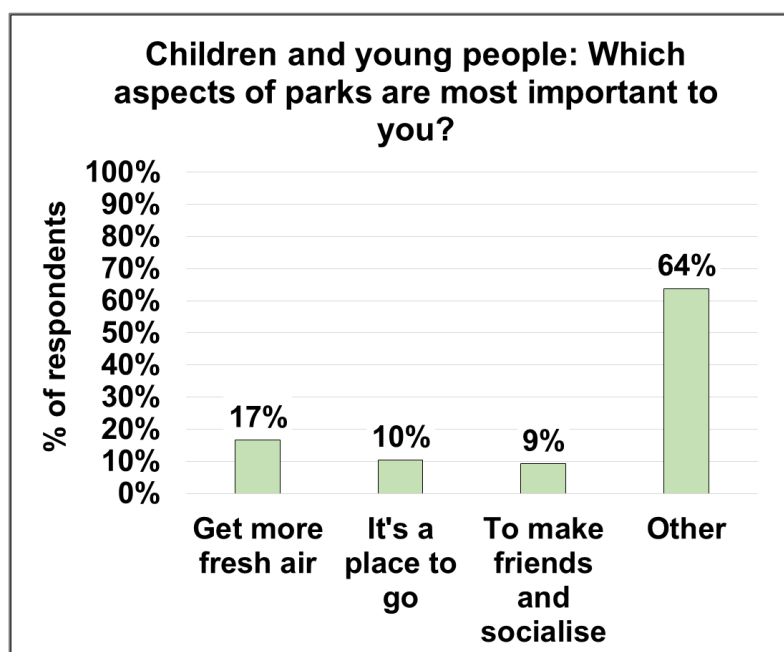
- more equipment (39 responses)
- less litter (16 responses)
- maintenance (13 responses).



When asked “**what could a park do for you?**”, the most common responses are (percentages shown in the chart):

- Get more fresh air (27 responses)
- It's a place to go (17 responses)
- To make friends and socialise (15 people).

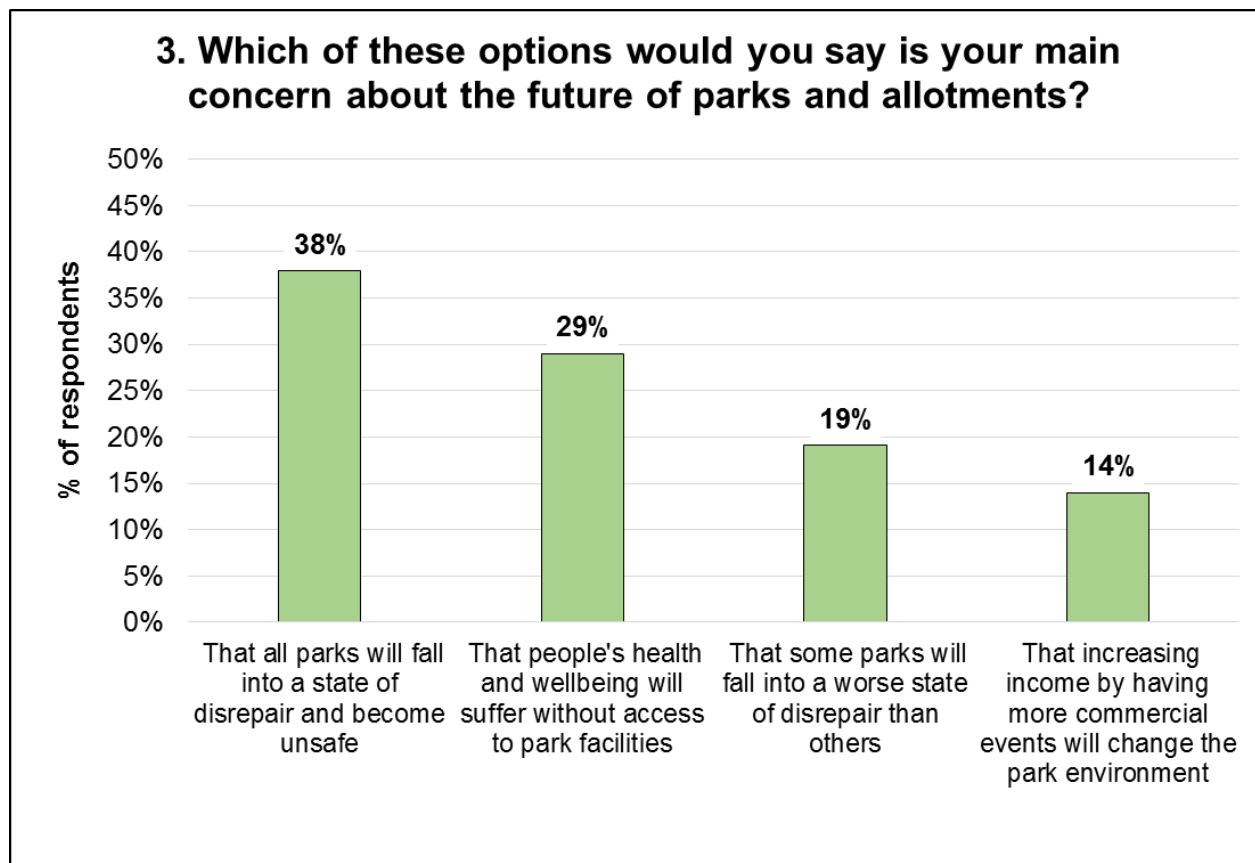
One young person's picture of what they liked about parks is shown below.



3. What is your main concern about the future of parks and allotments?

We asked people to consider what their main concern about the future of parks and allotments is, asking them to choose only one. As shown below, the most common answer was “that all parks will fall into a state of disrepair and become unsafe” (38% of respondents said this).

Again, 414 people answered this question.



We asked people taking part in the consultation to give us their comments about their concerns. An analysis is shown on the next page; some example of their comments are shown below:

“Parks are vital to give city dwellers some green space, space for kids to run around and for people to enjoy.”

“I have concerns that parkland will be built on for commercial gain, that existing parks will not be maintained, and that this will be detrimental to the community.”

4. What do you want to tell us about your main concern or concerns?

We asked whether people had comments about this, or found it difficult to choose just one concern. 217 people made comments. The main topics they raised were:

- Green spaces are important for physical and mental wellbeing (29 people said this)
- I am concerned that parks will decline and become "no-go" areas (22 people)
- All the issues listed in the question are relevant concerns (16 people)

The main topics from their comments – those mentioned by more than five people – are shown in the table below. Another 178 topics were raised in people's comments, many of which were related to the main topics. For example, in addition to people saying "Green spaces are important for physical and mental wellbeing", others raised the issues of "Maintaining parks indirectly pays for itself by improving health and community cohesion" (one person). A full list of all comments and topics is available on request.

4. What do you want to tell us about your concerns?	Number of people
Green spaces are important for people's physical and mental wellbeing	29
I am concerned that parks will decline and become "no-go" areas	22
All the issues listed in the question are relevant concerns	16
Some parks are already in a better state of repair than others	13
People's health and wellbeing will suffer without access to parks	12
I am concerned that commercial events could change the nature of the parks	11
The parks must remain free to access	10
I am concerned that the consultation questions do not allow people to choose more than one priority or concern	8
There is a need to generate income to keep parks maintained	8
I am concerned that some parks will end up in a worse state of repair than others	8
All the parks must receive equal resources	6
I am concerned that people on low incomes or living in deprived areas will not have access to good park facilities	6
We must encourage people to use sustainable transport to visit parks	6
My local park has declined	6
Some parks have been saved by volunteers	6
<i>Other topics (mentioned by 5 or fewer people)</i>	<i>178</i>

5. What do you think could be a positive outcome or outcomes from this proposal?

We asked what people thought could be a positive outcome or outcomes from the proposal to create a charitable trust to run Newcastle's parks and allotments. The main topics from their comments were:

- The parks could be kept clean and well-maintained (53 people said this)
- The parks could be safeguarded for the future (48 people)
- The parks could have better facilities (29 people)

The main topics from their comments – those mentioned by more than eight people – are shown in the table below. Another 230 topics were raised in people's comments, many of which were related to the main topics. For example, in addition to people saying "Parks could have better facilities", other comments included "Improved facilities for children" (five people). A full list of all comments and topics is available on request.

5. What do you think could be a positive outcome or outcomes from this proposal?	Number of people
The parks could be kept clean and well-maintained	53
The parks could be safeguarded for the future	48
The parks could have better facilities	29
The ability to be innovative when generating income	25
Communities being more involved in running parks	21
An increased use of parks	20
Continuing free access to the parks	18
The parks could protect and nurture wildlife	16
Increasing people's health and wellbeing	15
The parks could be safer places	13
More events could be held in parks	12
Communities to be more engaged with how parks are used	11
There could be more volunteering in parks	10
There would be the option to develop and improve the parks	9
The parks would be kept in council ownership	9
<i>Other comments (topics mentioned by 8 or fewer people)</i>	230

Comments included:

"A positive outcome would be for parks to be clean, well-maintained and have facilities such as toilets, play equipment, etc. without driving out the existing users via rent increases or other financial penalties."

"We need to raise awareness that parks and landscapes don't look after themselves, they cost money to preserve – and we need to really value them for now and invest for future generations."

6. Do you have any other concerns about this proposal?

We asked if people had other concerns about the proposal to create a charitable trust to run Newcastle's parks and allotments. 257 people gave their views, and the main topics in their comments were:

- I am concerned that parks will become too commercial in appearance (38 people)
- Will the trust be able to generate enough income to sustain itself? (13 people)

The main topics from their comments – those mentioned by more than four people – are shown in the table below. Another 291 topics were raised in people's comments, many of which were related to the main topics. For example, in addition to people saying "Will the trust be able to generate enough income to sustain itself?", other comments included "If the trust fails, will there be arrangements to transfer the running of parks back to the Council?" (three people). A full list of all comments and topics is available on request.

6. Do you have any other concerns about this proposal?	Number of people
I am concerned that parks will become too commercial in appearance	38
Will the trust be able to generate enough income to sustain itself?	13
I am concerned that commercialisation of parks will lead to people on low incomes being less able to access them	9
I am concerned that biodiversity and wildlife will suffer	9
I am concerned that park space will be sold to developers	9
There is not enough detail provided about how this would work	8
I am concerned that some parks will be less able than others to generate income	7
I am concerned that park rangers and existing parks staff will not keep their jobs	6
I feel that the Council is trying to avoid its responsibility for parks	6
That parks in deprived areas will decline	6
That all the parks will decline	6
I do not want to see any park space used for car parking	6
I fear that the proposals are part of a privatisation agenda	5
I fear the proposed charitable trust will be less accountable than the Council	5
I am concerned that parks would no longer be free to access	5
<i>Other comments (topics mentioned by 4 or fewer people)</i>	<i>291</i>

Comments included:

"I do not feel that enough emphasis is placed in your 'core values' on the importance of wildlife in the parks. All our parks, even those embedded in high-density population centres, act as vital wildlife corridors and reserves."

"What if the trust can't manage to run the parks? Who will look after these vital facilities?"

7. Do you have any suggestions about how we could improve the proposal?

When asked if they had any suggestions about how we could improve the proposal, 217 people gave their views. The main topics in their comments were:

- The proposed charitable trust must ensure community engagement (16 people said this)
- We need to protect nature and biodiversity (13 people)
- I am not clear about what is being proposed (9 people)

The main topics from their comments – those mentioned by more than three people – are shown in the table below. Another 279 topics were raised in people's comments, many of which were related to the main topics. For example, in addition to people saying "It is not clear what is being proposed", other comments included "Need to provide more information alongside consultation questions" (three people). A full list of all comments and topics is available on request.

7. Do you have any suggestions about how we could improve the proposal?	Number of people
The proposed charitable trust must ensure community engagement	16
Need to protect nature and biodiversity	13
It is not clear what is being proposed	9
We should have a council tax parks precept	7
Parks are necessary for people's health and wellbeing	6
Provide more information about the proposals	6
Use public health budget to help fund parks	6
Promote events to raise funds and increase parks usage	5
All stakeholders should be represented on the board	4
Council should cut senior staff salaries and use savings for parks	4
Encourage people to volunteer	4
Make sure "Friends Of" groups are involved in this	4
Take action to prevent vandalism	4
<i>Other comments (topics mentioned by 3 or fewer people)</i>	279

Comments included:

"You need to find ways of including difficult to engage communities; you need to find avenues of communication which enable greater understanding of the resources available. I'm concerned that people without smart phones or internet access or email accounts are not going to be able to take part in this process."

"Parks are a natural environment. They provide green space for people and wildlife. More care needs to be taken of wildlife by leaving much more space as meadowland so that wild flowers can grow and butterflies and other creatures flourish."

5. Let's Talk Parks Workshops, Website and Twitter Hours

Let's Talk Parks and engagements

Let's Talk Parks is a way of engaging with city residents and park users to hear their ideas and concerns for the future of Newcastle's public parks and allotments, including their maintenance and service delivery. To do this we used workshops, Twitter Hour discussions and a web platform.

Developing the Let's Talk Parks process and content

The Let's Talk Parks process involved the development of scenarios and questions through a number of initial workshops delivered between March and December 2016. These workshops involved park rangers, park managers, parks volunteers, the Newcastle City Council Parks project team, local councilors and external organisations (the London-based Social Finance consultancy and the National Trust), who were tasked with helping the Newcastle City Council Parks Team develop a possible model for a future parks services delivery. From these initial workshops, and in collaboration with the Newcastle City Council Parks Team, four broad questions were selected:

1. Where should the money come from?
2. What activities should parks support?
3. How should decisions be made?
4. What role should volunteers play in parks?

The selection criteria for the four broad questions and the three related scenarios were as follows:

1. Questions inviting **critical and constructive** discussions around issues that presently concern public parks.
2. Questions reflecting the Parks Team's current thinking and **unresolved questions** in respect to what a possible Parks Charitable Trust could look like in practice.
3. Questions that would provide people with the opportunity to feed in constructive and **feasible directions** for a possible Parks Charitable Trust.

These questions and scenarios formed the basis for all the Let's Talk Parks strands of engagements that formed Phase 2 of the consultation: the workshops, Twitter Hours and the Let's Talk Parks website.

Let's Talk Parks workshops and kit

The Let's Talk Parks Workshop was designed as a board game- style process to support the structuring of discussions around the four broad questions within teams of five people.

As part of the Let's Talk Parks workshop process, teams were first invited to do a team-building activity that involved constructing a park bench, and sharing their personal values relating to public parks (an image of the "park bench" tool is shown on the right).



Then each team was invited to examine a question of their choice at a time, share personal ideas in response to the question, and then formulate a collective response. Each team was invited to include differences of opinions in a collective response. Each team was encouraged to examine between four to six question cards during the workshop. At the end of the workshop, each team was invited to share their main ideas and these were discussed with the rest of the teams.



Ten workshops, hosting a maximum of 25 people each, were delivered in different locations in the city. Images of the kit used to guide discussions are shown on the right.



Let's Talk Parks Twitter Hours

Held on Wednesdays at 7pm between 15 March and 5 April, these four hour-long debates were hosted by @NCLTalkParks and used the hashtag #NewcastleParks. Each Twitter discussion focused on a different question and provided opportunities to take part in polls which posed questions about alternative futures for Newcastle's parks.

Designed to provoke discussion and debate around questions around **income generation, volunteering, park activities** and **governance**, each Twitter hour was divided into smaller questions that focussed in more detail upon specific aspects of one of the larger questions.

These questions were supported by live polls, where members of the public could vote on possible park futures. At the end of each Twitter hour, the results of the polls were tallied, and summarised in the form of a closing statement. In this way, the decisions made by participants in the hour were reflected back to those who had taken part and observed the online discussion, to provoke further debate.

Let's Talk Parks Website

The 'Explore' section of the Let's Talk Parks website provided ways for members of the public to contribute further responses, ideas and concerns around the topics as well as act as a repository for opinions and ideas gathered across Twitter discussions and workshops. The platform also provided the opportunity to cast votes on each of the questions posed as well as vote up or down people's comments, ideas and concerns published on the platform. We asked people attending the workshops to think about the following topics:

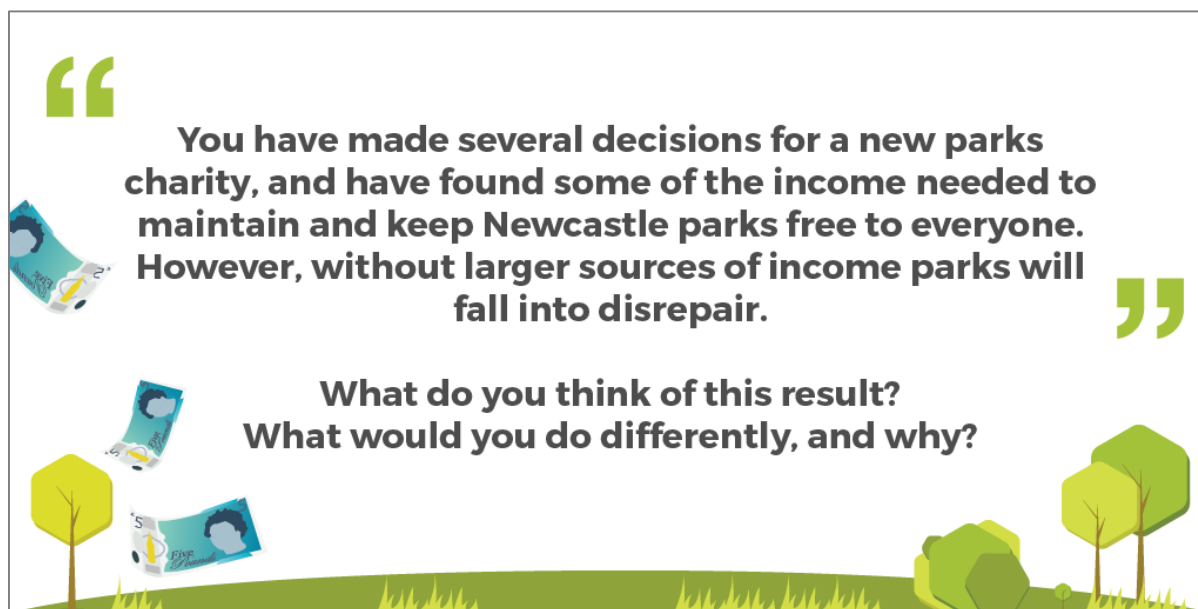
- Funding and income
- Activities and priorities
- Governance and structure
- Volunteering

Funding and income

We asked workshop and Twitter Hour participants to comment on the following issues in relation to the funding of parks, and income generation:

- Where should the money come from?
- Should car parking be used as a source of income?
- Should events be used as a source of income?
- Should business sponsorship, advertising and leasing facilities be used as a source of income?
- How much do you think trading should be guided by community values?

