



Research Report

June 2020 Viewpoint Survey:  
Green Spaces in Lockdown

South Gloucestershire Council

Report produced by:

Corporate Research & Consultation Team

Department for Environment and Community Services

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# Key Findings

## The main reasons for using green spaces

- The most frequent reason for visiting green spaces before lockdown was to enjoy natural scenery and wildlife, and this remained the main reason to visit during lockdown as well (77% of people listed it in their main five reasons for the period before lockdown, and 78% during the lockdown period)
- When asked to explain any other reasons why a respondent may have visited green spaces, the most frequent response was not actually related to visiting green space at all. The most frequent comment made was that respondents couldn't visit due to ill health, vulnerability or shielding (27 mentions). The next most frequent reason that people *had* visited a green space was leisure activities such as horse riding, photography and fishing (10 mentions).

## Frequency of using green spaces

- Almost all respondents visited a green space at least weekly before lockdown (85% at least weekly)
- 48% of respondents have used green spaces more since lockdown, and 28% having used green spaces less

# Key Findings

## Reasons for changes in the use of green spaces

- Pending analysis of open ended comments
- 47% of respondents think their use change will continue, and 53% do not think it will continue

## The value of green spaces

- The majority of respondents (60%) value green spaces more now compared to before lockdown, and virtually no one values green spaces less (1%)
- Pending analysis of open ended comments

# Introduction

The following report provides a summary of findings from a survey of South Gloucestershire Council's Viewpoint panel. Members of South Gloucestershire Council's Viewpoint panel were asked for their feedback on their use of green spaces, including how that use has changed as a result of lockdown. These questions were asked alongside a series of questions about the opinions on the new Council Plan.

## Methodology

The survey was sent to all 2,293 members of South Gloucestershire Council's Viewpoint panel either by post (83%) or by email (17%). The survey was open until **5<sup>th</sup> July 2020**.

## Sample and Response

871 completed surveys were received, giving a response rate of 38%.

The panel aims to be as representative of the population of South Gloucestershire as possible and any over- or under-representations with regards to certain demographics are balanced by weighting the data to match the proportions present in the population. Quantitative data has been weighted according to population information taken from the 2011 Census (Office for National Statistics). The results are weighted by gender, ethnicity (White and BAME), age (working age vs. non working age) and geography (priority neighbourhood and rest of the district).

There are five priority neighbourhoods in South Gloucestershire: Cadbury Heath, Kingswood, Patchway, Staple Hill and Yate & Dodington. These areas were defined using the English Indices of Deprivation as areas where higher numbers of people do not achieve their full potential, have poorer health outcomes, are employed in less well paid jobs or are unemployed and have higher levels of crime. For further information please visit <http://www.southglos.gov.uk/community-and-living/stronger-communities/priority-neighbourhoods/>.

## Reporting

Base numbers shown for graphs/charts in this report reflect the weighted number. Qualitative data (comments questions) has not been weighted.

For each survey question, the difference in views of different sample groups have been tested for significance at a 95% confidence level. Key significant findings are highlighted throughout this report.

Sums of percentages reported in this document may deviate from the actual total due to rounding. Greater deviations from 100% occur where respondents were able to choose multiple options and percentages are based on the number of respondents.

A full list of all comments made is available on request; due to the large number of individual comments made it has not been possible to include the full text of all comments within the main body of this report.

This following pages present the survey findings by subject area and follows the format of the questionnaire (a copy of the questionnaire is available on request). 5



## **Main reasons for using green spaces in lockdown**

The first question asked about the five main reasons for visiting green spaces before and during lockdown

# Main reasons for visiting green spaces

(Question 17)

The most frequent reason for visiting green spaces before lockdown was to enjoy natural scenery and wildlife, and this remained the main reason to visit during lockdown as well (77% of people listed it in their main five reasons for the period before lockdown, and 78% during the lockdown period)

Reason for visiting	Before lockdown	During lockdown	Increase or decrease?
To enjoy natural scenery and wildlife	77%	78%	↑
To relax and enjoy peace & quiet in nature	68%	72%	↑
To exercise	73%	74%	↑
To visit the children's play area	25%	3%	↓
To play sport	19%	10%	↓
For bowling	3%	0%	↓
To visit the cafe	17%	3%	↓
For a picnic / barbecue	14%	8%	↓
To spend time with family/friends	47%	27%	↓
To attend an organised event	21%	3%	↓
To walk or cycle to somewhere else	41%	41%	→
To exercise my dog	28%	28%	→
To take a shortcut	17%	16%	↓
To visit an allotment	5%	5%	→

There were small increases in the proportion of people visiting green spaces during lockdown to enjoy natural scenery and wildlife (+1%), to relax and enjoy peace and quiet in nature (+4%), and to exercise (1%).

