



Friends of Eastville Park Proposal: Transforming Eastville Park for Future Generations

A vision of improvement with Heritage Lottery Fund support

Registered charity 1199637

The Friends of Eastville Park Incorporated Charity established in 2022, evolving from the Friends Group which has been running since 2015. Friends of Eastville Park is run by local residents who are trustees. We fundraise for the improvement and benefit of the park while working with Bristol City Council and park users.

The Charity status has allowed us to strengthen our ability to make improvements within Eastville Park, widen options for fundraising or incoming generation and be more ambitious whilst managing expectations

Our key aims are to protect, restore, enhance and future proof the array of park features and facilities for current and growing needs of the local and wider community. This includes the nature and wildlife within the heritage and natural features, ageing buildings, tired or over-used outdoor play areas, sports facilities and community buildings.

This is to ensure that our diverse community can have free access to the space, organise or take part in events, and increase awareness of other cultures and needs. Our events and activities are open to all and are multi generational, secular and support asset-based community development.

We are pragmatic in our approach and have worked closely with Bristol City Council to alleviate some of the pressure of managing such a large space. We have restored ageing buildings, created a community space and fundraised to reinvest in the park. Recent survey feedback, combined with historic surveys have helped us refresh priorities. Whilst the park is used in a multitude of ways by different people, there are common themes and priorities.

Friends of Eastville Park have extensive documentation of the local history and heritage value of Eastville Park in the local community, adding value to the Heritage Fund bid.

We have a large and supportive facebook community with 12,000 followers. This space is for the park community and neighbours to chat, share photos or take part in volunteering or events.

With thanks to Your Park Bristol and Bath, who have contributed sections of this report and consulted with local disabled residents and carers.

<https://eastvillepark.org.uk/friendsFacebook> link -
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/eastvillepark>.

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Executive Summary

Eastville Park is one of Bristol's most cherished green spaces — a historic, diverse, and well-used park that continues to thrive despite decades of underinvestment, and its position outside the city's designated Destination Parks programme.

This proposal outlines a transformational vision for Eastville Park, supported by the Friends of Eastville Park (FOEP), in line with the vision for parks from Bristol Parks Forum, and a wide network of community partners.

The aim of this document is to gain a letter of support from the Bristol City Council Parks Department to pursue a £4.8 million heritage lottery fund bid.

We require a letter of support to continue discussions with Heritage Lottery to further develop a bid, which we will write with support from specialists, and through volunteer facilitated engagement sessions.

Heritage Lottery Funding, combined with FOEP's £40,000 match fund and future CIL contributions, will enable a comprehensive programme of improvements including:

- Accessible infrastructure to ensure the park is safe and usable for all.
- New play equipment for young children
- Outdoor sports and fitness facilities for teens and adults
- Sensory gardens and biodiversity enhancements
- New buildings to support sports clubs, community groups, and events while providing regular income
- A sustainable, community-focused café and social hub

These improvements will protect and enhance the park's heritage, increase accessibility, support health and wellbeing, and create a resilient, community-led model for long-term stewardship.

Friends of Eastville Park has already delivered over **£400,000** of improvements and services, demonstrating strong governance, fundraising capability, and a proven track record of delivery. This proposal represents a unique opportunity to secure the future of Eastville Park for generations to come.

2. Introduction & Background

Eastville Park is a vital green space that sits at the heart of one of Bristol's most diverse, densely populated, and economically varied areas. The communities surrounding the park include Eastville, Fishponds, Stapleton, and parts of Lockleaze and St George — neighbourhoods characterised by a rich cultural mix, a high proportion of young families, and significant pockets of deprivation. The park is therefore not simply a leisure asset; it is a vital public health resource and a social anchor for thousands of residents.

Only 2 miles from Bristol City Centre, the space extends from the M32 to Snuff Mills, it is a place on the edge of inner city Bristol, described as the lungs of the inner city. Eastville Park is a diverse blend of Victorian heritage features, natural landscapes, managed woodlands, wildflower meadows, tranquil streams, and a wildlife rich lake adjacent to the River Frome corridor, providing natural informal green space and access to the countryside.