The outcome of the Twitter Hour discussion on funding is shown below:



1. Where should the money come from?

We asked attendees at workshops to consider the following question: “A Parks Charitable Trust would need new sources of income, which would be reinvested in our parks and allotments. But there are many ways it could do this. **How do you think a parks charitable trust should generate income?**” Workshops on this topic took place at:

- City Library
- Civic Centre (two workshops)
- Gosforth Trinity Church
- Leazes Park
- Jesmond Dene (two workshops), and
- Staff working at Jesmond Dene

The workshop attendees considered this question, as did people commenting via the Let's talk Parks website and Twitter discussions. Around **160** people in total gave their views. Their thoughts were:

What people thought could be a positive outcome of the proposals, including ideas for sources of income: Several attendees commented that funding would need to come from a mixture of sources. They suggested:

- **Car park charges:** Whilst increasing car parking space is controversial, charging for existing car parking spaces was mentioned by a few participants as a possible source of income for parks.
- **Charging for use of parks:** It was suggested that we could charge for the use of parks for the following activities: conferences, exhibitions, green gyms, fund-raising events, dog training, building hire, Forest Schools, fitness activities such as bootcamps, children's holiday play schemes, pop-up shops, and weddings.
- **Corporate social responsibility:** One suggestion for how parks could generate income was by setting up a scheme to enable larger businesses to offset their carbon emissions by funding planting in parks.
- **Donations and legacies:** Staff suggested asking for donations, perhaps even legacies. Memorial trees were also suggested.
- **Endowments:** Attendees suggested that a core amount of finance could come from an endowment from Newcastle City Council.
- **Events:** Festivals and food markets were suggested as ways to generate income.
- **Facilities:** Cafes and restaurants were suggested as ways of increasing both income and visitor numbers. Pet's Corner in Jesmond Dene was also mentioned; could people be encouraged to sponsor animals? Another question was whether hydroelectric power could be generated in some parks with suitable geography.
- **Fines:** One suggestion was that fines from companies who pollute the environment or dump rubbish could be used to maintain parks.
- **Grants and Heritage Lottery funding:** Some participants felt that a charitable trust might be more successful in applying for grants and Heritage Lottery funding to keep parks maintained.
- **Holiday lets:** Jesmond Dene staff mentioned this as a source of income.
- **Jesmond Dene Nurseries:** Reinvesting the proceeds of the sale of Jesmond Dene Nurseries into parks was a suggestion made by some participants.

- **Lottery and Membership schemes:** People suggested setting up a lottery to fund parks, or having a membership scheme where members would pay an annual subscription to support the parks.
- **Public funds:** Some people asked if parks could be at least partly funded through a council tax precept, local authority contracts, or Council subsidy?
- **Sponsorship:** Seeking sponsorship from local and national businesses. One member of staff commented “we could offer up space for sponsorship to local businesses, have ‘Tesco Pet’s Corner’ – it’s only a name!”
- **Trading:** Selling products and plants to raise income was suggested.

What people do not want to see:

- **Charging for parks access:** Parks being “free to all” was a value many people expressed support for.
- **Exclusion:** Related to the topic above, many people did not want to see forms of income generation that “create social segregation or exclusion”.
- **Health charging:** Several people also said that they did not want to see not-for-profit health and well-being- related events being charged for using the parks.
- **Schools** or other educational organisations should not be charged for using the parks, in the eyes of many people who took part.
- **Sponsorship** from companies whose values and ethics are not thought to be in line with the “ethos of parks”. In this context, companies selling tobacco, alcohol and soft drinks were mentioned.

How this could work:

Participants made the following suggestions:

- A **mechanism** for assessing sponsorship applications. Participants wanted this to be able to exclude any applications felt not to be in line with the “ethos of the parks”, and to be robust enough to exclude the possibility of legal challenge to the outcomes of decisions.
- Employing full-time **staff** with all the necessary skills to assess funding applications and income generation proposals, such as fund-raising, facilities management, and events management.



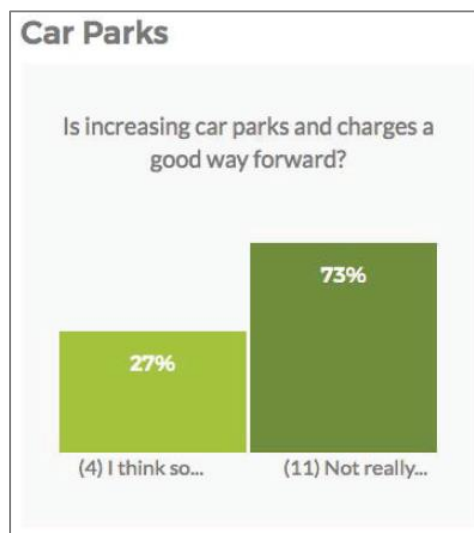
2. Car Parks

We asked attendees at workshops to consider the following question: “Car parks could be a way of securing a reliable source of income for a future parks charitable trust. Car parking could be expanded on selected sites and charges implemented. What would you do?” Workshops on this topic took place at:

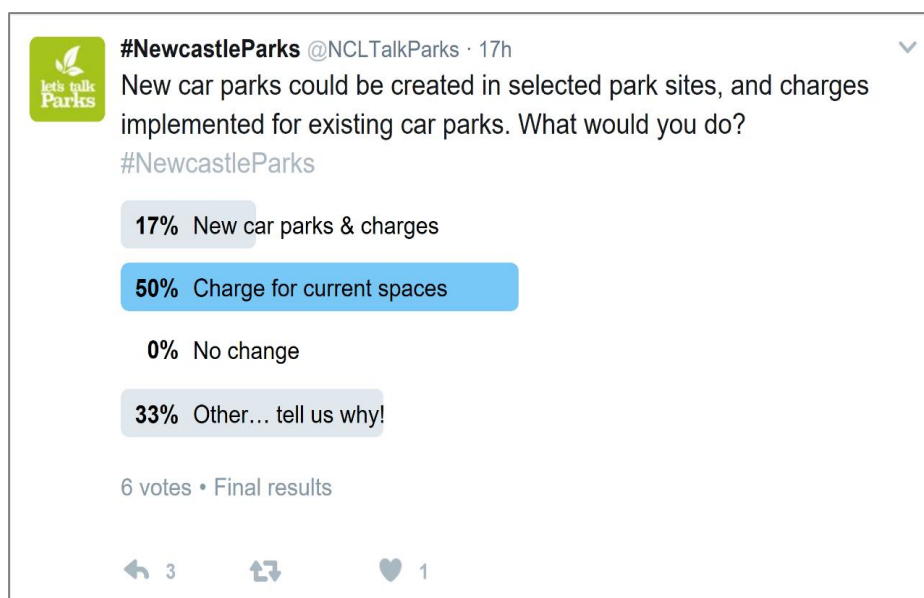
- The City Library
- Civic Centre (two workshops)
- Gosforth Trinity Church
- Leazes Park
- Newburn
- Jesmond Dene (two workshops)
- Staff working at Jesmond Dene.

The workshop attendees considered this question, as did people commenting via the Let's talk Parks website and Twitter discussions. Around **177** people in total gave their views. Their thoughts are shown in the table on the next page.

The results of the Twitter Hour quick poll (six participants) are shown below, where the largest number of respondents said that we should change for current spaces. The chart above shows the results of a quick poll on the Let's talk Parks website about generating income through car parks, which 15 people took part in.



3. **Fifteen** people took part in this quick online poll



4. **Six** people took part in this quick Twitter poll.

What people thought could be positive outcomes:

- **Charging for existing spaces and ring-fencing:** Some participants were happy for existing car parks to continue to charge for use, and for the resulting income to be ring-fenced for improving parks.
- **Generating income:** Whilst few participants were happy with the idea of drastically increasing car parking spaces, several felt that charging for existing car parking spaces was an acceptable way to generate income to preserve the parks, especially since neighbouring local authorities often impose small parking charges at car parks near parks and green spaces.
- **Increasing existing charges:** Some participants wanted car parking charges to be increased as a way of generating ring-fenced income for parks, with explicit signage explaining this.
- **New spaces a possibility:** Creating new car parking spaces was an option some participants said could be considered, on the condition that they did not negatively impact on the experience of visiting the parks.
- **Sustainable travel:** Some people wanted parking charges to be introduced or increased to discourage people from driving to parks and encourage them to walk to their local parks.

Concerns: People were concerned about:

- **Air quality and climate change:** Suggestions about increasing car parking led to concerns that this would lead to poor air quality and increased carbon emissions, contributing to climate change.
- **Cost-effectiveness and management:** Some participants wondered if car parking charges would be cost-effective, due to the costs of emptying machines and patrolling parking spaces. They also asked if the proposed charitable trust would have staff with the necessary skills to manage traffic and parking in parks.
- **Driving through parks:** Vehicles driving through parks was something that several participants were unhappy with, as they felt this is causing safety issues.
- **Health:** Health impacts, both from air pollution and from people travelling by car rather than using active transport such as cycling or walking, was an issue raised by several people.
- **No more car parking spaces in parks:** Many participants did not want to see any more car parking spaces created in or near the parks.
- **No more car parking spaces in the city:** Several participants did not want to see any more car parking spaces created within the city as a whole.
- **Wildlife:** Some people were concerned at the potential impact on wildlife of increasing car parking spaces, and potentially traffic.

How this could work: People made the following suggestions:

- **Cycling:** One suggestion was to think about how parks could be connected up via cycle routes.
- **Disability and older persons' parking:** Some people wanted free disabled access parking to be provided, and one person suggested an older person's exemption for car park charges.
- **Donations:** One suggestion was to introduce donation boxes in car parks.

- **Healthier transport and sustainable transport:** Linked to the above, a common view was that the city (i.e. the council and the proposed charitable trust) should encourage people to travel to parks using more sustainable transport, such as public transport, minibuses for groups, walking and cycling. One comment was that people should be encouraged to walk to their local parks, not travel by car to others further away.
- **Impact assessments:** Participants wanted any proposed changes to car parking to undergo an impact assessment, including looking at the effects they would have on local residents. For example, assessing whether creating new car parking spaces would increase traffic volume near parks, or whether removing some existing parking would increase the numbers of park visitors leaving their cars in nearby streets. They stated that the council and the proposed charitable trust would need to work closely together on this issue. Impact on wildlife, including the possibility of migrating wildlife to new areas, was also raised as an issue.
- **Land use:** One suggestion was that new car parking spaces should only be introduced if suitable land is available near the park, so that existing park land is not lost. Another suggestion was creating more underground car parking.
- **Removing car parking spaces:** Some participants wondered if existing car parking spaces could be converted into green space.
- **Site assessments and strategy:** It was suggested that increasing car parking space should be considered on a case-by-case basis, as it was felt that some parks are more suitable than others for introducing more car parking spaces. Many participants wanted to see a transport plan for parks, balancing income generation with promoting sustainable transport.
- **Volunteers:** One suggestion was that Friends of the Parks members and parks volunteers should be able to use car parks for free.



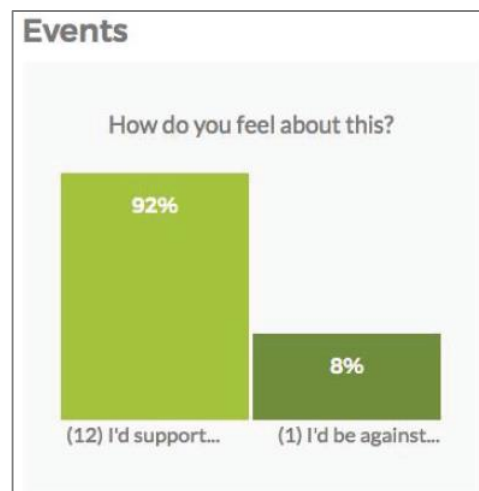
3. Events

We asked attendees at workshops to consider the following question: “More community groups and commercial events companies could organise events in Newcastle’s parks. This could provide a source of income through ticket sales and hiring of facilities. Events could offer new exciting outdoor entertainment, but potentially restrict park use for a limited time. Would you have more public events in parks?” Workshops on this topic took place at:

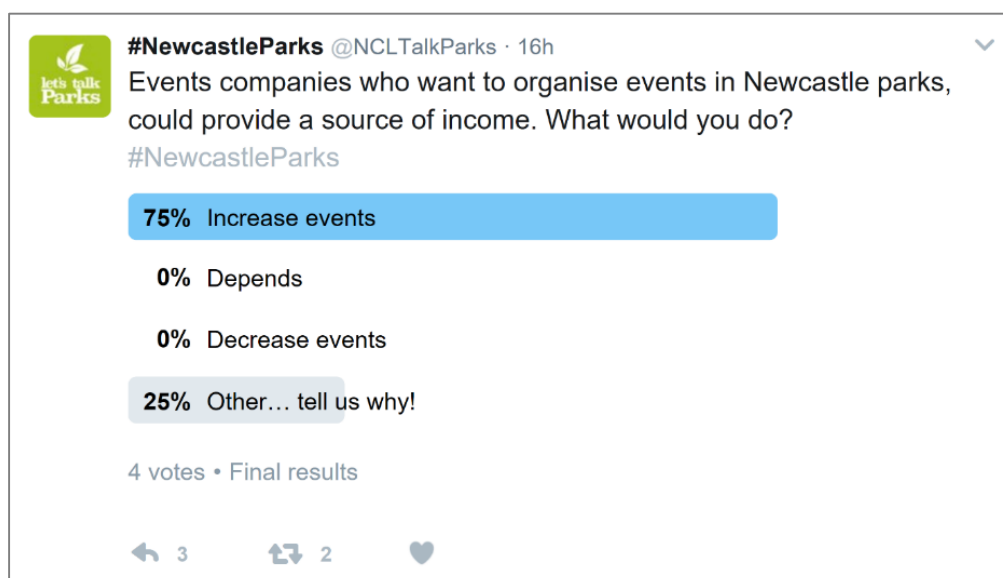
- The City Library
- Civic Centre (two workshops)
- Jesmond Dene (two workshops)

The workshop attendees considered this question, as did people commenting via the Let’s talk Parks website and Twitter discussions. Around **174** people in total gave their views. Their thoughts are shown in the table on the next page.

The chart above shows the results of a quick online Let’s talk Parks website poll (13 people took part) about generating income by holding events in parks. The results of the Twitter Hour quick poll of four people are shown below.



5. **Thirteen** people took part in this quick online poll



6. **Four** people took part in this quick online poll.

What people thought could be positive outcomes:

- **Community events:** People thought that “community events”, such as the Heaton Community Festival, were generally a good idea, as they encourage people to visit parks and feel a sense of ownership of them. Organised barbeques were mentioned as a possible option.
- **Comedy, arts, literature and music events:** These types of ticketed events were seen as a positive addition to parks by some participants. People mentioned the Hoppings, Newcastle Pride, the Mela and “Shakespeare in the Dene” as examples of events which work well.
- **Existing good practice:** Participants noted that some events, such as Parkruns, are already promoted in parks and that this indicates that having events in parks can work if they are carefully managed.
- **Income generation:** Some people felt that it was necessary to take a pragmatic approach by using carefully-managed events to generate the necessary funds for parks maintenance. Many of those who raised concerns about the possible impacts of events also suggested ways to mitigate them, such as limiting opening hours, and ensuring that only so many days per year can be used for events. Generally the idea of using events to generate income attracted a more positive response compared to other income generation proposals such as car parks and advertising – bearing in mind the concerns raised (see below).
- **Increased parks usage and smaller parks:** Events were seen as a possible way to increase parks usage. Locating them in smaller and less-well-used parks could be a way of encouraging visitors in these areas.

Concerns:

- **Access:** That events could limit access to parks was a concern mentioned by many participants. One person said that access for children and young people to areas of parks set out specifically for them, such as playgrounds, should not be limited by events.
- **Cost-effectiveness:** One concern was whether income generated by events would cover running costs; for example, paying for traffic management and litter clearing. Participants also asked about what would happen if an event made a loss, for example, due to poor weather?
- **Environmental issues – litter and noise:** The potential environmental impact of having more events in parks was an issue for many participant, who cited issues such as increased litter and possible noise nuisance for local residents caused by music events.
- **“Ethos of parks”:** Several participants raised the question of whether having more commercial events in parks would be consistent with the values that people consider them to embody, such as personal wellbeing, and escaping what people see to be the commercial environment of the city centre.
- **Inequality of income between parks:** One concern participants had was that some parks are more suitable than others for this form of income generation. For example, larger, centrally-located parks with facilities such as toilets and care are likely to be more attractive venues. Smaller parks which are in deprived neighbourhoods or located away from the city centre and public transport links, were considered to be less likely to attract this form of income, leading to their likely decline. Participants

were concerned at the possible cumulative negative impact on people living in these areas, where parks are often among relatively few public amenities.