All other reasons for visiting decreased.

The biggest decreases in reasons were seen for usages that involved a physical location or event: visiting the children's play area (-22%), to spend time with family and friends (-20%), to attend an organised event (-18%), and to visit the café (-14%).

Base: n=773

# Other reasons for visiting green spaces

(Question 17 - other)

When asked to explain any other reasons why a respondent may have visited green spaces, the most frequent response was not actually related to visiting green space at all. The most frequent comment made was that respondents couldn't visit due to ill health, vulnerability or shielding (27 mentions).

Theme	Number of mentions
Vulnerable and/or unwell so was shielding	27
Leisure activities such as photography, fishing	10
None of the options applied	8
Don't use green spaces	8
Change of scenery	7
Live/walk in countryside	6
Get some headspace/fresh air	6
Green space is garden	6
Misc	5
Went elsewhere for easier distancing	4
Exercised elsewhere	3
No reason to go for social during lockdown	2
Assist with a community asset	2
Haven't been during lockdown	1
To litter pick	1
Visiting relatives	1

Base: n = 97

When asked to explain any other reasons why a respondent may have visited green spaces, the most frequent response was not actually related to visiting green space at all. The most frequent comment made was that respondents couldn't visit due to ill health, vulnerability or shielding (27 mentions).

The next most frequent 'other' reason for visiting (that wasn't a comment on shielding or vulnerability) was to visit for leisure activities (10 mentions).

These included horse riding (2 mentions), fishing (2 mentions), attend dance classes (1 mention) and to undertake a hobby like photography (1 mention).

Some respondents stated that they didn't use green space at all (6 mentions), or that they already lived in a rural area so didn't need to use a green space during lockdown (6 mentions).



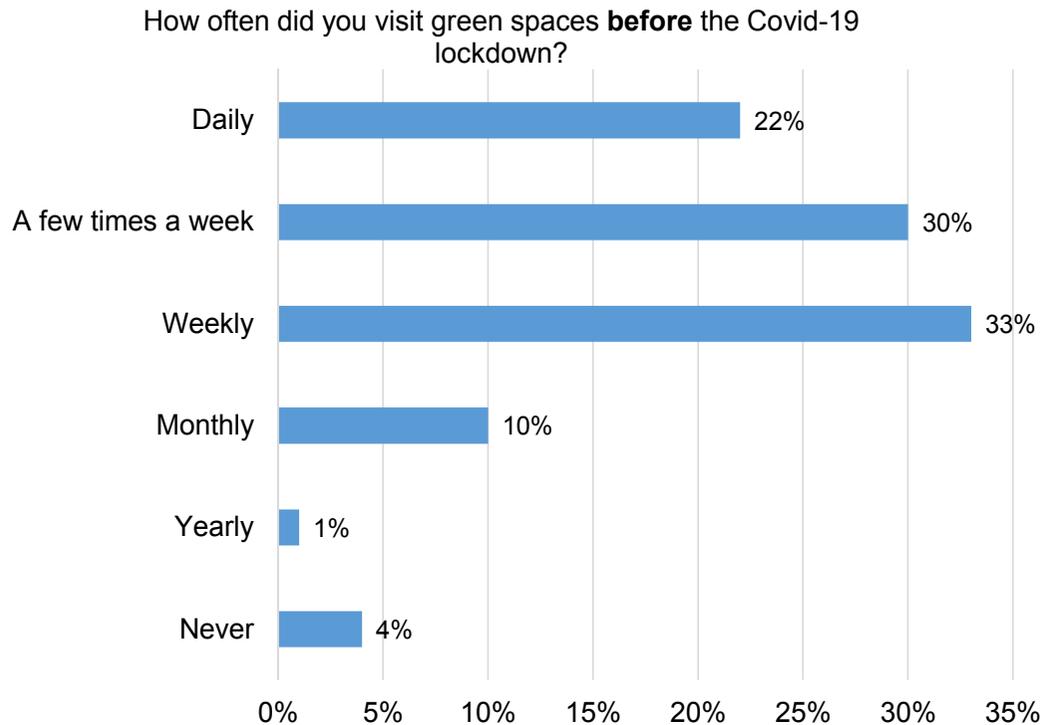
## Frequency of use of green spaces

The next questions asked about frequency of use of green spaces, both before and during lockdown

# How often did you visit green spaces *before* lockdown?

(Question 18)

Almost all respondents visited a green space at least weekly before lockdown (85% at least weekly)



## Over 65's

- Slightly less likely than average to use a green space at least weekly (82% compared to an average of 85%), but still a high proportion of use

## Retired people

- Slightly less likely than average to use a green space at least weekly (81% compared to an average of 85%), but still a high proportion of use