Eastville Park Key Features

- A large ornamental lake 330m x 70m at the widest point
- WWII Nissen Hut community hub supporting a limited range of initiatives and an occasional summer volunteer-run café
- Old swimming pool, bombed in WWII, then a peaceful garden space, now unused/locked
- Originally 2 Bowling greens - now only one that is maintained to bowl by volunteers
- Bowls pavilion from early 1900's that is in need of replacement
- Sports change facilities restricted to football use and often vandalised
- 2 Children's play areas with some equipment over 30 years old
- Tennis courts (refurbished recently through asset transfer)
- Multi Use-Games Area refurbished recently through CIL funds and FOEP support.
- Small Active travel routes through the park and alongside the lake.
- Popular running for wellbeing groups such as Sri Chinmoy Peace mile and parkrun operate here.
- Space for small to medium size community festivals

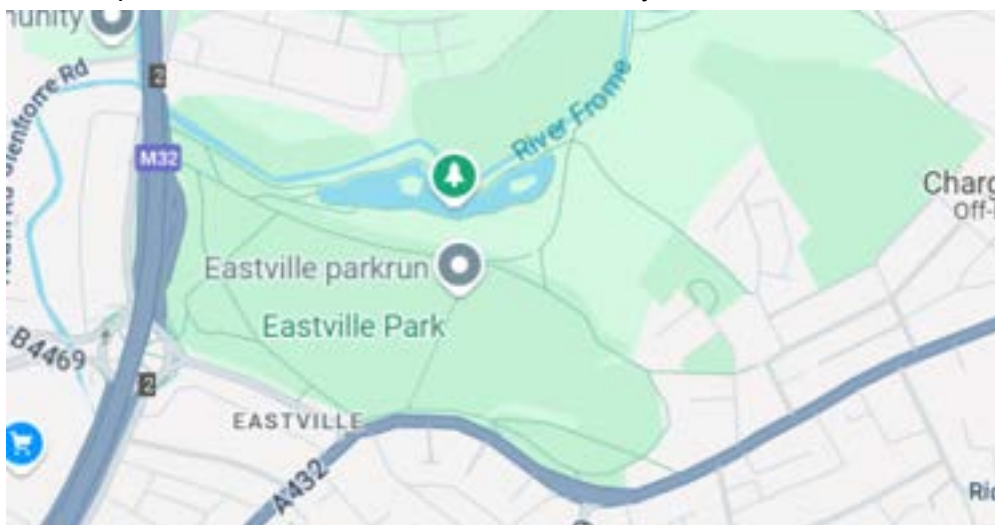


Image of Eastville Park extent, with lake and surrounding city residential areas, from Google Maps.

East Bristol is one of the most ethnically diverse parts of the city. The area includes long-established communities alongside newer migrant and refugee populations. This diversity enriches the area but also increases the need for **shared, inclusive public spaces** where people from different backgrounds can meet, interact, and feel a sense of belonging.



2024 Bristol Refugee festival at Eastville Park



Eastville Park is a historic landscape with significant ecological, recreational, and social value. Despite this, the park has not benefited from the same level of investment as Bristol's Destination Parks, leaving key facilities outdated or missing entirely.

Friends of Eastville Park (FOEP), a registered charity, has worked tirelessly to fill this gap. Over the past nine years, FOEP has secured funding from:

- Section 106
- Community Infrastructure Levy
- Enover and Ibstock Landfill Trusts
- St Monica Trust
- The Grateful Society
- People's Health Trust
- Bristol City Council

These efforts have delivered a community hub, restored heritage features, improved paths, benches and planting, and supported a wide range of community activities.

However, the scale of need now exceeds what can be achieved through small grants alone. Heritage Lottery Funding offers the opportunity to deliver a coherent, strategic programme of improvements that will secure the park's future.

2.1 Eastville Park in Context

Eastville Park was established during a period when Bristol's eastern districts were rapidly industrialising. Overcrowded housing, polluted air, and long working hours meant that access to open space was not a luxury — it was a necessity.