- **Selecting the type of events:** The type of events that would be permitted was an issue raised by some participants, who said that events should be “carefully curated” to be in line with what people value about their parks.

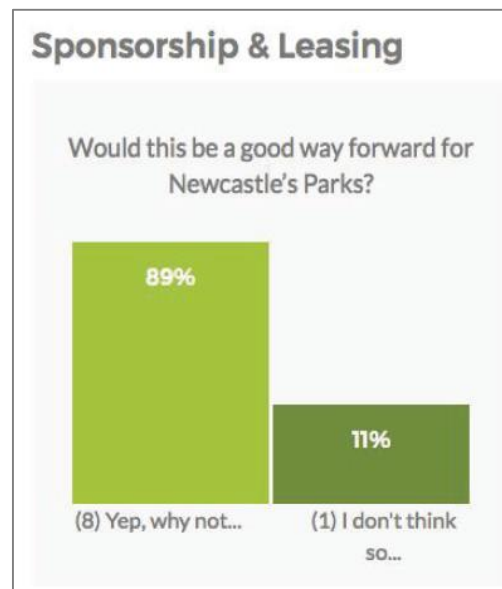
How this could work: People made the following suggestions:

- **Community events:** Participants supported continuing these events (such as the Heaton Community Festival) and keeping them free to access wherever possible.
- **Distribution of income:** To address the issue that some parks are less likely than others to attract this form of income generation, participants suggested that the proposed charitable trust should share events-related income among all parks.
- **Events Officer:** Employing an events officer to oversee and manage events in parks was suggested by several participants.
- **Limiting the duration of events:** A limit on the length of time an event can occupy park space was suggested (for example, less than a week).
- **Limiting the number of events:** Striking a balance between commercial events needing to occupy space in parks and maintaining community access to them was, for many participants, a necessary condition of using this form of income generation. Several people suggested that there should be a limit on the number of events permitted in each park in each year.
- **Limiting the amount of space available:** A limit on the amount of space within the parks that can be occupied by an event was recommended by several participants to ensure that free access to parks continues.
- **Types of events:** Participants mentioned a wide range of activities which they thought could take place in parks to generate income, such as arts events, music (including local bands), fairs, gardening classes, bootcamps, yoga, boats for hire, safe cycling for children, guided health walks and nature walks, tennis competitions, family fun days, jumble sales, car boot sales, Tai Chi, classes about nature, fitness classes and dog training. Some of these types of events and activities are already successfully running in some parks.
- **Waste management and environmental impact:** Participants thought that a waste management and environmental impact plan would be essential for events to be a viable form of income generation.
- **Zoning:** One suggestion was to divide parks into zones where different types of activities could take place.

4. Sponsorship, Leasing, Licensing and Advertising

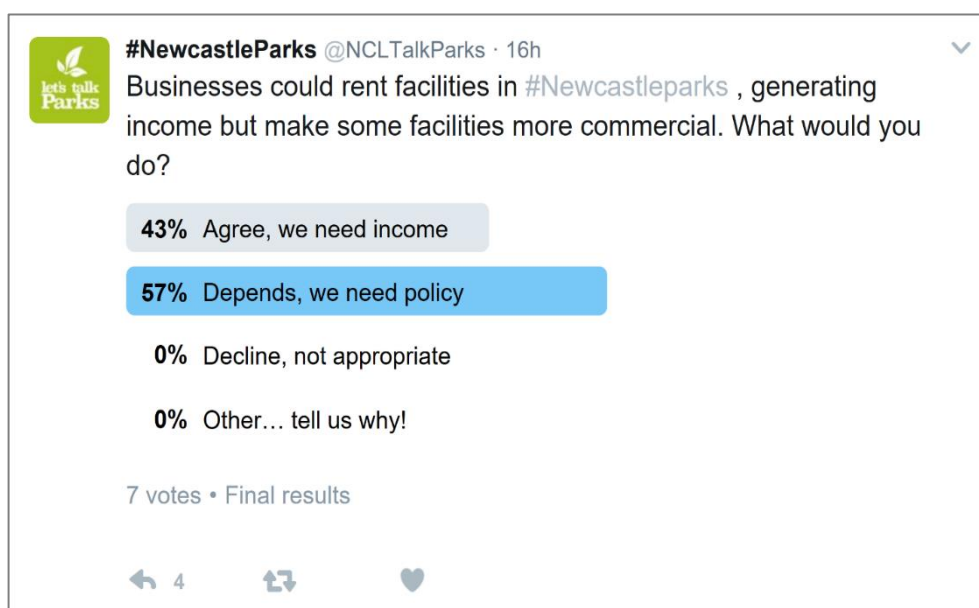
We asked attendees at workshops to consider the following question: “Newcastle City Council already receives sponsorship from businesses, and rents out facilities in parks to them. More of this could raise more money to help ensure park facilities do not fall into disrepair. However, commercial operations may charge for services, and businesses may want to put adverts in the parks. Would this be a good way forward for Newcastle’s parks?” Workshops on this topic took place at:

- The City Library
- Civic Centre
- Gosforth Trinity Church
- Jesmond Dene
- Newburn
- Leazes Park



7. **Nine** people took part in this quick online poll

Around **156** people took part via the Let's talk Parks website, Twitter discussions and at workshops. The chart above shows the results of a quick online Let's talk Parks website poll (nine participants) about generating income via business sponsorship and leasing out parks facilities. The results of the Twitter Hour quick poll of seven people on whether businesses should be able to rent facilities in parks are shown below. Views were split, with some saying “it depends, we need a policy governing this”, and others saying “agree, we need income”.



8. **Seven** people took part in this quick online poll

What people thought could be positive outcomes:

- **Appropriate sponsorship:** Sponsorship from what people considered “appropriate” local businesses was suggested as a good way to bring in income. “Appropriate” generally meant businesses with a strong local connection, whose activities are in line with what people think of as the ethos of parks: NUFC was mentioned by one participant, as were Greggs. Sponsorship of individual events was also mentioned as a way to generate income without changing the “feel” of the parks.
- **Better facilities:** One suggestion was to create a centre for activities in a suitable location – for example, a central location with space for activities and good transport links – that could also be used for weddings.
- **Income generation:** Some people felt that advertising, sponsorship and leasing could be a good way to bring in income for maintaining parks, saying that “advertising is fine within reason” and acknowledging that there needed to be some ways of generating income for parks maintenance. However, it should be noted that others were strongly opposed to any form of advertising in parks.

Concerns:

- **Advertising and the ethos of parks:** Many participants felt that advertising in parks could lead to them becoming more “commercial” in feel, and they felt that parks should be an escape from this type of environment.
- **Equality:** Participants were concerned that some parks had greater potential for generating income via sponsorship and leasing than others, and that this would lead to parks which did not attract this form of income generation declining. (This was also a concern raised in connection with the possibility of income generation through events in parks, as described above.)
- **Ethics:** Some participants did not want to see parks sponsorship coming from payday loans companies or those promoting alcoholic drinks, as they felt this was not compatible with the ethos of parks.
- **Facilities standards:** Some participants thought that facilities in some parks would need to be improved before they could be rented out.
- **Limited access by licensing:** One concern was that licensing or leasing parts of the parks could limit public access to public facilities such as tennis courts. Charging for tennis court access was a concern some participants had.
- **Privatisation:** Some felt that this could lead to partial privatisation of the parks, and that holding events would be a better way of generating income.
- **Security:** One issue raised was whether security and staffing costs related to having more commercial events in parks would be costed into the proposals. “Go Ape” was mentioned as an example of the sort of facility participants did not want to see.

How this could work: People made the following suggestions:

- **Advertising locations:** One suggestion was to put advertising only at the entrances to parks, but not inside them. Another idea was to limit the size of adverts, for example to the size generally seen on the sides of bins.
- **Code of ethics:** Several participants wanted to see a “code of ethics” governing what advertising and sponsorship would be considered acceptable in parks. For example, this could ban fast-food, tobacco and alcohol advertising, and activities that might damage the natural environment.

- **Community input:** Several participants said that communities should be involved in assessing leasing and licensing applications. However, one participant made the point that some areas have more resources available for this; for example, more affluent areas may have more people available to volunteer. They were concerned that, given this issue, too much community involvement in assessing applications could mean that less affluent areas lose out on income, if they are not as well represented in the decision-making process as more affluent areas. One suggestion to make it easier for people to have their say was to create a “cyber noticeboard” where businesses could post their sponsorship and licensing applications for individuals and organisations to comment and vote on.
- **Corporate events:** One suggestion was to generate income by encouraging businesses to use parks facilities for corporate events, such as awaydays and team meetings.
- **Crowdfunding:** Another idea was to have periodic crowdfunding appeals to preserve or maintain specific aspects of the parks, such as bandstands or statues.
- **Distribution of income:** As with events, it was suggested that income generated in this way should be equitably distributed among all parks.
- **Necessary expertise:** Many participants felt that for this form of income generation to work, the board of directors and staff of the proposed charitable trust would have to have the necessary commercial skills to manage sponsorship, licensing, or leasing facilities. One participant commented: “Who decides what is ‘balanced and appropriate’?”
- **Sponsoring facilities:** One suggestion was that members of the public and businesses could sponsor facilities and equipment, such as lawn mowers or flowerbeds.



5. Trading, Core Values and Community Values

We asked attendees at workshops to consider the following question: “Decisions made around income would be guided by a Parks Charitable Trust’s core values. It could be that it does not work with organisations whose ethics do not support these values. However, this would limit the charitable trust’s abilities to meet running costs and generate income. How much do you think trading should be guided by community values?” Workshops on this topic took place at:

- The City Library
- Civic Centre
- Gosforth Trinity Church
- Jesmond Dene

Around **86** people took part via the website and at workshops. The chart on the right shows the results of a quick online Let’s talk Parks website poll (of 9 people) about trading and core values. The results of the Twitter Hour quick poll of 17 people are shown below. The largest number of respondents said that the board of directors should aim to strike a balance between the parks’ core values and the need to meet running costs; the next most popular option was to give priority to core values.



9. **Nine** people took part in this quick online poll



10. **Seventeen** people took part in this quick online poll

What people thought could be positive outcomes:

- **Free access:** A value strongly expressed throughout the consultation by many participants was that parks should remain free for all to access. Many thought that this should be included in the “core values” under consideration.
- **Health:** The role of parks in promoting health and wellbeing was mentioned several times. People felt that this should be protected through inclusion in the “core values”. In practice, this could mean not charging health and fitness activities for using parks, or promoting food growing activities within them.
- **Safeguarding parks:** Some people thought that trading was a good way to preserve the parks, commenting that historically businesses have contributed to parks funding.

- **Usage:** One response was that if the parks' trading values do not accord with community values parks usage will eventually decline. Ensuring a good fit between the two was seen as essential to both the long-term future of parks and to people's health and wellbeing.

Concerns:

- **Conflicting values:** The difficulty of defining what "community values" are was mentioned by several participants. For example (as discussed below), should events promoting health and wellbeing be prioritised, or should the proposed charitable trust aim to see the natural environment disturbed as little as possible, to preserve biodiversity and wildlife? Other questions raised were "who determines what is 'ethical'?" and "what limits would be placed on who could run events in parks – for example, would a far-right group be permitted to hold a rally in them?"
- **Exclusion:** Several participants were concerned that people whose values were not reflected in the proposed "core values" governing trading in parks could feel excluded.
- **Localisation:** Some participants asked if it would be feasible to draw up one set of "core values" covering all the parks. As parks are located in different communities across the city, "community values" may vary between them.
- **Management:** Some participants were concerned about how decision-making would work for this aspect of running parks. How could the need to have community input into the parks' trading values be achieved without the decision-making process becoming too slow and unwieldy? (This was discussed in more detail in other sessions; the findings are shown below.)
- **Short-termism:** One concern was that focussing too much on income generation could have short-term benefits, but could lead to damage to parks or a decline in usage in the long term. Another aspect of this was whether communities would have access to all the information necessary to make informed decisions about whether to accept or reject sponsorship or licensing proposals.

How this could work:

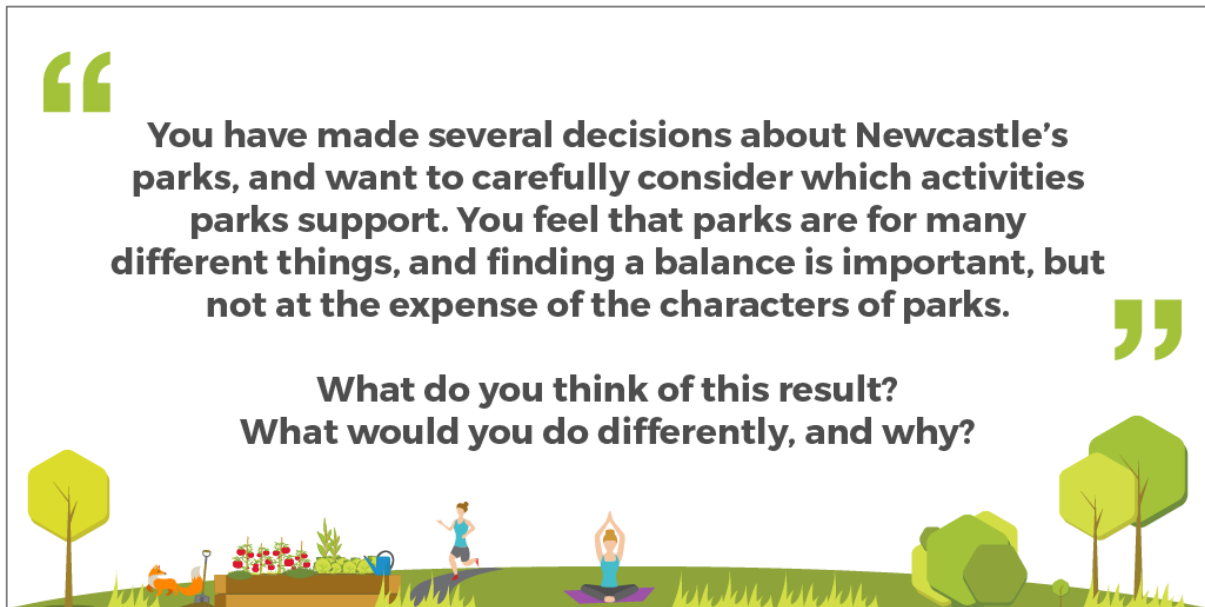
- **Management:** One suggestion was to have a panel of community representatives meet each quarter to decide on trading proposals, although people acknowledged that this would need skilled chairing to reconcile conflicting viewpoints.
- **Mapping exercise:** Participants suggested that one of the proposed charitable trust's first actions should be to hold a mapping exercise to determine what these "community values" should be, using both online and offline methods to ensure this.
- **Pragmatism:** Some participants commented that there would need to be a level of realism about what the proposed parks trust could and could not do; for example, whether banning branded soft drinks in cafes would be a realistic possibility.
- **Short-term and long-term goals:** Several people commented that there would need to be a balance between short-term and long-term goals. For example, in the short-term it could be necessary to prioritise income generation whilst the proposed charitable trust is establishing itself, then moving towards a focus on long-term goals once this is achieved.
- **Written constitution:** One suggestion was to have a written constitution for the proposed charitable trust to enable managing sponsorship and licensing applications.

Activities and Priorities

We asked workshop and Twitter Hour participants to comment on the following issues in relation to what activities parks should support, including:

- Should parks prioritise health and wellbeing, wildlife conservation, or both?
- Should educational activities be charged for?

The summary of people's responses to this during the Twitter hour looking at activities and priorities is:



6. What activities should parks support? and Health Hubs

We asked attendees at workshops to consider the following questions:

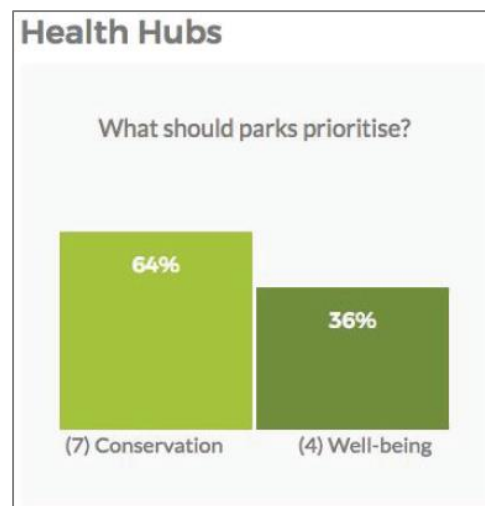
“Parks have a positive impact on our physical and mental health and wellbeing. Parks are also places for learning about wildlife and growing food. A Parks Charitable Trust could receive funds in return for offering activities to increase communities’ health and wellbeing, education and for the use of park facilities. How could a Parks Charitable Trust contribute to increasing community health, education and wellbeing?”, and:

“Enhancing and expanding health and wellbeing activities in local parks would benefit local communities. However, this could result in wildlife conservation being given a lower priority. What should parks prioritise?”