## Health

- People who describe themselves as long term sick were significantly less likely to use green spaces than people with all other employment statuses (23% weekly use). These people are more likely to use a green space yearly (55%) rather than never (6%)
- Disabled people were significantly less likely to visit green spaces at least weekly than non-disabled people (76% of disabled people visiting weekly vs 86% non-disabled)

## Ethnicity

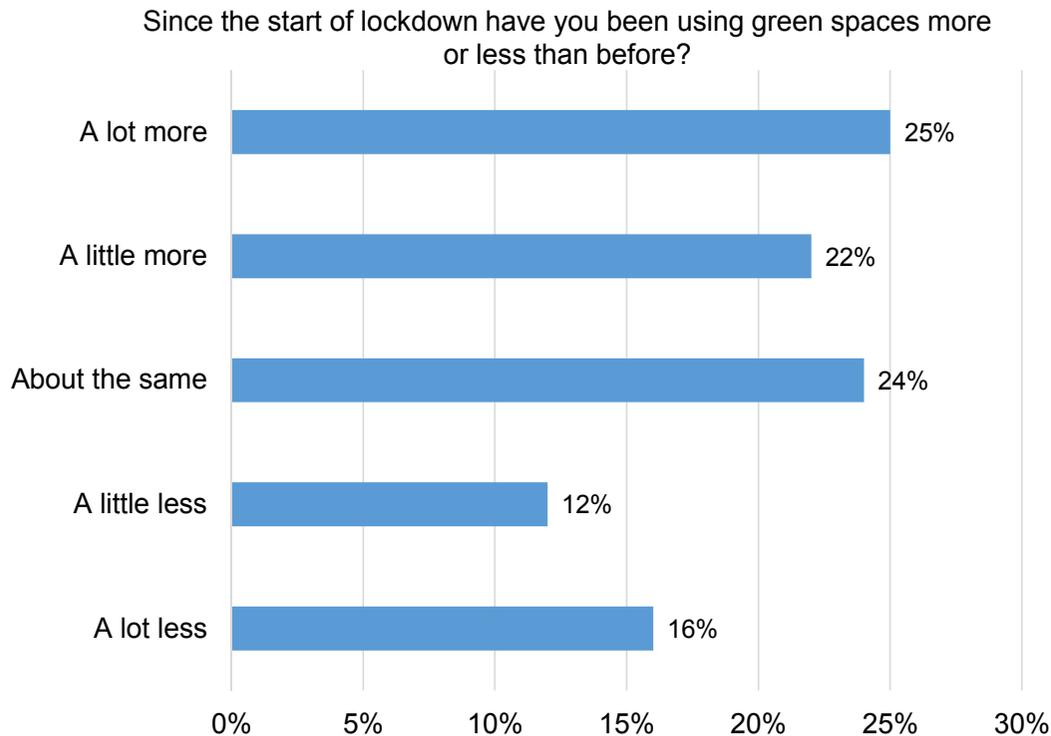
- People from a BAME background were significantly less likely to visit green spaces at least weekly than people from a White British background (55% compared to 86% )

Base: n=763

# Since the start of lockdown, have you been using green spaces more or less than before?

(Question 19)

48% of respondents have used green spaces more since lockdown, and 28% having used green spaces less



Base: n=751

## Age

- People aged 16-44 significantly more likely to have used green spaces more (64%), compared to people aged 45 to 64 (40%) and people aged 65+ (19%)

## Priority Neighbourhoods

- Respondents living in priority neighbourhood areas were significantly more likely to use green spaces less (47% respondents living in PN areas, compared to 25% rest of district)

## Housing

- People whose housing does not have access to an outdoor space were significantly more likely to use green spaces more (96% no outdoor space vs 45% with outdoor space)

## Health

- Disabled people were significantly more likely to visit green spaces less when compared to non-disabled people (51% disabled people using green spaces more vs 25% non-disabled)

# What are the main reasons you are visiting green spaces more or less often than before lockdown?

(Question 20)