In 1871, a powerful local pamphlet titled “**The Cry of the Poor**” was circulated across East Bristol. It called for:

- Clean air
- Access to recreation
- Public parks for working families
- Relief from overcrowded, unhealthy living conditions

The leaflet argued that parks were not ornamental extras, but essential public health infrastructure. It stated that the working people of East Bristol deserved “open spaces where the body may be strengthened, the mind refreshed, and the spirit lifted.”

This sentiment directly influenced the creation of parks like Eastville — places designed to improve health, wellbeing, and social cohesion.

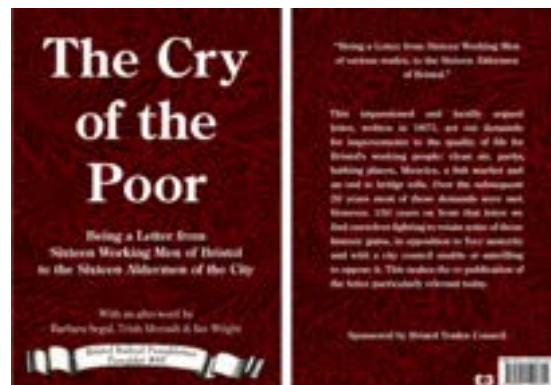
2.2 A Heritage That Still Speaks Today

What is striking is how little these needs have changed.

East Bristol remains one of the most diverse and densely populated parts of the city. Many residents live in flats or terraced housing with limited access to private gardens. Health inequalities persist. Demand for safe, accessible, free outdoor space is higher than ever.

The same principles that shaped the park's creation — **clean air, recreation, community, and dignity** — continue to guide its future.

By referencing *The Cry of the Poor*, we demonstrate that this project is not simply about upgrading facilities. It is about honouring the park's founding purpose and ensuring it continues to meet the needs of the people it was created to serve.



<https://www.brh.org.uk/site/pamphleteer/the-cry-of-the-poor/>



2.3 Young Families and Children

The wards surrounding Eastville Park have a higher-than-average proportion of:

- Children aged 0–14
- Young parents
- Families living in flats or homes without gardens

This makes access to **safe, high-quality outdoor play** essential for early years development, physical activity, and family wellbeing.



Screenshot of the Bristol city council PowerBI tool showing higher than city average child poverty in Eastville ward.

2.4 Teenagers and Young Adults

East Bristol has a large youth population, many of whom lack access to affordable sports facilities. Young people consistently report a need for:

- Outdoor fitness equipment
- Safe places to meet friends
- Opportunities to be active without cost
- Youth facilities to support after school clubs
- Home school / forest school facilities
- Mentoring and volunteering opportunities to build life skills and a sense of community

Providing these facilities reduces anti-social behaviour, reduces the negative impacts on local businesses from groups of teens loitering, improves health outcomes, and strengthens community pride.

“5.6% of 16-17 year olds in Bristol are “not in education, employment or training (NEET)” and 0.8% are current situation not known (CSNK) in total this is (6.4%), higher than the national average (5.8%). “

- JSNA Health and Wellbeing Profile 2026/27

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/files/documents/1518-jsna-neet/file>

2.5 Older Residents

The area also includes a significant number of older adults, many living alone or managing long-term health conditions. Accessible paths, sensory gardens, and social spaces help reduce isolation and support healthy ageing. The cold and wet seasons make getting out into nature particularly difficult without supportive infrastructure such as

- Accessible paths
- Clean, accessible toilets
- Places to shelter and get warm during visits
- Social groups to provide safety and footfall
- Active options for healthy ageing

Friends of Eastville Park have hosted and managed a social group for over 55's at the Nissen hut community hub with funding from Bristol charitable organisations, such as the Grateful Society. This group holds weekly activities that provide reasons for older residents to meet, get a warm meal, and find friendship. Improvements to accessibility to create welcoming indoor and outdoor facilities for older people would provide healthy ageing opportunities, such as Nordic Walking and nature walks, and reduce the costs of social care.

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FRIENDS OF EASTVILLE PARK

Soup, smiles and chats in the park

Laura Cobbett runs the Thursday group for over-55s at the Nissen hut in Eastville Park. The group is funded through grants the Friends of Eastville Park applied for, from the Grateful Society and the People's Health Lottery.