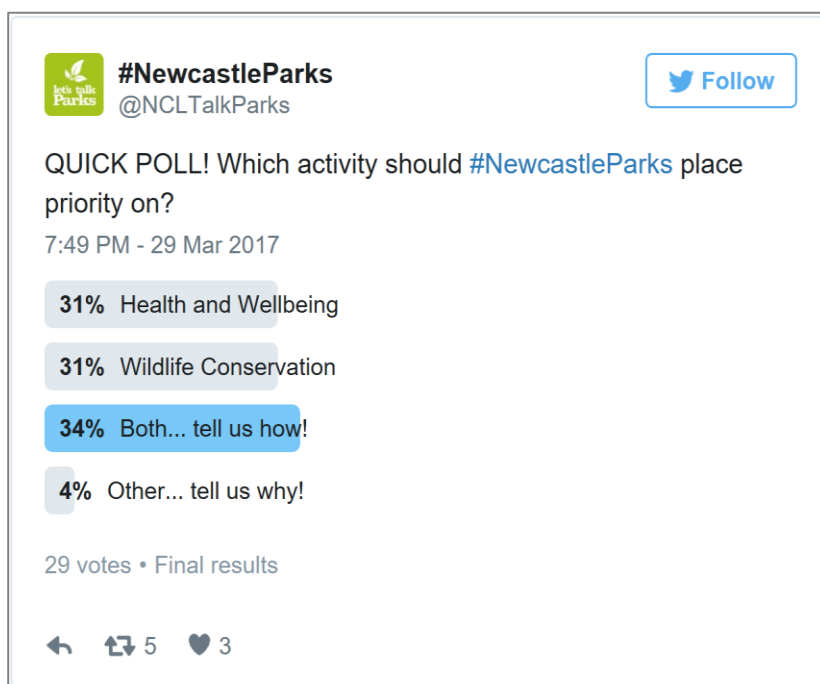
Workshops on this topic took place at:

- The Civic Centre
- The City Library
- Gosforth Trinity Church
- Newburn
- Jesmond Dene
- Leazes Park
- Staff at Jesmond Dene

Around **173** people took part in discussing this via the website and at workshops. The chart above shows the results of a quick online poll on the Let's talk Parks website, which 11 people took part in. The chart on the right shows the results of the Let's talk Parks Twitter hour poll about what activities the proposed Parks Charitable Trust should place a priority on, which 29 people took part in.



11. **Eleven** people took part in this quick online poll



12. **Twenty-nine** people took part in this quick online poll

What people thought could be positive outcomes:

- **Existing good practice:** People gave examples of existing activities, such as the angling club in Leazes Park, which promote health and wellbeing, and suggested learning from them.
- **Health:** Some participants commented that these two priorities could reinforce each other, as contact with nature can be beneficial for both physical and mental wellbeing.
- **Partnership working:** One suggestion was to work in partnership with GP surgeries, Forest Schools, organisations such as the Woodlands Trust, and primary and secondary schools to organise health-related activities whilst maintaining the parks' environment.
- **Wildlife:** Some participants felt that preserving wildlife should be the main priority for parks, given that health and fitness needs can be met at other locations. They thought that the proposed creation of a charitable trust offered the opportunity to review how this is done within the city.

Concerns:

- **Defining the areas covered:** One participant commented that they thought it was difficult to define the areas that would be covered by the proposed charitable trust. For example, are areas of nature conservation which are not in parks included in the proposal? What grounds could be used to determine which areas are best suited to promote either health and wellbeing, or the nature conversation, and who would define them?
- **Finance:** One question was where income to support health and wellbeing-related activities would come from, and how it could be generated in ways which do not conflict with promoting health. People also felt that education-related activities should not be profit-making; in other words, that they should ideally be free of charge and that any charges imposed should only be to cover costs, not generate income. This is discussed in more detail below.

How this could work:

- **Contributions:** One suggestion was that participants in health and wellbeing-related activities could also contribute to maintaining the parks environment, either by making donations or by taking part in activities such as bulb planting.
- **Facilitation:** Several people suggested that the proposed charitable trust would need to employ members of staff with the necessary skills to facilitate these types of activity.
- **Green Gyms:** People suggested that there could be more "green gyms" in parks. These are activities where participants keep fit by carrying out physical activities such as planting, growing food and weeding, which also help to maintain the parks environment.
- **Local sensitivity:** It was observed that different areas of parks, and different parks, are better suited to different activities. For example, city centre parks and those in large population centres will probably be better suited for health and fitness activities, and those in more remote areas better suited for wildlife conservation.
- **Public Health:** Some participants asked if Public Health funding would be available to support the proposed charitable trust, given the health benefits of people having access to parks.

- **Zoning:** As mentioned above in relation to holding events in parks, some participants suggested dividing parks into zones for different activities; some for exercise, and some for wildlife preservation.

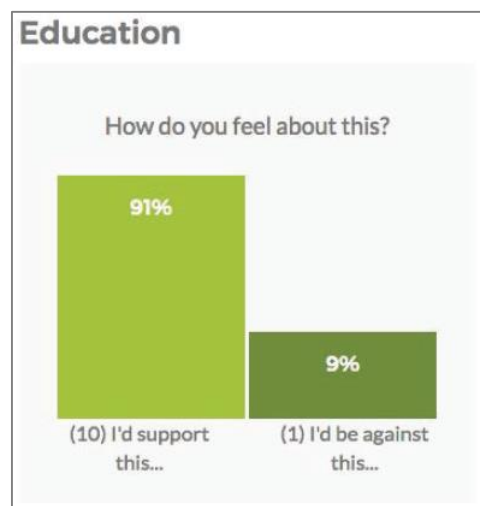
7. Education

We asked attendees at workshops to consider the following question: “A Parks Charitable Trust could generate more income by enhancing learning resources about the ecological value of parks and charge groups who use the park for educational reasons. This could improve the quality of educational opportunities that parks provide and help raise money for the Parks Charitable Trust. What would you do?”

Workshops on this topic took place at:

- The City Library
- Jesmond Dene,
- The Civic Centre.

Around **85** people took part in this discussion. The results of a quick online poll (of 11 people) held on the Let's talk Parks website are shown above. This was also discussed during a Twitter Hour session on workshops. Comments from Twitter have been included in the analysis of people's responses, but the results of the quick poll of 11 people can be seen on the right.



13. **Eleven** people took part in this quick online poll



14. **Eleven** people took part in this quick online poll

What people thought could be positive outcomes:

- **Conservation:** The creation of the proposed parks charitable trust was seen as an opportunity to look at how parks could support more people to learn more about nature, wildlife and conservation.
- **Education:** Several participants said that educational activities should be a priority for the proposed charitable trust.

Concerns:

- **Charging for educational activities:** Most participants did not want to see educational or learning activities in parks being charged for.
- **Demographics:** One concern was that educational activities should not be limited to children and young people, but accessible to all ages. This could be done through a combination of hosting all-ages events, and ensuring that parks host activities tailored for older age groups as well as young people.

How this could work:

- **Business plans:** Participants said that a robust business plan, including funding strategies, was essential, as they did not think that educational activities should be used for income generation.
- **Community events:** One suggestion was to encourage communities to organise their own educational events.
- **Co-ordination:** As with assessing sponsorship applications and events management, people stressed the importance of having skilled staff to co-ordinate educational activities.
- **Donations:** Whilst participants felt that education activities should be free in principle, some suggested that asking for donations for these types of activities would be a viable option.
- **Grant applications:** Some participants asked if the charitable trust would be able to apply for grant funding to deliver educational activities.
- **Partnership working:** A common suggestion was to work with schools and other educational organisations to deliver educational activities.
- **Resources:** Whilst many participants felt that educational events should not be charged for, developing educational resources and materials and charging for their use was one suggestion for generating income.

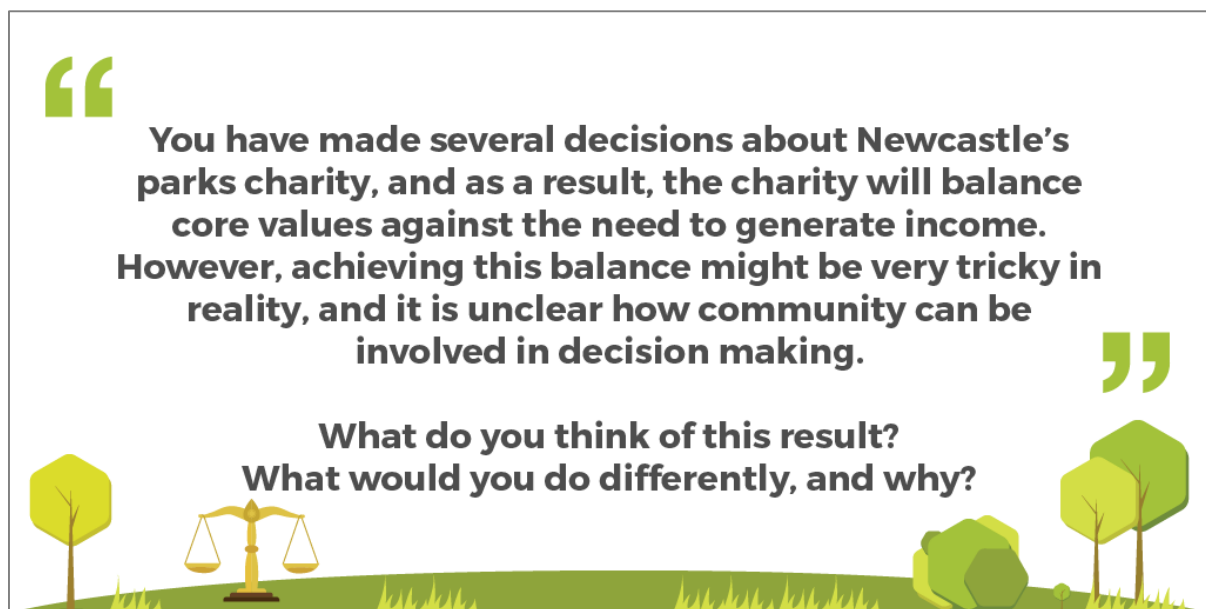


Governance and Structure

We asked workshop and Twitter Hour participants to comment on the following issues in relation to the governance and structure of the proposed charitable trust:

- How closely should a Parks Charitable Trust stick to the values of local communities?
- How should communities be involved in decision-making?
- Should allotments be included in a Parks Charitable Trust?
- When required, which should the board of directors prioritise: income generation, or community ownership?

The outcome of people's decisions during the Twitter hour focussing upon this can be seen below:



8. How closely should a Parks Charitable Trust stick to the values of local communities?

We asked attendees at workshops to consider the following question: “Decisions in a Parks Charitable Trust would be made by trustees and directors. But how this works and how decisions would be made are very important questions. How closely should a parks charitable trust stick to the values of local communities?” Workshops on this topic took place at:

- The City Library
- Jesmond Dene

Around **68** participants commented on this at workshops, via the Let's talk Parks website and Twitter discussions.

What people thought could be positive outcomes:

- **Ownership:** The possibility that communities could become more involved in running parks and increased ownership of them was mentioned as a positive outcome by several participants.
- **Values:** Some participants felt this was an opportunity to make a clear commitment to what they deemed “core values”: preservation of nature, free access to green space, and health and well-being. One person defined them as “Core values are free, green, non-commercialised, health spaces for people and nature which we should secure for future generations.”

Concerns:

- **Accountability:** Respondents were concerned that a charitable trust's decision-making would not be democratically accountable to the public in the way that the council's decision-making by elected members is.
- **Communities of identity and interest:** One response was that both “communities of interest” (such as Friends Of groups, clubs using sports facilities), and “local communities” needed to be fairly represented on the board.
- **Objectivity:** One concern was that there needed to be a way of involving the general public's views, but also remaining objective about the best interests of all parks and groups using them, not only people's particular interests.
- **Sale of land:** That park land might be sold to generate income was an area of concern for many participants.
- **Special interests:** Linked to the issue above, respondents wanted to see checks and balances to prevent groups, individuals or organisations with their own agendas “hijacking” decision-making.

How this could work: People made the following suggestions:

- **Allotments as model:** The existing arrangements for decision-making involving allotments was mentioned as an example of good practice that could be learned from when setting up the charitable trust.
- **Engagement:** The need for an effective community engagement plan to educate all stakeholders about what is proposed and get them involved in decision-making was considered very important. Recruiting skilled staff to support this was also mentioned.

- **Forum:** One suggestion was to create a forum for involving different groups and communities (both geographic and communities of interest) in decision-making.
- **Local involvement:** One respondent felt it was important that the charitable trust should be based locally, and that perhaps elected members from Newcastle City Council should sit on the board.
- **Prioritise values:** One comment was that “core values” rather than costs should be the long-term priority.
- **Public meetings:** Holding open meetings about particular issues facing parks was suggested as a way to balance efficient decision-making and public involvement.
- **Strategic plan:** As mentioned in relation to forums, the need for a plan to ensure that all communities – both geographic and communities of interest – was mentioned by several participants.

9. How should the Board of Directors balance priorities?

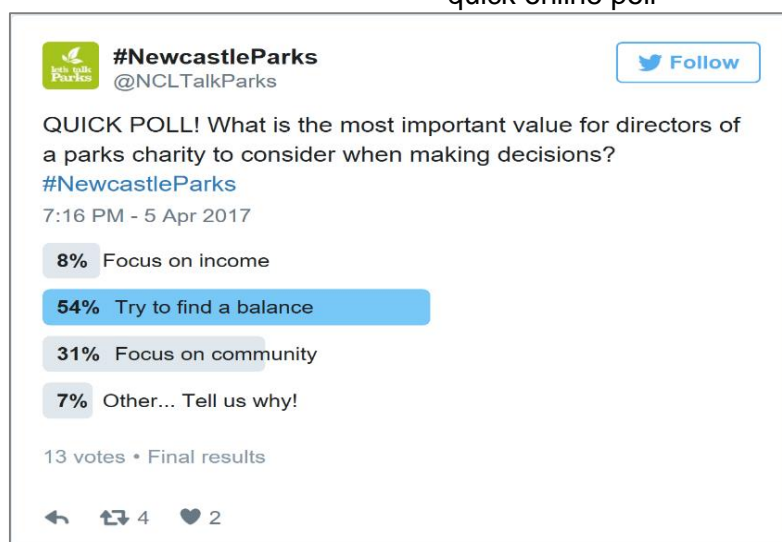
We asked attendees at workshops to consider the following question: “A Parks Charitable Trust will have to concern itself with bringing income to the park as well as supporting community ownership and involvement. Both are very important, but a Parks Charitable Trust will at times have to prioritise one over the other. When required, which should the board of directors prioritise?” Workshops on this topic took place at the following locations:

- The City Library
- Civic Centre
- Gosforth Trinity Church
- Jesmond Dene

Around **134** participants commented on this at workshops, via the Let's talk Parks website, and Twitter discussions. The results of a quick online poll of nine people on the Let's Talk Parks website is shown above. This was also discussed during a Twitter Hour session on workshops. Comments from Twitter have been included in the analysis of people's responses, but the results of the quick poll of 13 people can be seen on the right.



15. **Nine** people took part in this quick online poll



16. **Thirteen** people took part in this quick online poll

Many of the issues raised in response to this question were very similar to those raised in response to the previous question, “How should decisions be made? (Community involvement in decision-making)”.

What people thought could be positive outcomes:

- **Charitable objectives:** Attendees at some workshops stated that charitable objectives and community involvement should be the proposed charitable trust's priority, not income generation.
- **Ownership:** As with the previous question about community values and decision-making, several participants said that the possibility that communities could become more involved in running parks and have increased ownership of them could be a positive outcome.

Concerns:

- **Accountability and democracy:** As for the previous question, participants were concerned that a charitable trust's decision-making would not be democratically accountable to the public in the way that council decision-making by elected members is.
- **Directors' interests:** Some people were worried that the directors might pursue their own interests, not those of Newcastle parks and residents.
- **Directors' salaries:** Some participants were concerned about how staff salaries, especially those of directors, would be set.
- **Objectivity:** As with the earlier question about core values, people were concerned about whether the proposed charitable trust and its board of directors would be able to balance the need to involve the public in decision-making, with the need to remain objective about what is in the best interests of all parks and park users. Ensuring that expert advice was available to guide this was a related concern.
- **Parity of funding between parks:** Another concern raised was how funding raised and income generated could be fairly shared between different parks.
- **Recruitment:** People questioned whether it would be possible to recruit directors, trustees and staff with the necessary skills.
- **Transparency:** Some participants were concerned about whether the decision-making process would be transparent enough to ensure full public accountability.

How this could work:

- **Charity law:** Some participants felt that the fact that the proposed charitable trust would be governed by charity law was one way to ensure it would be publicly accountable, although others felt this would not be enough on its own.
- **Constitution:** Participants thought that having a written constitution was one way to protect accountability and democracy in the proposed charitable trust's decision-making. One comment was that “A clear set of aims and objectives that the board agree to, following community consultation, will lessen the possibility of conflict [between community values and income generation].”
- **Council support and involvement:** Some respondents felt that the council should retain some involvement in the proposed charitable trust's decision-making, and perhaps also provide some funding, to help ensure that decisions are made in the public interest.

- **Engagement:** As with the previous question about core values, people thought it was very important to have an effective community engagement plan to educate all stakeholders about what is proposed and get them involved in the proposed charitable trust's decision-making.
- **Representation on the board:** Respondents wanted to see the following groups represented on the board: the council, community groups, 'Friends Of Parks' groups, and other key stakeholder organisations, such as clubs using parks facilities. This was not intended as an exclusive list, but as a starting point for thinking about who should be involved.
- **Volunteer directors:** Some people felt that the proposed charitable trust's directors should not be paid, although others questioned if this was realistic.