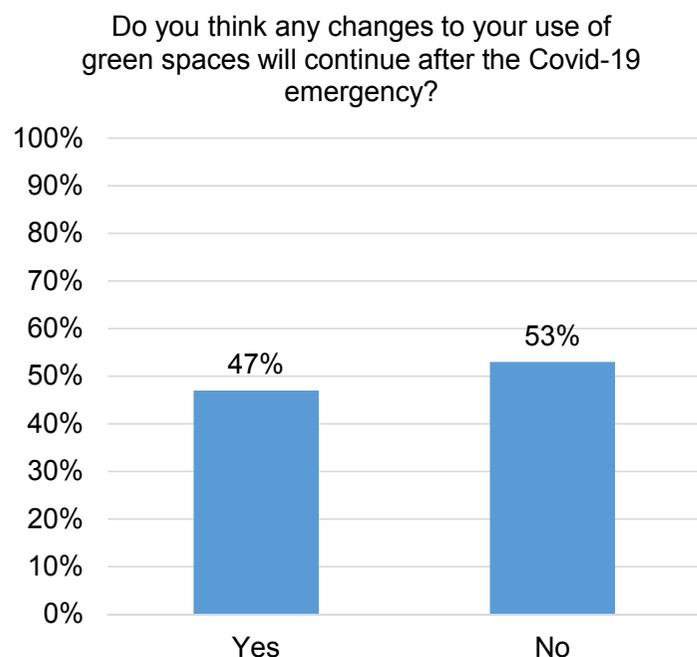
ANALYSIS PENDING

Base: n = 530

# Do you think any changes to your use of green spaces will continue after the Covid-19 emergency?

(Question 21)

47% of respondents think their use change will continue, and 53% do not think it will continue



## Current levels of green space use

- Of the respondents who think their use change will continue, the majority (65%) are currently using green spaces more

## Green space use before Covid

- Of the respondents who think their use change will continue, 83% were using green spaces at least weekly before Covid

## Other significant differences

- There were no other significant differences in response, analysed by demographic.

Base: n=780



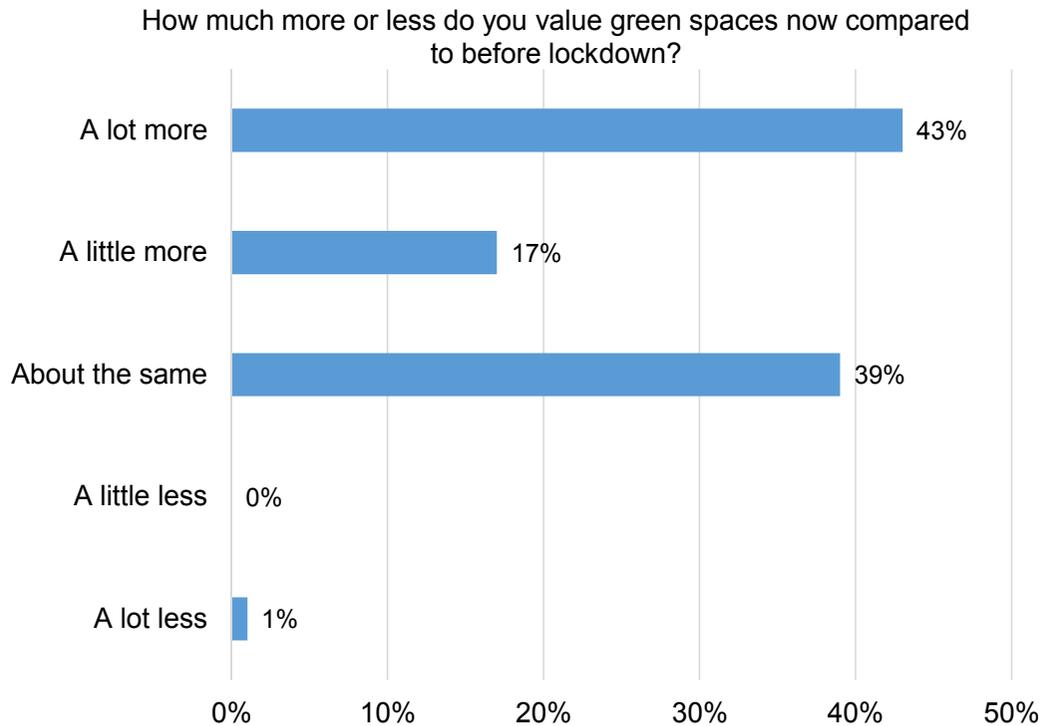
## The value of green spaces

The next questions asked about the value of green spaces now, compared to before lockdown

# How much more or less do you value green spaces now compared to before lockdown?

(Question 22)

The majority of respondents (60%) value green spaces more now compared to before lockdown, and virtually no one values green spaces less (1%)



Base: n=768

## Younger people

- Younger people are significantly less likely to value green spaces more compared to people aged 65+ (56% vs 70%)

## Housing

- People in socially rented housing are significantly more likely to value green spaces more now vs people who own their own home (85% vs 61%)
- There was no statistically significant difference in perception of value seen between those who do and don't have access to outdoor space at home

## Health

- People who describe themselves as long term sick were less likely to value green spaces more, when compared to some other employment statuses (28% long term sick vs 71% employed part-time and 71% retired)

# Please use the space below to leave any further comments on the value of green spaces to you during lockdown

(Question 23)

ANALYSIS PENDING

Base: n = 202