THURSDAY is my favourite day of the week.

No matter what the weather or my mood, once I arrive at the Nissen Hut I always feel better.

Along with Hazel, I have been running our friendly group for older people, called Community Connect, for a little over two years.

We meet every Thursday between 11am and 2pm at the Nissen Hut in Eastville Park. Activities vary from week to



Friendship at a Community Connect craft session

week, and include board games, gentle exercise sessions, guest speakers, craft activities and occasional themed sessions.

Our most recent activities include pancake flipping, planting and, of course, bingo!

From the moment attendees walk through the door they are



Laura Cobbett

greeted with a smile, and there is no pressure to do anything other than sit and chat, if that's what you prefer.

Chat continues each week whilst we eat a bowl of home-made soup. I make the soup each week, so it's not for me to say, but the members tell me it's delicious!

Comments they make include:

"Coming today has done me the world of good! We always have a laugh, I come along to catch up with the friends I have made since I joined you at the Nissen Hut."

I come for the delicious lunch and the lovely people. It gives me a reason to leave the house on a dreary winter day, otherwise I would stay at home and I wouldn't see anyone at all, I enjoy the different activities and the good company!"

There are lots of reasons why members come along, and these are just some of them.

New members are always welcome, there is no charge, and there is no need to book.

For those aged 55 and over who are looking to get out of the house and make new friends, our fabulous community group may be just the place to start.

I hope to meet you soon!

2.6 Health, Wellbeing & Inequality

East Bristol experiences some of the city's most persistent health inequalities. Local data shows higher-than-average levels of:

- Respiratory conditions
- Cardiovascular disease
- Mental health challenges
- Childhood obesity
- Loneliness and social isolation

These issues are strongly linked to environmental factors, access to green space, and opportunities for physical activity.

Eastville Park already plays a vital role in mitigating these inequalities, Local running clubs and the parkrun organisation host regular events in the park. There are also lots of people running, walking and cycling for health and wellbeing and some outdoor gym groups.

These groups would benefit from access to a café and additional toilet facilities to facilitate socialising, and safety for vulnerable groups like women, children, and older people. Current toilet facilities are insufficient for the size and needs of the population, and the community café is infrequent. Investment will significantly amplify the park's impact for sports, physical and mental wellbeing.



Screenshot of the Bristol city council PowerBI tool showing higher than city average premature mortality data for Eastville Ward.

2.7 Disabled people and Carers

Your Park Bristol & Bath's *Reimagining Parks* campaign was launched in 2024 to tackle the barriers it estimates keeps a third of Bristol and Bath's population shut out or struggling to access them. To better understand the experiences of communities using parks least, they have commissioned and published research with Disabled people and unpaid carers, Not Just a Check Box. <https://yourpark.org.uk/not-just-a-checkbox>.

The research outlines the key barriers and solutions identified by these interconnected communities. The biggest barriers identified included; Getting to parks, accessibility within parks including play options, gateways, entrances, paths and facilities, and safety, the impact on mental and physical health, dogs, and the disproportionate level of planning and logistics management needed for visits.

One of the key recommendations was that user-led park accessibility audits should be commissioned. Since the research was published and with the support of Heritage Lottery Fund, Your Park Bristol & Bath have developed and tested a way for local Disabled people and unpaid carers to work together to make a plan to make their parks more accessible and inclusive. In July 2026, Disabled people and unpaid carers from Eastville took part in the process and made an Access Action Plan for Eastville Park.

The Eastville Park Accessibility Plan was co-produced by 16 local Disabled people and unpaid carers, working with Your Park Bristol & Bath, Friends of Eastville Park and Bristol City Council. Participants had a wide range of disabilities, including neurodiversity, mobility and sensory impairments, and worked together to identify and prioritise the changes needed to make the park genuinely accessible. All suggestions raised through the consultation were included in the plan and ranked as high, medium or low priority.