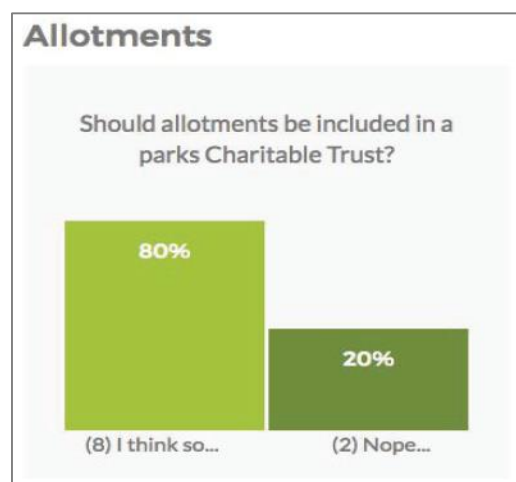
10. Allotments

We asked attendees at workshops to consider the following question: "Including allotments in a Parks Charitable Trust could bring expertise and skills into it and provide the opportunity for additional health and wellbeing activities. This could benefit both the charitable trust and allotment holders in many ways, but it could mean other changes to how allotments are managed and run. Should allotments be included in a Parks Charitable Trust?" Workshops on this topic took place at the following locations:

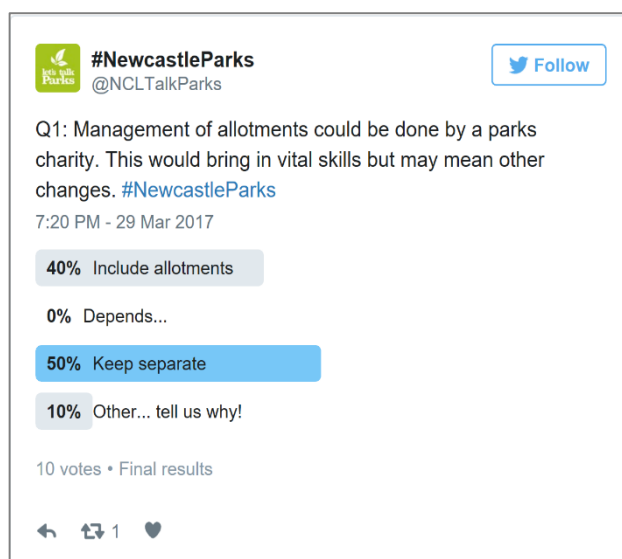
- The City Library
- Newcastle Civic Centre
- Gosforth Trinity Church
- Jesmond Dene
- Leazes Park.

Around **149** participants commented on this at workshops, via the Let's talk Parks website and Twitter discussions. The results of a quick online poll (of 10 people) on the Let's Talk Parks website can be seen above. This was also discussed during a Twitter Hour session on workshops. Comments from Twitter have been included in the analysis of people's responses, but the results of the quick poll (of 10 people) are shown on the right: half felt that allotments should be kept separate from parks.

The results of a quick online poll (of 10 people) on the Let's Talk Parks website can be seen on the right. This was also discussed during a Twitter Hour session



17. **Ten** people took part in this quick online poll



18. **Ten** people took part in this quick online poll.

on workshops. Comments from Twitter have been included in the analysis of people's responses, but the results of the quick poll (of 10 people) are shown on the previous page.

What people thought could be positive outcomes:

- **Food growing:** One view was that bringing more food-growing activities into parks would be a positive development, and that perhaps this could be done by creating more community allotments in parks.
- **Food security:** Some people thought that including allotments and food-growing activities in the parks charitable trust's remit could be a way of improving food security and sustainability in Newcastle.
- **Income generation:** Some people felt that having the proposed charitable trust manage allotments, could be a way to generate income to preserve parks and green spaces.
- **Increased access, usage and health benefits:** Some people wondered if this could be a way of increasing allotments usage by different groups, such as Scouts, disabled people, schools, among others. There was a feeling that if it was possible to spread the health benefits of having allotments among more people, this would be a positive development. The possibility of using some park land to create community allotments was also mentioned as a way to help tackle existing waiting lists for allotments.
- **Skills-sharing:** Some participants mentioned the possibility of skills-sharing between people working on allotments and parks volunteers as a possible advantage of this proposal.

Concerns:

- **Community cohesion:** Some participants highlighted the role of allotments in community cohesion, as a place where people from different backgrounds and communities can meet, work together and share knowledge. They were concerned that this could decline if allotments were included in the proposed charitable trust's remit, as there could be a feeling that allotments were being used to subsidise parks. This could create division between "allotment holders" and "parks users".
- **Different models:** Many participants were concerned that the allotment model of paid membership and the parks model of free access for all would not work well together. They commented that allotments are not public land, are very different to parks and their users have different interests.
- **Difficulties of broadening the proposed trust's remit:** One issue raised was whether including allotments would create extra work and bureaucracy for the proposed charitable trust.
- **Equalities and increasing rents:** One concern was that if allotment rents were raised to generate income for parks, this could lead to people on lower incomes being less able to have allotments. Several participants said that they did not want to see this happen.
- **Land contamination:** One person raised the issue of whether the proposed charitable trust would be able to access expert advice on how to identify whether proposed allotments sites contain any contaminated land, and if so, how to address this issue.
- **Land sales:** Participants were concerned that allotment land could be sold to generate income for parks.

- **Prioritisation:** Participants were concerned that allotments would not be the main priority for the proposed charitable trust.
- **Risk to allotments:** One fear was that incorporating allotments into the proposed charitable trust would put them at financial risk.
- **Unfair expectations:** One view was that it was unfair to expect allotment holders to become involved in running or maintaining parks.

How this could work:

- **Affiliation:** One suggestion was that allotments could be affiliated to the proposed charitable trust, but remain independent.
- **Allocate food-growing areas:** A suggestion for getting some benefits from the proposed inclusion of allotments in the proposed charitable trust's remit was to set aside areas in parks for growing food.
- **Allotments-holders' decisions:** One response was that this decision should be the allotment holders' choice.
- **Community allotments:** One suggestion was that the proposed parks trust could look at creating community allotments on parks or waste ground.
- **Good practice:** Learning from good practice elsewhere, such as in the US, was suggested in relation to how allotments should be part of their local communities.
- **Independence for allotments:** Some people felt that allotments in Newcastle should become entirely autonomous and separate from the parks service.
- **Partnership:** Partnership working between allotments and the board of directors was mentioned as a way to move forwards, perhaps with an allotments representative on the board.
- **Representative:** Having an allotments representative on the board of directors was a common suggestion in reply to this question.
- **Skills-sharing:** The possibility for skills-sharing was a potential benefit of parks and allotments volunteers working more closely together was suggested as something the proposed parks trust should pursue.
- **Status quo:** Some people felt that the status quo should be maintained, and that allotments should not become part of the proposed charitable trust's remit.

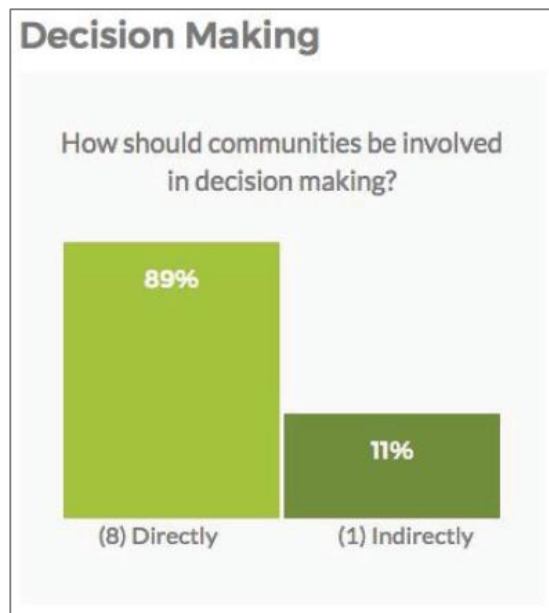


11. How should communities be involved in decision-making?

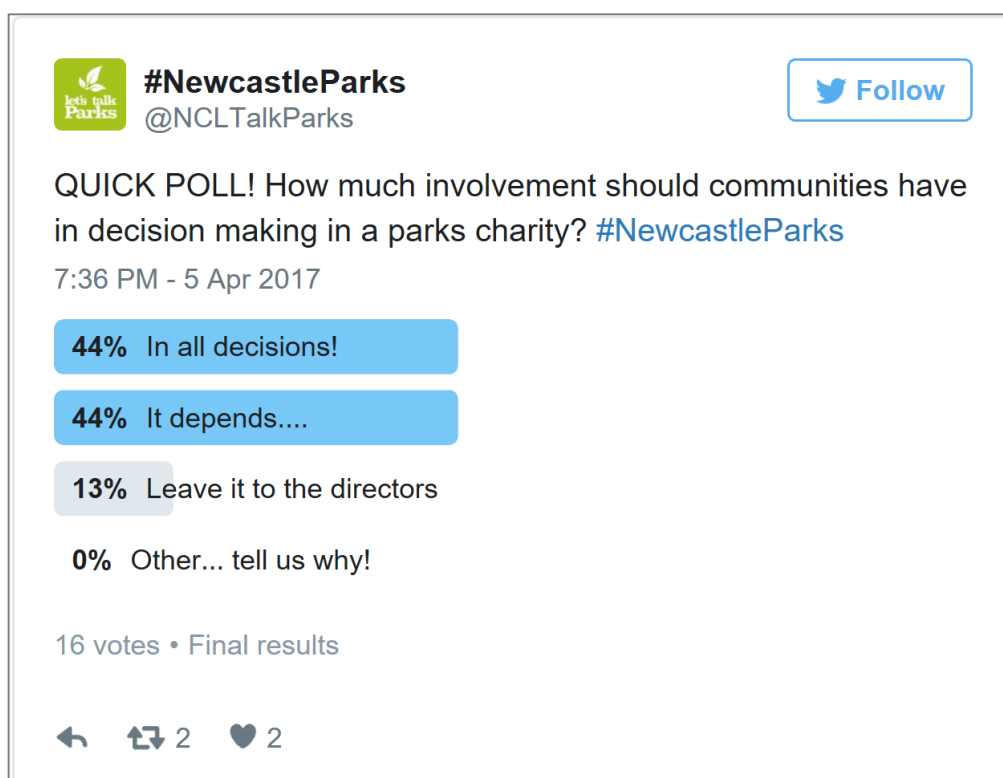
We asked attendees at workshops to consider the following: “It is important to decide what part communities play in making decisions that affect Newcastle’s parks. On one hand, deep community involvement ensures parks reflect the wishes of communities, but on the other, this can take time, money and be difficult to organise across the city. How should communities be involved in decision-making?”

Around **88** participants commented on this at workshops, including at the City Library, Civic Centre, Gosforth Trinity Church, Jesmond Dene, Leazes Park, and via the Let’s talk Parks website and Twitter discussions.

The result of the quick poll of nine people on the Let’s talk Parks website is shown above, with the largest number in favour of the direct involvement of communities in decision-making. The results of a Twitter hour poll of 16 people are shown below, with views split between communities being involved in all decisions, and “it depends”.



19. **Nine** people took part in this quick online poll.



20. **Sixteen** people took part in this quick online poll.

What people thought could be positive outcomes:

- **Community involvement:** Many people saw the possibility of greater community involvement in decision-making around parks as a potential benefit of the proposal. Most were concerned to describe ways in which this could be obtained whilst avoiding conflicts of interest and “bogging down” decision-making to the extent that it becomes inefficient.

Concerns:

- **Conflicting interests:** Many people mentioned that parks have a large number of stakeholders, each with their own set of interests which may conflict with each other, and this is an issue the proposed charitable trust would need to manage.
- **Inefficiency:** People were concerned that trying to involve all stakeholders in decision-making would lead to this being very slow and inefficient, and that was a need for realism about the fact that sometimes the board of directors would have to take decisions quickly.
- **Unrepresentative decision-making and the “usual suspects”:** Some participants feared that only the “usual suspects” (meaning people and groups who always take part in consultations relating to parks) would have a say in decision-making, and other parks users’ voices may not be heard. Participants also questioned whether these individuals and groups are truly representative of all parks users.

How this could work: People made the following suggestions:

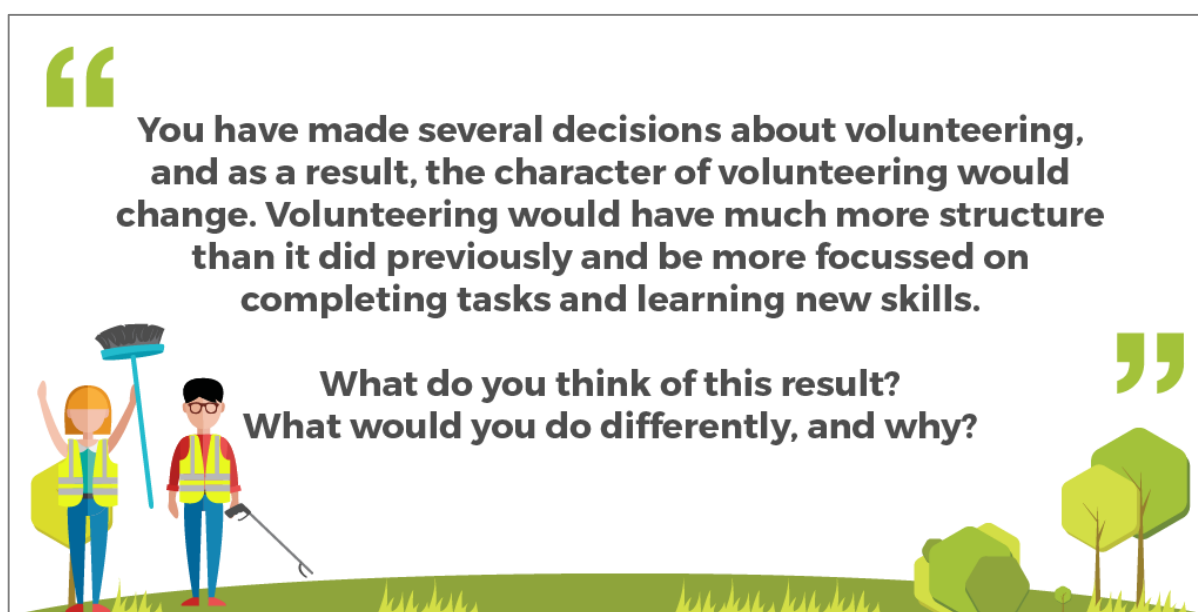
- **Consultation and engagement:** As in response to earlier questions, participants stressed the need for a strong consultation and engagement plan to ensure that community values are fully understood by the board of directors.
- **Constitution:** Similarly, participants thought that having a constitution that clearly sets out how the board of directors would make decisions, and how communities could feed their views into the decision-making process, would be essential.
- **Evaluation:** One suggestion was to have volunteers involved in evaluating the proposed trust’s decisions and actions.
- **Good practice:** People recommended learning from existing good practice, for example from “Friends Of Parks” groups and the National Trust.
- **Public meetings:** It was suggested that volunteers and parks charitable trust members could attend public meetings where trustees and directors would share summaries of their actions, and possibly vote on some very significant decisions.
- **Publicity:** Various methods for publicising the meetings of the board were suggested, such as leaflet drops, religious and community organisations, press articles, social media and online consultations. Using a similar approach to that taken for this consultation was a suggestion.
- **Recruitment:** As in response to previous questions, the need to recruit suitably skilled directors and staff was mentioned several times.
- **Representatives:** As in response to previous questions, one suggested method for involving communities in decision-making was to ensure that they have representatives on the board.

Volunteering

We asked workshop and Twitter Hour participants to comment on the following issues in relation to volunteering in parks:

- What role communities and volunteers should play in parks
- Whether we should look at making volunteering in parks mobile across the city to meet the maintenance needs of parks
- A question about accreditation for parks volunteers: “When volunteering at a local park, you may be given different volunteering options as well as earn accreditation and qualifications for learning skills. Yet, a skills scheme might require additional formalities to the volunteering experience and may not actually be desirable to all volunteers. What would you do?”
- Whether a Charitable Trust should coordinate volunteers across the city.

The outcome of the Twitter discussion is shown below.



12. The role of volunteers

We asked attendees at workshops to consider the following question: “A Parks Charitable Trust could increase community involvement and offer more and different volunteering opportunities, contributing to the parks’ upkeep. People volunteer for many reasons, and volunteering differs from park to park. What role should communities and volunteers play in parks?” Workshops on this topic took place at the following locations:

- The City Library
- Newcastle Civic Centre
- Gosforth Trinity Church
- Jesmond Dene
- Leazes Park

Around **103** participants commented on this at workshops, via the Let’s talk Parks website and Twitter discussions.

What people thought could be positive outcomes:

- **Acknowledgement of volunteers’ importance:** Some participants took the view that this was an opportunity to formally recognise the importance of volunteers in maintaining and running parks, and acknowledge their contribution.
- **Children and young people being involved:** One view was that this could be an opportunity to involve children and young people in parks volunteering.
- **Community payback and young offenders:** Another suggestion was that this could be an opportunity to increase involvement from people on community payback schemes, and young offenders.
- **Corporate volunteering:** Some people suggested that this could be an opportunity to increase support from corporate volunteering schemes.
- **Student volunteering:** Similarly, people suggested that this could be an opportunity to increase support from student volunteering schemes.
- **Volunteers involved in planning parks:** Some participants took the view that having volunteers’ knowledge of their local parks be used in parks planning was a potential benefit of the proposals.

Concerns:

- **Demographics:** A general point made by several people was that relying too heavily on volunteers could be risky given the aging population. Whilst people living longer could mean an increased potential pool of retirees wanting to volunteer in parks, in future people may have to work longer and retire at an older age, and / or find themselves increasingly needed to care for older relatives and friends.
- **Is this what volunteers want?** Several participants mentioned that volunteers may not want to be more involved than they currently are.
- **Limits to volunteering and ‘burn-out’:** Several people mentioned that the proposed trust needs to acknowledge that there are limits to what volunteers are able to do for parks, and that it is important to ensure that they are able to cease volunteering at any time. Some people highlighted the risk that asking too much of volunteers can lead to them ‘burning out’ and stopping volunteering.

- **Paid staff:** An issue raised was the need to safeguard the continued employment of skilled paid staff such as the parks rangers, as their skills are needed both to maintain parks and guide or supervise volunteers.
- **Unequal distribution of volunteers:** Many participants commented that not all parks have the same ability to attract volunteers, and that this could lead to some parks declining if they cannot rely on volunteers to maintain them.