The highest-priority findings centre on basic infrastructure that is currently missing or unusable. The existing toilets at the car park have been vandalised and are out of use, and there are no toilets at all near the lake — a significant barrier for disabled visitors, families and carers wanting to stay in the park for any length of time. Blue Badge parking is inadequate for the size of the park, and the current car park requires visitors to travel through much of the site before reaching a step-free route to the lake; a new car park beneath the motorway was proposed as a more direct, accessible alternative. Other high priorities include step-free access and handrails to the lake, clearer and more legible signage (multi-language, high-contrast, positioned for wheelchair users), accessible notice boards signposting flat routes and facilities, and more accessible seating at the lake.

Beyond core accessibility, the group identified priorities across three further themes: community (including converting a disused sports building into a café/toilet/community hub, and circular seating to encourage social connection), nature (a sensory, flower-rich area designed for a range of needs, and accessible wildlife signage), and health and wellbeing (accessible drinking fountains, shaded rest areas, a signed accessible walking loop, and designated quiet areas for people who experience sensory overload). Medium- and lower-priority ideas — such as path resurfacing, lighting, CCTV, a bandstand and accessible

play equipment — were also captured, alongside a longer list of ideas raised but not prioritised by the group (e.g. a bridge across the lake, Wi-Fi, an amphitheatre).

Eastville Park has underused areas that could be reimagined to support Disabled people and carers in the city, such as the old swimming pool garden and old bowling green. These areas are close to the car park and community hut with reasonably level pathways, providing useful infrastructure to support those with mobility issues to access green spaces, nature, and sports. Social prescribing is already actively happening in Eastville Park Nissen Hut space through the Roots to Wellbeing programme, run by Your Park and hosted by Friends of Eastville Park, which provides activities and lunch to people struggling with mental health problems. Expanding on this concept with a community garden and volunteer opportunities would enable Disabled people and their carers, and those with neurodiverse challenges to enjoy the health and wellbeing benefits of green space.

3. Evidence of Need

Friends of Eastville Park have regular contact with the park user community through community events, surveys, open meetings, and social media. Over the last 10 years there have been common and persistent challenges that are beyond the scope of small grant funding investment.

3.1 Current Challenges

- The park lacks a café, limiting dwell time and revenue generation.
- Access paths and routes through the park are damaged, cutting off access to those with restricted mobility.
- Many items of play equipment are reaching the end of usable life, inaccessible, and insufficient for the number of families using the park.
- There is limited outdoor fitness provision for teens or adults leading to antisocial behaviour.
- Key heritage features require restoration and interpretation.
- Community groups lack sufficient indoor space to support meetings, classes, and events.
- Biodiversity areas are fragmented and underdeveloped.
- Community buildings and sports facilities are at the end of usable life and require repair / replacement.
- Eastville is a large park serving a growing local catchment and wider residential needs
- Lack of construction in ward 5 often leaves only a small pot of Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 funding that often does not meet the demands of the area.
- Demand for forest school, home school centres for special needs, and gardening for wellbeing groups is much higher than the current facilities can support.
- Competition from other parks for local Community Infrastructure Levy funding, and destination parks that have maintenance obligation, funding for repairs and investment.
- Sections of the park have been cut off and sold to meet short-term funding crisis, threatening access to green space.
- The climate crisis makes access to high quality green space more important than ever as people need cool spaces with shade, and food growing spaces when their homes have small or no gardens.



Current play equipment at the end of usable life

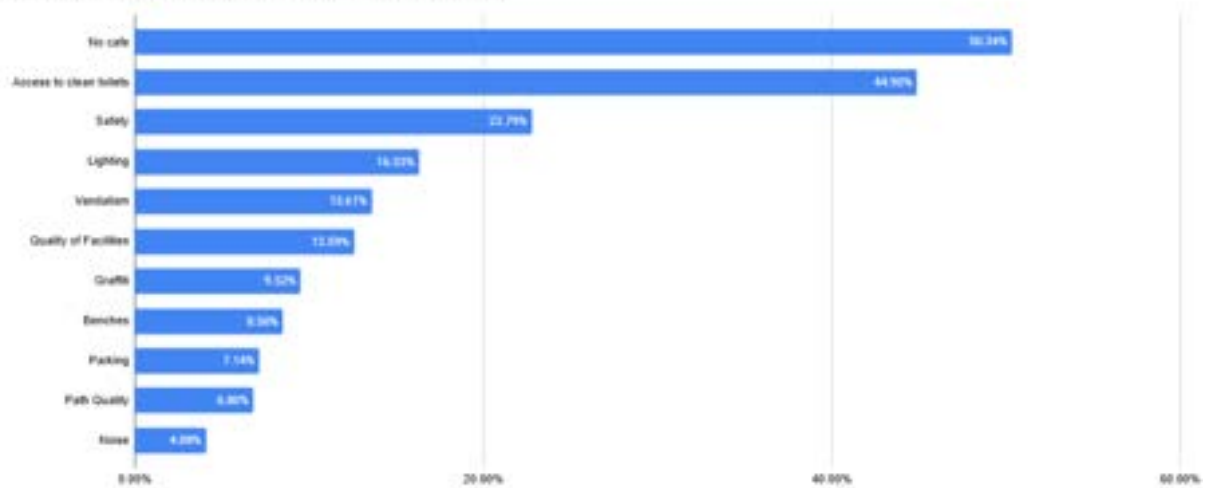
3.2 Community Demand

Consultation with residents, schools, sports clubs, and community organisations shows strong demand for:

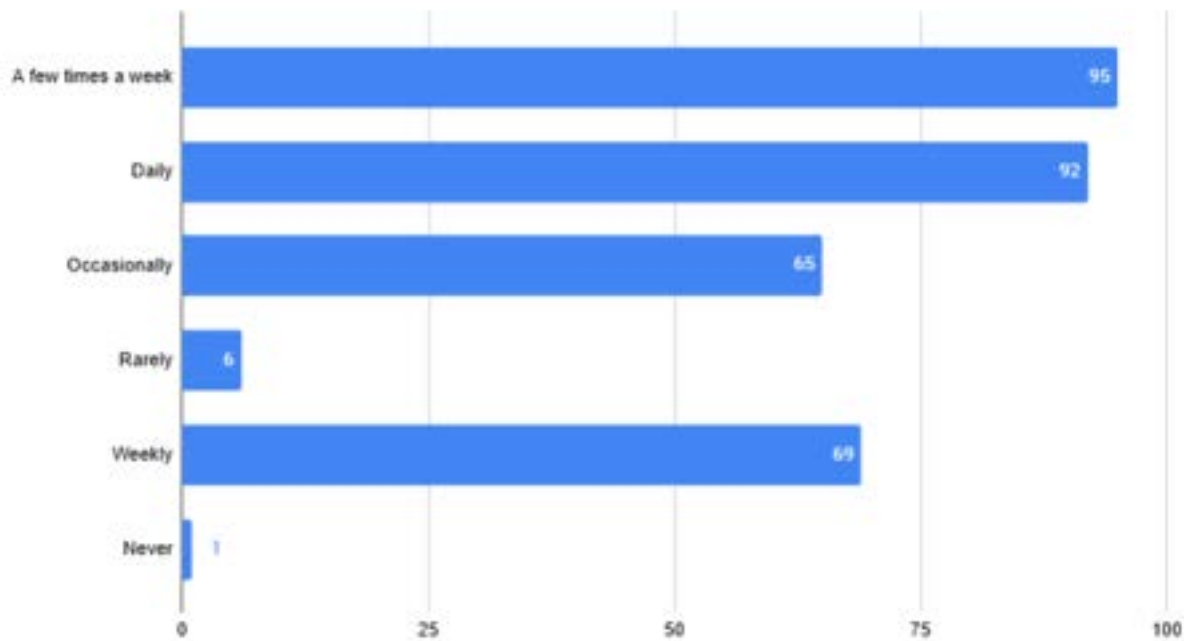
- A café and social meeting point
- Clean, accessible toilets
- Regular footfall to prevent graffiti and vandalism in key areas
- Good lighting for safe access
- More community events and activities
- Spaces to rent to support regular group activities for many demographic groups
- New play equipment for young children
- Improved sports and fitness facilities
- More benches for rest and enjoyment
- Improved paths, and accessible peaceful zones

FOEP's own events regularly attract hundreds of local visitors, demonstrating the park's potential as a community hub.