How this could work:

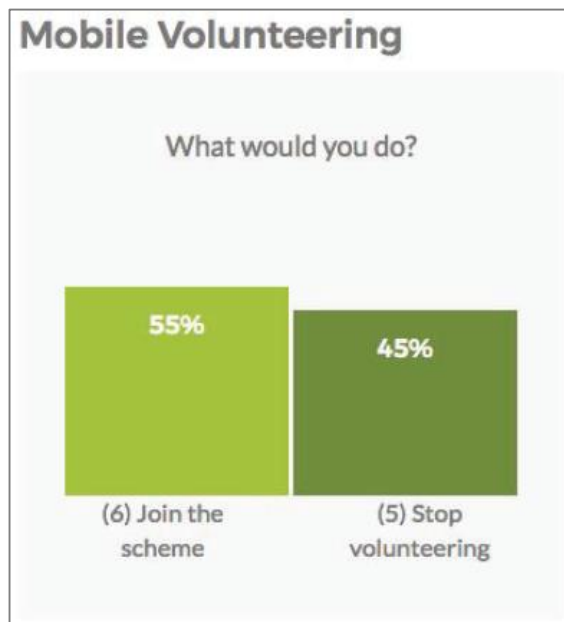
- **Decision-making and governance:** As mentioned earlier, several people suggested that the proposed charitable trust should prioritise involving volunteers in decision-making for parks, not only maintenance work in the parks, and that it was important to listen to them.
- **Good practice:** One suggestion was to review existing good practice, such as the creation of a wildlife garden in Gosforth Central Park, as a way to move this forward.

13. Mobile volunteering

We asked attendees at workshops to consider the following question: “One option to meet the maintenance needs of Newcastle Parks is to make volunteering mobile across the city. However, this may discourage volunteers who want to work in a specific park, or who feel this sounds too much like being ‘given a job’. What would you do?” Workshops on this topic took place at the following locations:

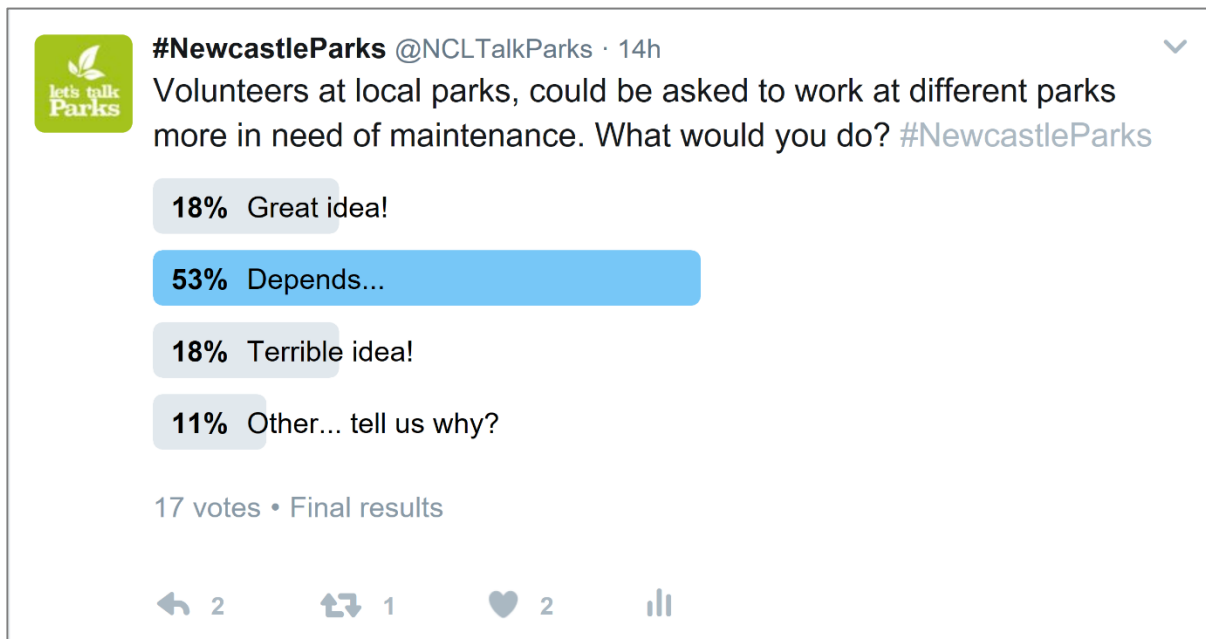
- The City Library
- Newcastle Civic Centre
- Gosforth Trinity Church
- Jesmond Dene
- Leazes Park.

Around **130** participants commented on this at workshops, via the Let's talk Parks website and Twitter discussions. The results of a Let's talk Parks quick poll of 11 people are shown on the right.



21. **Eleven** people took part in this quick online poll.

This issue was also discussed during a Twitter Hour session on workshops. Comments from Twitter have been included in the analysis of people's responses, but the results of a quick poll of 17 people are shown below.



22. **Seventeen** people took part in this quick online poll.

What people thought could be positive outcomes:

- **Equality between parks:** One view was that this could help to solve the issue that not all parks attract equal numbers of volunteers, as volunteers could be deployed from more “popular” parks to those that need extra workers.
- **Learning opportunities:** People suggested that this could be a way for volunteers to learn how to do tasks that they do not have the chance to do in their local parks.
- **Responsiveness:** Several people felt that in principle this was a good idea, as it would allow for a responsive workforce to solve problems in parks.
- **Variety:** One comment was that the opportunity to visit new areas of the city could be an incentive for some volunteers, keeping them interested.

Concerns:

- **Bureaucracy:** One issue raised was whether the complexities of co-ordinating mobile volunteering would cause more work than it would save.
- **Health and safety:** People wanted to be sure that all health and safety requirements would be met if people were working in unfamiliar environments and possibly on unfamiliar tasks.
- **Local identification:** Some respondents felt that the fact that people identify strongly with their local parks was an asset that should be used to encourage volunteering, and that mobile volunteering would not work well due to this.
- **Local knowledge:** One comment was that volunteers working only in one park build up a particular level of knowledge of issues affecting that park that mobile volunteers would not have.

- **Putting volunteers off:** Some participants were concerned that some people want to only volunteer in their local parks, that mobile volunteering would be stressful for these people, and that a mobile volunteering scheme would put them off.
- **Seasonal availability:** One concern raised was that volunteer availability varies throughout the year due to holidays, exams, increased ill-health in winter, and so forth. People asked how a mobile volunteering scheme would manage this.
- **Support:** One question asked was whether there would be sufficient support from paid staff to make this work.
- **Transport:** Participants asked how mobile volunteers would travel to different parks. For example, would the parks trust make transport available to them, and would it be sustainable and / or active, such as walking or cycling?

How this could work::

- **Awareness raising:** Several participants mentioned the need to raise awareness of issues affecting parks to encourage more volunteering.
- **Corporate volunteering:** People asked if a mobile volunteering scheme would be well-suited to attract support from corporate volunteering schemes.
- **Incentives:** One suggestion for inducing people to try mobile volunteering was to offer incentives, such as vouchers for cafes, sports facilities, local attractions, or the Wylam Brewery in Exhibition Park.
- **Online booking:** One suggestion was to have an online booking system for mobile volunteering, like that used by the National Wildlife Trust. People thought that perhaps it could be designed to allow volunteers to choose opportunities that would enable them to learn new skills.
- **Optional:** Several people felt that a mobile volunteering scheme should be optional, as some people would not want to volunteer if they had to work anywhere other than in their local parks, but others would be more interested. For example, volunteers could be allowed to choose from options such as: volunteering in a specific park, volunteering in a specific number of parks, or volunteering in an “adopt a plot” scheme.
- **Projects:** One suggestion was that people might be more willing to engage in mobile volunteering if it was for specific projects, not routine maintenance work.

14. Accreditation for volunteers

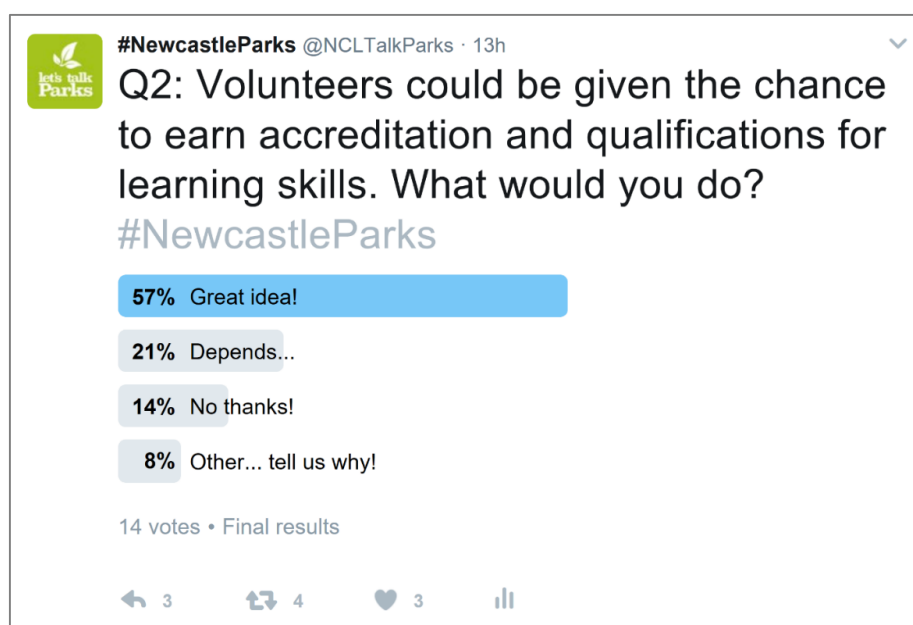
We asked attendees at workshops to consider the following question: “When volunteering at a local park, you may be given different volunteering options as well as earn accreditation and qualifications for learning skills. Yet, a skills scheme might require additional formalities to the volunteering experience and may not actually be desirable to all volunteers. What would you do?” Workshops on this topic took place at the following locations:

- Jesmond Dene
- Leazes Park.

Around **68** participants commented on this at workshops via the Let's talk Parks website and Twitter discussions. The results of a Let's talk Parks website quick poll of eleven people can be seen on the left. This was also discussed during a Twitter Hour session on workshops. Comments from Twitter have been included in the analysis of people's responses, but the results of a quick poll of fourteen people can be seen on the right.



23. **Eleven** people took part in this quick online poll.



24. **Fourteen** people took part in this quick online poll.

What people felt could be positive outcomes:

- **Employability:** Several people mentioned that the possibilities for enabling volunteers to enhance their employability was a potential benefit of having an accreditation and skills scheme.
- **Incentive:** One view was that for some people, such as those who are unemployed or looking to learn new skills and move jobs, this could be an incentive to volunteer.
- **Skilled volunteers:** Many participants thought that the potential to increase the skill level of volunteers, and the possibility of skills-sharing among different groups of volunteers, could be a positive outcome of the proposal.

- **Younger volunteers:** Some participants thought that this could be a way of attracting more young volunteers, particularly those who prefer to learn in a non-classroom-based environment.

Concerns:

- **Commitments:** Participants raised the question of whether volunteers would be able to meet the time commitments required for accreditation, and if this would put some of them off.
- **Funding:** Some participants asked how an accreditation scheme would be funded and how the proposed charitable trust would ensure that funding was sustainable.
- **Lack of interest:** Some people thought that not all volunteers would be interested in this, and that for some people it could be off-putting. For example, they may be volunteering for relaxation, or to escape the pressures of work or study.
- **Which accreditations:** People asked how the trust would select an accreditation system and ensure that any qualifications gained through it would be widely recognised.

How this could work:

- **Apprenticeships:** One suggestion was for an accreditation scheme to have a tie-in with existing apprenticeship schemes.
- **Optional:** Most participants thought that participating in an accreditation scheme should be optional.
- **Partnership:** One suggestion was to work in partnership with sixth forms, universities, residents' associations and Newcastle College.

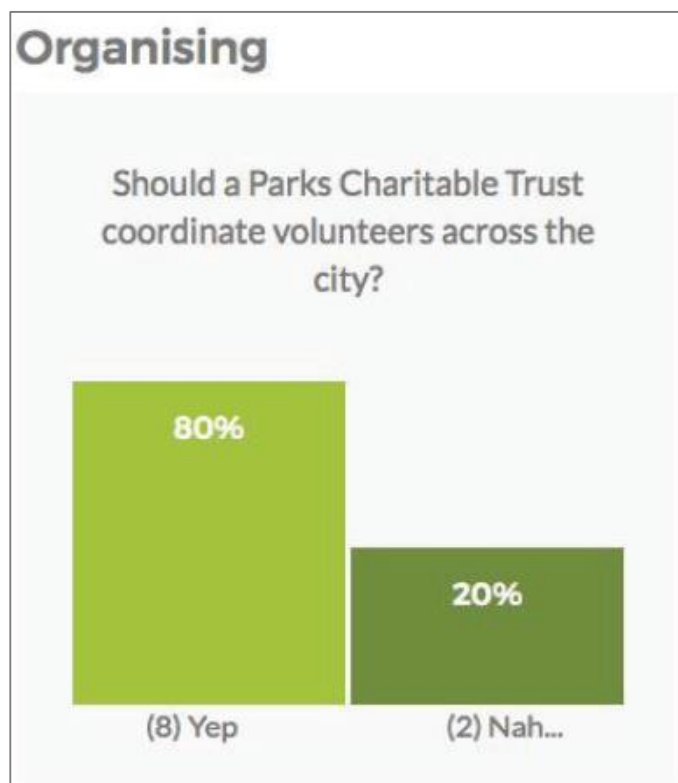


15. Organising and co-ordinating volunteers

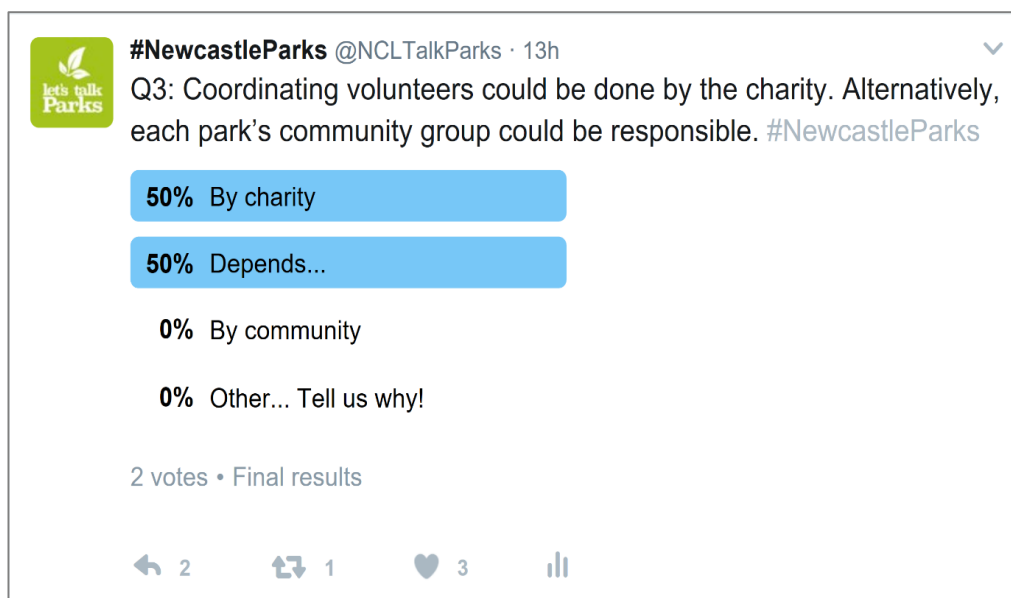
We asked attendees at workshops to consider the following question: “Coordinating all volunteers centrally would help to ensure that all parks were properly looked after and that work was distributed across the city. However, local park community groups have better knowledge of their local parks and are passionate about their local environments. But not all parks are supported by community groups. Should a Charitable Trust coordinate volunteers across the city?” Workshops on this topic took place at:

- The City Library
- Newcastle Civic Centre
- Newburn.

Around **49** participants commented on this via workshops, on the Let's talk Parks website and during Twitter discussions. The results of the Let's talk Parks website quick poll (of 10 people) can be seen on the left. This was also discussed during a Twitter Hour session on workshops. Comments from Twitter have been included in the analysis of people's responses, but the results of the quick poll of two people can be seen below.



25. **Ten** people took part in this quick online poll.



26. **Two** people took part in this quick online poll.

What people felt could be positive outcomes:

- **Efficiency and coordination:** People thought this could be a possible way to maximise the efficient use of volunteering hours, and also co-ordinate with other local organisations, such as Newcastle City Council and Northumbria Police.
- **Equality between parks:** Thinking about an issue raised earlier, one view was that this proposal could help to solve the issue that not all parks attract equal numbers of volunteers, and not all volunteers are equally skilled and able. Another issue raised is that not all parks are supported by “Friends Of” or other community groups, and that this proposal could help to address this.
- **Increasing volunteering:** People thought that this could be a possible solution to the difficulty of attracting more volunteers. In particular, some people asked if it would be possible for the proposed charitable trust to monitor where volunteers are most needed, and put more resources into encouraging and “nurturing” volunteering in these areas.

Concerns:

- **Costs and bureaucracy:** Some participants asked whether co-ordinating volunteers could lead to an extra level of bureaucracy, and additional costs, for the proposed charitable trust.
- **Replacing paid staff:** Several people made the point that volunteers cannot wholly replace paid staff.

How this could work:

- **Local leadership:** One participant suggested was to have a “local leader” for each park to liaise with both volunteers and the proposed charitable trust.



27. People discuss their views at a workshop.

6. How we engaged with residents, organisations, and other stakeholders

Residents, partners and other stakeholders were able to have their say through a wide range of ways to get involved. We aimed to enable people to take part both offline, for example through drop-in discussions, sending us letters and attending workshops, and via online consultation channels such as Twitter Hour discussions and Let's Talk Newcastle surveys. This section describes how we publicised the consultation, and how we consulted people both offline and online.

Publicity

The proposals and the invitation to give feedback on them were publicised in local communities via ward noticeboards, email and distribution of flyers to community groups and individual contacts within the Communities Team.

Leaflets about the proposals were left at numerous libraries and community buildings across the city. They were also left in cafes and visitor centres at Exhibition Park, Walker Park, and Newburn Riverside Park. Flyers were distributed to households near the parks. We kept Newcastle City Council staff informed through internal bulletins and staff briefings.

Media campaign and press releases

Between February to April 2017, the City Council's communications team delivered a media campaign to promote the #NewcastleParks consultation and engagement programme. Press releases were used to inform both the media and the public about this consultation, and to give them details of the different ways people could take part in it. Once the main information went live in the public and media domain, it was used as a calling card (or signpost) for fresh pitches to new media colleagues.

Initial press releases were structured in such a way that the content would be relevant during February, March and April 2017. The first press release coincided with an important collective meeting with the Parks Forum, the second was a joint press release with the Heritage Lottery Fund and National Trust, and the third was a round-up briefing document that contained the core information plus case studies from consultation work we did with the Newcastle Elders Council and Newcastle City Youth Council.

Press releases were issued to the Newcastle City Council press list and followed up with key media contacts. The guiding principle behind the media campaign was to generate a cross-section of media coverage across the consultation fieldwork period, and to keep the engagement process in the public eye to generate interest.

On-site engagement and publicity in parks

We handed out over 100 postcards at the "This Girl Can" 5K walk and run in Exhibition Park on 8 March 2017. Additionally, students from Northumbria University visited Exhibition Park and engaged with over 50 people and handed out postcards. They collected 25 completed questionnaires, and over 200 people had discussions about the proposals whilst visiting parks and handed in postcards. Throughout the consultation period, we displayed banners in parks informing people about what was being discussed and how they could give us their views.

Drop-in sessions during Phase 1

We wanted to ensure that people could give their views both online and offline. The Community Engagement team organised drop-in meetings that were held in eight locations across the city. Over 300 people attended these sessions, with the highest attendance being in Gosforth and Jesmond (over two-thirds of the total attendance).

Location	Attendees
Jesmond	120
Gosforth	100
City Library	35
Byker	20
Lemington	19
Condercum Road	5
Kingston Park	5
Westerhope	3
Total	307

Reaching children and young people

Our Sessional Team held an event with 143 children and young people, with the questions having been devised by the Newcastle Youth Council. Staff in the Community Engagement team visited the Schools Forum on 14 February 2017 to publicise the consultation to headteachers and governors, and ask them to encourage students and parents to take part. The Wingrove Scouts also discussed this at one of their meetings, with 30 young people present.



28. One young person's illustrated thoughts about parks.

How did we advertise the consultation online?

Our main online channels were Facebook, Twitter and email to push the message out and to get people engaged. The press team used social media to provide blanket coverage for the consultation process, with key messages being distributed in regular slots across February to April 2017. The messages used the “Let’s Talk Newcastle” and “Let’s Talk Parks” links as hooks for people to access the campaign. The regular slots included North East Hour on Mondays between 8-9pm and Tuesdays between 2pm-3pm, and NE Followers on Thursdays at 2-3pm.

The communities’ media team also worked with the “Let’s Talk Parks” five media hour sessions in March and April 2017, which were set up by the OpenLab team at Newcastle University to interact with people online and get their views as part of the consultation.

Media round-up

Here is a summary of media appearances of the consultation:

Medium	Number of mentions
Local newspapers	5
National newspapers	2
Local television	3
National television	1
Local radio	3
National radio	2
Online stories	14
Facebook – 26 videos:	
Reach:	131,351
Post clicks:	6,177
Conversion Rate	21
(Reach divided by Post Clicks)	One in 21 people who saw the Newcastle Parks Facebook posts interacted with the messages
Twitter	
February	
Number of Tweets	23
Number of impressions	3,541
March	
Number of Tweets	30
Number of impressions	81,289
April	
Number of Tweets	18
Number of impressions	54,649
Overall	
Number of Tweets	71
Number of impressions	171,479

How many people took part online?

It is difficult to calculate exactly how many website users visited the Let's Talk Newcastle Online website for the purpose of completing the Have Your Say On Parks and Allotments survey or finding out information about the workshops. It is the Council's online consultation portal, and some website users may have visited it to complete other consultations that were running at the time. However, the Parks and Allotments consultation was the main consultation running on the site during the time period 13 February – 21 April, and so it is reasonable to estimate the numbers of page views and new users (people who had not previously visited the site to complete the consultation) using the analytics data for the Let's talk Newcastle website as a whole.

OpenLab ran four Twitter Hour discussions on the @LetsTalkParks Twitter account. These had 1,989 engagements, where people click on a link, retweet a tweet or reply to it. There were 102,000 impressions, where the tweets from the Twitter Hour were delivered to individual Twitter accounts. (Full statistics for the four Twitter Hours are available on request.)

Using this method of estimate, the statistics are as shown in the table below.

Users	No.
Let's talk Newcastle Online Parks Consultation webpages	
New users (estimated)	579
Unique page views (estimated)	4,347
Let's talk Parks webpages	
New users	1,174
Unique page views	7,255
Total new users (estimated)	1,753
Total unique page views (estimated)	11,602

How long did they look?

People spent the following amounts of time on the two websites:

Website	Average dwelling time
Let's talk Newcastle online	05:77
Let's talk Parks	04:32

We collected full analytical data about the consultation, which is available on request. As a quick summary, **2,267** of referrals to Let's talk Newcastle Online were direct, with the remaining **2,617** coming from a mix of social media, referrals from other pages, email, and organic searches, for example using Google.

Emails

We used email to reach stakeholder groups and members of the public. Members of the Communities Team emailed information about the drop-in sessions and Open Lab workshops to community contacts in their respective wards as follows:

- **Blakelaw, Fenham and Wingrove** – over **100** contacts.
- **Newcastle Council for Voluntary Service** –sent information to over **2,500** recipients in the voluntary and community sector.
- **'The Network'** – a West End network of community-based groups and organisations comprising over **100** groups and individuals.
- **Facebook** page – **1,218** people reached.

We also contacted Parks Groups by email, and sent out a press release alongside a briefing for elected members. The proposals received considerable media attention, and people send in their responses both online and via letters and workshops.

Let's Talk Park Workshops

OpenLab ran ten workshops to explore these issues further. In addition to using the publicity methods described above to recruit participants, we collected contact details from 83 people who completed a Let's Talk Newcastle online survey who were interested in further research. They were invited to take part at whichever workshop was best for them. The total number of workshop participants was 143, with the numbers attending each workshop being:

Location	Attendees
Jesmond Dene 1	25
Leazes Park	20
City Library	17
Gosforth Trinity Church	14
Civic Centre 1	13
Jesmond Dene 2	13
Civic Centre 2	13
Jesmond Dene Staff	12
Newburn	10
Civic Centre 3	6
Total	143

7. Who took part?

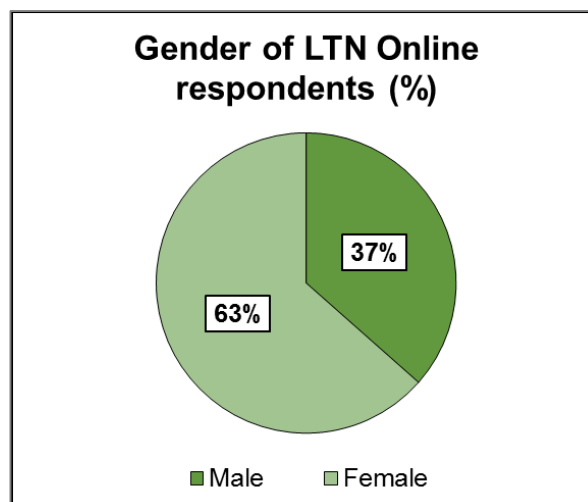
Due to the nature of the consultation with people taking part via many different routes, we have limited information about the people who took part. For example, whilst we can collect the age of people who participate via Let's Talk Newcastle online if they choose to give us this information, we do not generally know the age (or gender, or disability status) of people who attend workshops or drop-in sessions.

Of the people who took part and provided personal information, we can say that;

- The majority were **female**
- The most common **age group** was people aged 60-69 years old.
- The most common **ethnic group** was White British
- The most common **employment** status was employed full-time.
- The most common **sexual orientation** was heterosexual.
- The two most common **wards** that participants came from were North Heaton and East Gosforth.

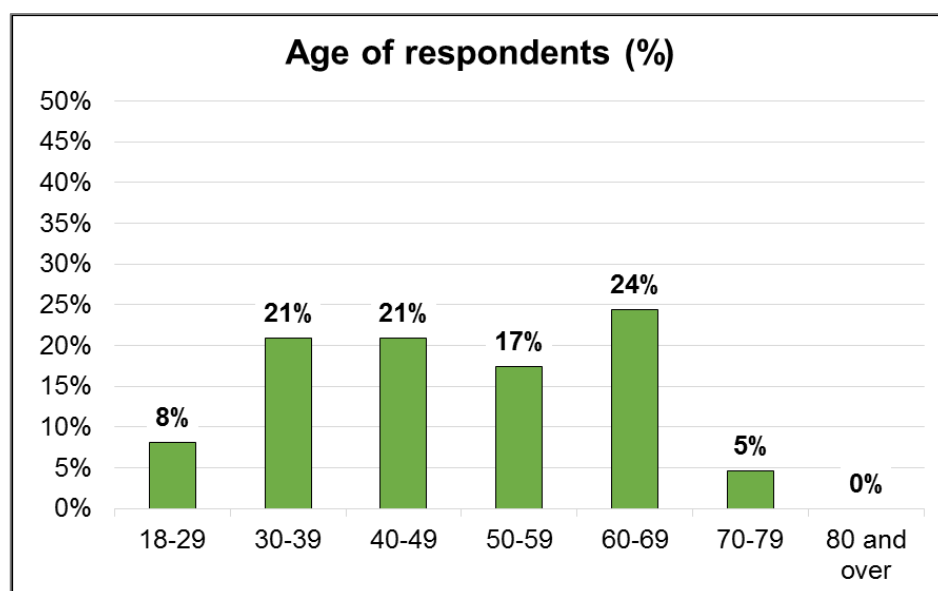
Gender

The pie chart on the right shows the gender of the 243 people who took part in the online survey during Phase 1 of the consultation and specified their gender. 63% were female and 37% male.



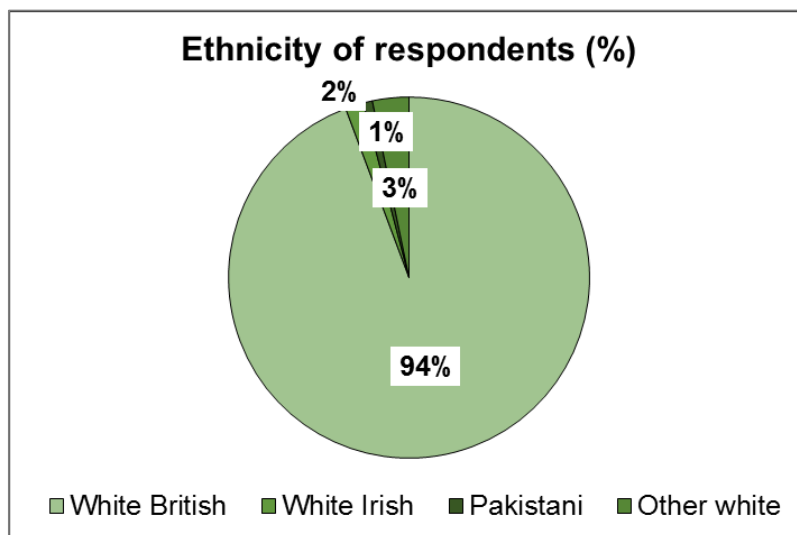
Age

The pie chart on the right shows the age of the 47 people who took part in the online survey during Phase 1 of the consultation and specified their age. The most common age group specified was 60-69 (24%).



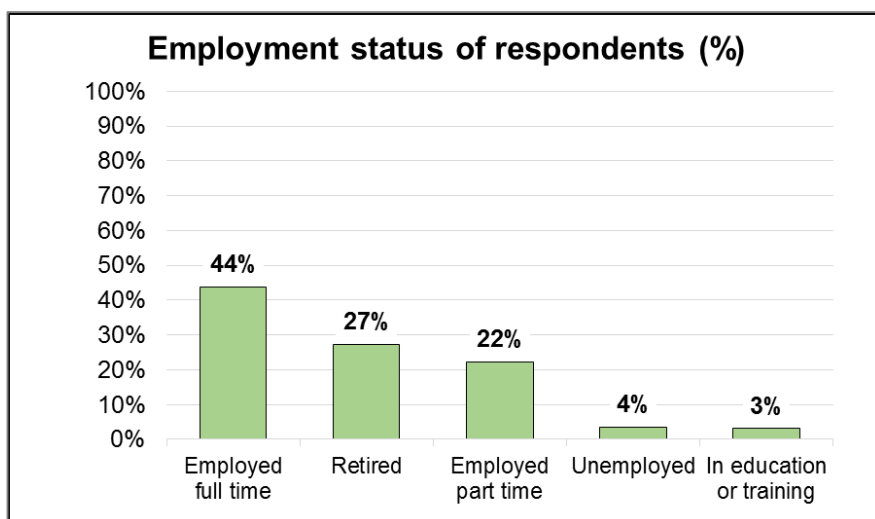
Ethnicity

The pie chart on the right shows the age of the 245 people who took part in the online survey during Phase 1 of the consultation and specified their ethnic group. The most common ethnic group was White British (94%).



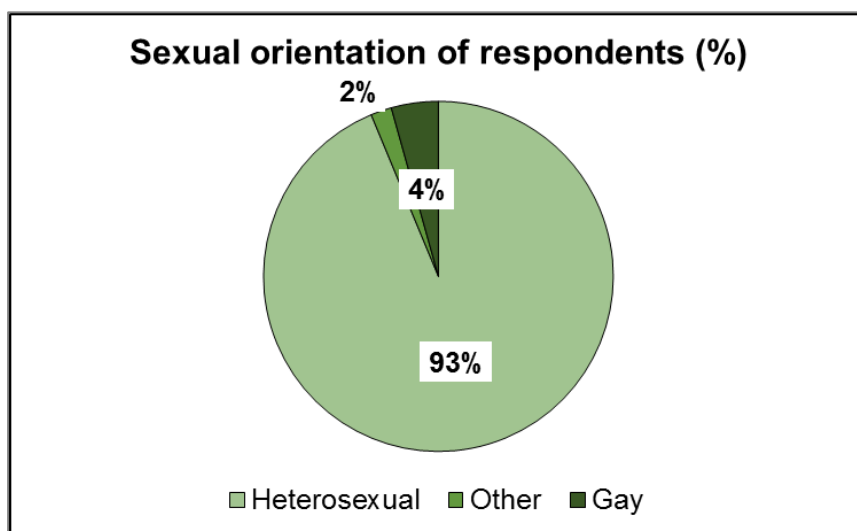
Employment status

The pie chart on the right shows the age of the 255 people who took part in the online survey during Phase 1 of the consultation and specified their employment status. The most common employment status was “employed full-time” (44%).



Sexual orientation

The pie chart on the right shows the sexual orientation of the 208 people who took part in the online survey during Phase 1 of the consultation and specified their sexual orientation. The most common reply was heterosexual (92%).



Where people live

The table below shows the wards of the **289** people who took part in the online survey during Phase 1 of the consultation and specified their postcode. The most common ward for respondent group was from North Heaton (12%).

Count	No.	%
North Heaton	35	12%
East Gosforth	23	8%
Ouseburn	22	8%
North Jesmond	20	7%
South Jesmond	20	7%
Dene	19	7%
South Heaton	17	6%
West Gosforth	17	6%
Wingrove	12	4%
Elswick	10	3%
Lemington	10	3%
Blakelaw	9	3%
Westgate	9	3%
Kenton	8	3%
Benwell and Scotswood	7	2%
Castle	5	2%
Newburn	5	2%
Byker	4	1%
Fenham	4	1%
Woolsington	4	1%
Walker	3	1%
Walkergate	3	1%
Westerhope	3	1%
Denton	2	1%
Fawdon	2	1%
Parklands	1	0%
<i>Outside Newcastle upon Tyne</i>	15	5%
Total	289	

The majority of visitors to the Let's talk Newcastle online survey and Let's Talk Parks website were from Newcastle upon Tyne (3,023), with 442 coming from nearby areas such as Gateshead and North Shields, 451 from London, 142 from other UK locations and 85 who did not specify their location.

821 referrals to the Let's Talk Parks website were direct, with the remaining **1,322** coming from a mix of social media, referrals, email, and organic searches. The majority of users were from Newcastle upon Tyne (1,353), with 142 coming from nearby areas such as Gateshead and North Shields, 199 from London, 153 from other UK locations and 48 who did not specify their location.

Appendix 1 – Media Report

This appendix provides full details of archived press releases, media pick-up, radio features and television features on the consultation

Example of archived press releases

Newcastle City Council

1. **Date:** 11 January 2017
PR Headline: *"Have your say about the future of Newcastle's Parks"*
Online Source: www.newcastle.gov.uk/news-story/have-your-say-about-future-newcastles-parks
2. **Date:** 13 February 2017
PR Headline: *"Newcastle explores transfer of parks to trust (Have Your Say)"*
Online Source: www.newcastle.gov.uk/news-story/newcastle-explores-transfer-parks-trust-have-your-say

Heritage Lottery Fund

3. **Date:** 11 February 2017
PR Headline: *"Newcastle explores transfer of parks to trust"*
Online Source: www.hlf.org.uk/about-us/media-centre/press-releases/newcastle-explores-transfer-parks-trust

Newcastle University (to highlight the work of Open Lab)

4. **Date:** 21 March 2017
PR Headline: *"Newcastle residents invited to give their views on city's parks"*
Online Source: www.ncl.ac.uk/press/news/2017/03/newcastleparksconsultation

Media Pick Up

Newswire

5. **Date:** 17 April 2017
Organisation: Press Association (Environment and Heritage correspondent, Emily Beament)
Content: We (Garry Smith) had been pitching the Newcastle Parks consultation to the national press since the start of the engagement programme. The momentum and progress of the campaign kept alive the media interest, but it wasn't until the last fortnight of the live consultation that one of the newswires "bit". The reporter spoke with Cllr Kim McGuinness and also used the briefing pack as padding material. Subsequently the wired article dated 17 April resulted in the catch of numerous national newspapers and TV on the following two days.

Newspapers

- 6. Date:** 12 January 2017
Title: Evening Chronicle and The Journal [hard copies in both papers and online]
Headline: *"National Trust could get involved in Newcastle parks as council cuts bite"*
Online: www.chroniclelive.co.uk/news/north-east-news/council-seeks-views-on-parks-12441053
- 7. Date:** 11 February 2017
Title: The Journal (plus online)
Headline: *"Plans to hand Newcastle parks to a charitable trust win the backing of Government"*.
Online: www.chroniclelive.co.uk/news/north-east-news/plans-hand-newcastle-parks-charitable-12585983
- 8. Date:** 26 February 2017
Title: The Sunday Times
Headline: *"Newcastle uses public health cash to save city parks"*
Online: www.thetimes.co.uk/article/newcastle-uses-public-health-cash-to-save-cityparks-6s2jhwpmg
- 9. Date:** 17 April 2017
Title: Evening Chronicle and The Journal [hard copies in both papers and online]
Headline: *"Newcastle parks shake-up: People fear for future of city's green spaces"*
Online: www.chroniclelive.co.uk/news/north-east-news/newcastle-parks-shake-up-people-12903240
- 10. Date:** 18 April 2017
Title: Daily Telegraph (hard copy and online)
Headline: *"Parks 'to be run by charities' under plans backed by the National Trust"*
Online: www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/04/17/parks-run-charities-plans-backed-national-trust
- 11. Date:** 18 April 2017
Title: Independent
Headline: N/A
(A member of the consultation team saw a news piece in the *Independent* newspaper.)

Radio

- 12. Date:** 8 February 2017
Station / Programme: BBC Newcastle / Breakfast Show
Approx. time: 6:00 – 9:00am
Content: A snippet of Cllr McGuinness's "Look North" TV interview was used on the radio.
- 13. Date:** 10 March 2017
Station / Programme: BBC Newcastle / Breakfast Show
Approx. time: 6:00 – 9:00am
Content: The audio from Tony Durcan's "Politics Show" were used as a radio piece ahead of the TV broadcast that weekend.
- 14. Date:** 14 April 2017
Station / Programme: "PM" / BBC Radio 4 (5.00pm)
Approx. time: A round-up piece was aired using material from North East BBC reporter Luke Walton (Newcastle City Council representative – Tony Durcan / Parks Forum).
- 15. Date:** 18 April 2017
Station / Programme: BBC Radio 4 / Today
Content: Cllr McGuinness was contacted by the show's producers to do a live interview into the show, but instead they used the pre-recorded material from the "Sunday Politics Show" (unconfirmed)

Television

- 16. Date:** 8 February 2017
Station / Programme: BBC Look North and Cumbria
Time: 6.30pm (sometimes it's also featured on the lunch-time and late news)
Outline: Reporter Luke Walton interviewed Cllr McGuinness at Exhibition Park; and also spoke with parks volunteers from Gosforth Central Park and with Anya from the Parks Forum.
- 17. Date:** 14 February 2017
Station / Programme: Made in Tyne and Wear
Times: 6.30pm and 9.00pm
Outline: The reporter interviewed Cllr McGuinness at Exhibition Park to gain a flavour of what the Parks consultation is all about.
- 18. Date:** 9 March 2017
Station / Programme: ITV Tyne Tees and Border
Outline: The reporter visited Havannah and Three Hills Nature Reserve in Hazlerigg to experience a parks volunteer scheme first hand, to chat to people about the consultation and inform people about the task in-hand, including an interview with Ivor Crowther of the Heritage Lottery Fund North East.

- 19. Date:** 10 March 2017
Station / Programme: BBC Look North and Cumbria
Outline: They aired an edited version of Sunday's Parks "Politics Show" interview with Tony Durcan.
- 20. Date:** 12 March 2017
Station / Programme: The Politics Show
Outline: The show looked closer at the financial model of potentially transferring the parks into a charitable trust. The reporter also spoke with other councils in the UK including Milton Keynes, plus a chat with Clive Betts MP. Luke interviewed Tony Durcan (Newcastle City Council) at Leazes Park.
- 21. Date:** 18 April 2017
Station / Programme: BBC Breakfast News (national)
Outline: The Newcastle Parks consultation made the news round up on "BBC Breakfast" (nationwide). They said that the people of Newcastle upon Tyne had the chance to vote and have their say about the future of their parks. (Source – PA Newswire story.)

Online

- 22. Date:** 17 January 2017
Publication: Pitchcare.com
Headline: *"National Trust could get involved in Newcastle parks as council cuts bite"*
Link: www.pitchcare.com/news-media/national-trust-could-get-involved-in-newcastle-parks-as-council-cuts-bite.html
- 23. Date:** 8 February 2017
Publication: BBC News Online
Headline: *"Newcastle Council considers handing running of parks to charity"*
Link: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-tyne-38907447>
- 24. Date:** 11 February 2017
Publication: Guardian Online
Headline: *"UK's cash-starved parks at tipping point of decline, MPs warn"*
Link: www.theguardian.com/cities/2017/feb/11/uks-cash-starved-parks-at-tipping-point-of-decline-mps-warn
- 25. Date:** 11 February 2017
Publication: BBC National Online News
Headline: *"Public parks in danger of falling into neglect, warn MPs" (after Local Government Association report)*
Link: www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-38935787
- 26. Date:** 11 February 2017
Publication: Sky News online
Headline: *"Public parks in England under threat from spending cuts"*
Link: <http://news.sky.com/story/public-parks-in-england-under-threat-from-spending-cuts-10763463>

- 27. Date:** 13 February 2017
Publication: Horticulture Weekly
Headline: *"Newcastle wins HLF funding to help it develop parks trust model".*
Link: www.hortweek.com/newcastle-wins-hlf-funding-help-develop-parks-trust-model/parks-and-gardens/article/1424037
- 28. Date:** 13 February 2017
Publication: Health Watch Newcastle
Headline: *"Have your say about the future of Newcastle's parks"*
Link: www.healthwatchnewcastle.org.uk/news/the-future-of-newcastles-parks
- 29. Date:** 14 February 2017
Publication: Landscape Insight
Headline: *"Newcastle explores transfer of parks to trust"*
Link: <http://landscapeinsight.com/910-newcastle-explores-transfer-of-parks-to-trust>
- 30. Date:** 17 March 2017
Publication: Horticulture Weekly
Headline: *"Park trusts, selling add-on services and working for neighbouring boroughs among funding solutions aired at parks event".*
Link: www.hortweek.com/park-trusts-selling-add-on-services-working-neighbouring-boroughs-among-funding-solutions-aird-parks-event/parks-and-gardens/article/1427845
- 31. Date:** 22 March 2017
Publication: Jesmond Local
Headline: *"Council continues consultation on future of parks"*
Link: <http://jesmondlocal.com/2017/03/council-continues-consultation-on-future-of-parks>
- 32. Date:** 28 March 2017
Publication: Voice North
Headline: *"Newcastle residents invited to give their views on city's parks"*
Link: www.voicenorth.org/latest/2017/march/newcastle-residents-invited-to-give-their-views-on-city-s-parks
- 33. Date:** 18 April 2017
Publication: ITV News Online
Headline: *"Major concerns over parks becoming unsafe in the hands of a new trust in Newcastle".*
Link: www.itv.com/news/tyne-tees/2017-04-18/people-in-newcastle-concerned-parks-will-become-unsafe-in-hands-of-trust
- 34. Date:** 18 April 2017
Title / Publication: Third Sector
Headline: *"Newcastle ponders handing parks and allotments to charitable trust"*
Online: www.thirdsector.co.uk/newcastle-ponders-handing-parks-allotments-charitable-trust/policy-and-politics/article/1430739

35. Date: 18 April 2017
Publication: Morning Star
Headline: "Newcastle may hand parks over to charity"
Link: www.morningstaronline.co.uk/a-5f46-Newcastle-may-hand-parks-over-to-charity#.WSL8jk0zWUk

Social Media

The press team used social media to provide blanket coverage for the consultation process, with key messages being distributed in regular slots across February to April. The messages used the "Let's Talk Newcastle" and "Let's Talk Parks" links as hooks for people to access the campaign. The Communities' media team also interacted with the "Let's Talk Parks" media hour set up by OpenLab at Newcastle University to interact with people online.

Reach is when a Facebook post has appeared in somebody's timeline

Post Click People who clicked web-link provided in the post

Conversion Rate is the 'Reach' divided by the 'Post Clicks', which means the number of people who went on to visit the web-link or website advertised in the post.

Facebook

Videos

36. Video / Photo 1: *BBC Look North (preview)*

Date: 7 February 2017
Content: Informing people about a pre-Parks consultation TV interview on BBC Look North included an interview with Cllr McGuinness (Exhibition Park) and volunteers
Reach: 1,610 people
Post Clicks: 93
Conversion Rate: 1 in 17 people

37. Video / Photo 2: *BBC Look North (post)*

Date: 7 February 2017
Content: A message to tell people if they saw the TV item to visit the consultation when it goes live on 13 February
Reach: 4,724 people
Post Clicks: 87
Conversion Rate: 1 in 54 people

38. Video 3: *"Have your say about the future of Newcastle's Parks"*

Date: 13 February 2017
Content: Public introduction to the Newcastle Parks Consultation with an interview with Cllr Kim McGuinness
Reach: 11,300 people
Post Clicks: 1,140
Conversion Rate: 1 in every 9 people

- 39. Video 4:** *"Here's the info on a Public Parks Jan 2017 Government Select Committee Report" (slide show)*
Date: 1 March 2017
Content: Slides created of key facts from the Select Committee Report
Reach: 4,291 people
Post Clicks: 43
Conversion Rate: 1 in every 99 people
- 40. Video 5:** *"Is a charitable trust the way forward for Newcastle's Parks?"*
Date: 2 March 2017
Content: Student Harry Harris, aged 18, of Newcastle University interview
Reach: 4,127 people
Post Clicks: 61
Conversion Rate: 1 in 67 people
- 41. Video 6:** *Message from the Communities Team (the people on the ground)*
Date: 6 March 2017
Content: Community Officer Gail Forbes talks about the importance of attending the Parks workshops and also taking part in the consultation
Reach: 8,363 people
Post Clicks: 193
Conversion Rate: 1 in 43 people
- 42. Video 7:** *Trailing the ITV Tyne Tees and Border magazine piece*
Date: 9 March 2017
Content: A photo taken during the Havannah and Three Hills Nature Reserve ITV filming
Reach: 2,014 people
Post Clicks: 60
Conversion Rate: 1 in 33 people
- 43. Video 8:** *Take part in our Newcastle Parks Consultation*
Date: 14 March 2017
Content: Edward Wynne, a volunteer of Gosforth, talking about being a volunteer and taking part in the Newcastle Parks consultation
Reach: 3,913 people
Post Clicks: 58
Conversion Rate: 1 in 67 people
- 44. Video / Photo 9:** *Consultation website links*
Date: 15 March 2017
Content: A photo of a daffodil to accompany the consultation website link
Reach: 1,376 people
Post Clicks: 68
Conversion Rate: 1 in 20 people

45. Video 10: *Walker Park – vandalism***Date:** 15 March 2017**Content:** Walker Park – a video to highlight some mindless vandalism to the park (uprooted trees and flowers). Video used to push the Walker-based drop-in sessions. Shows people's passion for their local park.**Reach:** 14.9k people**Post Clicks:** 2,544**Conversion Rate:** 1 in 5 people**46. Video / Photo 11:** Flower photo**Date:** 20 March 2017**Content:** A pretty flower photograph from the Chronicle accompanied by the Park's consultation web-link "Have your say..."**Reach:** 1,253 people**Post Clicks:** 29**Conversion Rate:** 1 in 43 people**47. Video 12:** *Parks Volunteer video***Date:** 21 March 2017**Content:** Sheila Lowery, Parks Volunteer talking at Havannah and Three Hills Nature Reserve about the importance of people volunteering in parks.**Reach:** 3,854 people**Post Clicks:** 49**Conversion Rate:** 1 in 78 people**48. Video 13:** *Open Lab part of Newcastle University video***Date:** 24 March 2017**Content:** Dan Lambton-Howard talks about open Lab's role in the Parks consultation and how people can get involved**Reach:** 5,211 people**Post Clicks:** 60**Conversion Rate:** 1 in 86 people**49. Video 14:** *Pat Ritchie, Chief Executive of NCC video***Date:** 24 March 2017**Content:** Pat Ritchie talks about the Council's Parks engagement programme, and encourages people to take part.**Reach:** 4,541 people**Post Clicks:** 72**Conversion Rate:** 1 in 63**50. Video 15:** *Heritage Lottery Fund video***Date:** 28 March 2017**Content:** Ivor Crowther, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund North East talks about why the HLF is supporting the NCC consultation; and reinforces the importance of parks in the community.**Reach:** 4,061 people**Post Clicks:** 96**Conversion Rate:** 1 in 42 people

51. Video / Photo 16: Images / slides from Twitter Hour**Date:** 29 March 2017**Content:** A cross-social media promotion promoting the Open Lab "Let's Talk Parks" Twitter Hour**Reach:** 1,898 people**Post Clicks:** 58**Conversion Rate:** 1 in 32 people**52. Video 17:** *Parks Vox Pops (1/3)***Date:** 30 March 2017**Content:** A video showing local residents (park users) having their say about the parks engagement programme "They had their say, now you have yours!"**Reach:** 8,403 people**Post Clicks:** 376**Conversion Rate:** 1 in 22 people**53. Video 18:** *Parks Vox Pops (2/3)***Date:** 31 March 2017**Content:** A video showing local residents (park users) answering the question – "Should we look to the past for our park's future?"**Reach:** 9,795 people**Post Clicks:** 268**Conversion Rate:** 1 in 30 people**54. Video 19:** *Parks Vox Pops (3/3)***Date:** 3 April 2017**Content:** A video showing local residents (park users) answering the question "is a parks trust the way forward?"**Reach:** 7,235 people**Post Clicks:** 223**Conversion Rate:** 1 in 32 people**55. Video 20:** *Cllr McGuinness – last minute reminder***Date:** 4 April 2017**Content:** Cllr McGuinness, cabinet member for culture and communities reminded people 'there was still time to take part and make a difference' in the Parks Consultation.**Reach:** 5,509 people**Post Clicks:** 130**Conversion Rate:** 1 in 42 people**56. Video 21:** *Parks Volunteers***Date:** 7 April 2017**Content:** David Stebbings, Parks Volunteer talking at Havannah and Three Hills Nature Reserve about the integral role volunteers play in the upkeep of parks and green spaces.**Reach:** 3,648 people**Post Clicks:** 36**Conversion Rate:** 1 in 101 people

- 57. Video 22:** *Elders Council of Newcastle*
Date: 11 April 2017
Content: Keith Pimm of the Elders Council of Newcastle talking about the importance of Newcastle's Elders community taking part in the parks consultation
Reach: 3,815 people
Post Clicks: 75
Conversion Rate: 1 in 50 people
- 58. Video 23:** *Newcastle Youth Council (NYC)*
Date: 18 April 2017
Content: Jamie Dickinson of NYC talks about the importance of young people having their say as part of the Newcastle Parks consultation
Reach: 4,017 people
Post Clicks: 40
Conversion Rate: 1 in 100 people
- 59. Video / Story link 24:** *Circulation of Daily Telegraph online article*
Date: 18 April 2017
Content: The Telegraph produced an article based on the newswire piece written by the Press Association
Reach: 5,304 people
Post Clicks: 177 clicks
Conversion Rate: 1 in 29 people
- 60. Video / Photo 25:** *Consultation Reminder*
Date: 20 April 2017
Content: "There is still time to have your say!"
Reach: 2,099
Post Clicks: 59
Conversion Rate: 1 in 35 people
- 61. Video 26:** *Protecting Our Parks (slideshow)*
Date: 21 April 2017
Content: A brief slideshow asking key questions about the why there's a need for the consultation and engagement programme
Reach: 4,090 people
Post Clicks: 82
Conversion Rate: 1 in 49 people

Extra information on the scope of social media

For information we are including the details of a collection of Face Book videos that showed how passionate local people are about their parks and green spaces. The Council used social media (23-25 February 2017) to appeal for information about a serious case of vandalism in Leazes Park. The response was outstanding!

The four videos generated a total of:

Video 1:	23 Feb	General appeal for information
Reach:	762,863 ppl	Post Clicks: 115,687 Conversion rate: 1 in 6 people
Video 2:	24 Feb	Cllr McGuinness (Council response to vandalism)
Reach:	15,513 ppl	Post Clicks: 1491 Conversion rate: 1 in 10 people
Video 3:	24 Feb	Cllr McGuinness talks about damage costs
Reach:	18,001 ppl	Post Clicks: 1381 Conversion rate: 1 in 13 people
Video 4:	25 Feb	Jan Hall from Friends of Leazes Park
Reach:	10,217 ppl	Post Clicks: 803 Conversion rate: 1 in 12 people
Total Reach:	806,594 people	
Total Post Clicks:	119,362	
Overall Conversion Rate:	1 in 6 people	

Internal Distribution of Key Messages: We also regularly featured the Park's consultation in the City Council's in-house weekly email bulletin (News in Brief) on at least six occasions.



Images drawn by children and young people taking part in the consultation of what their “perfect park” would look like