2025-26 Park user survey: 6, main barriers to enjoyment

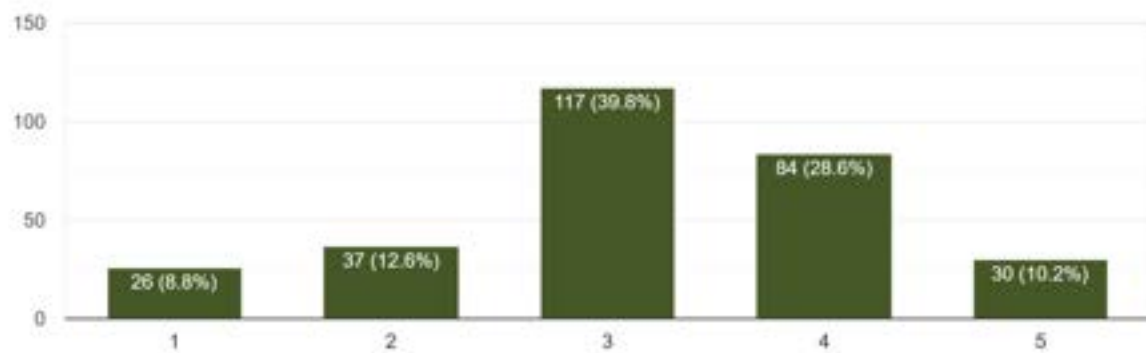


1. How often do you visit Eastville Park?

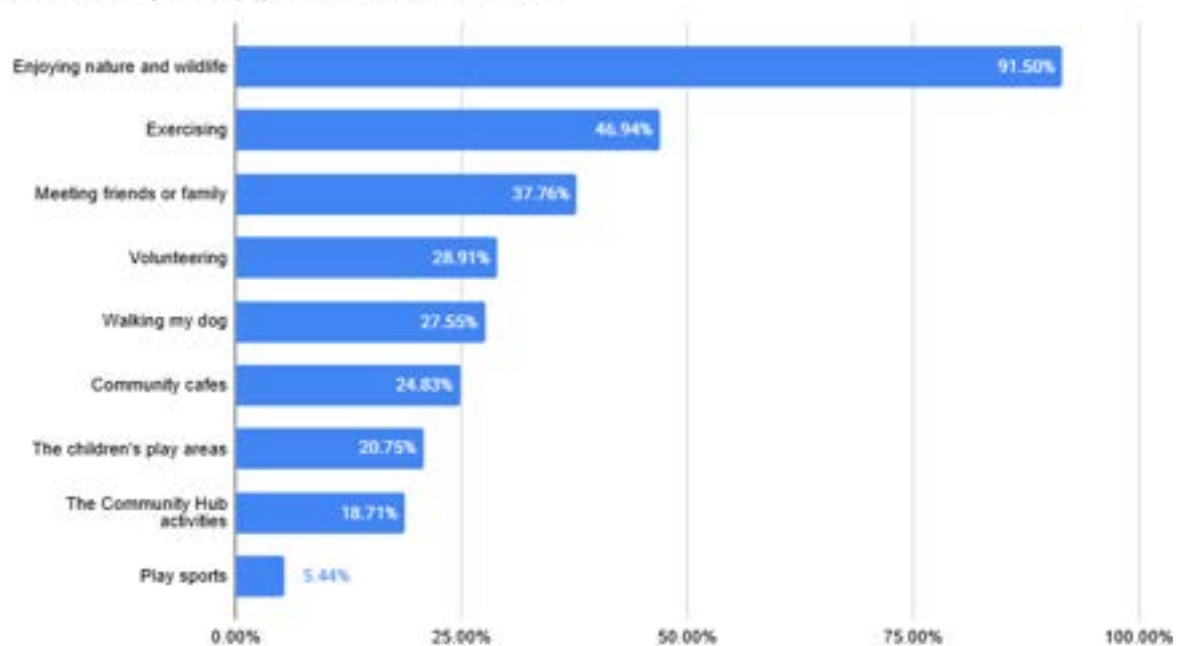


5. How would you rate facilities at Eastville Park?

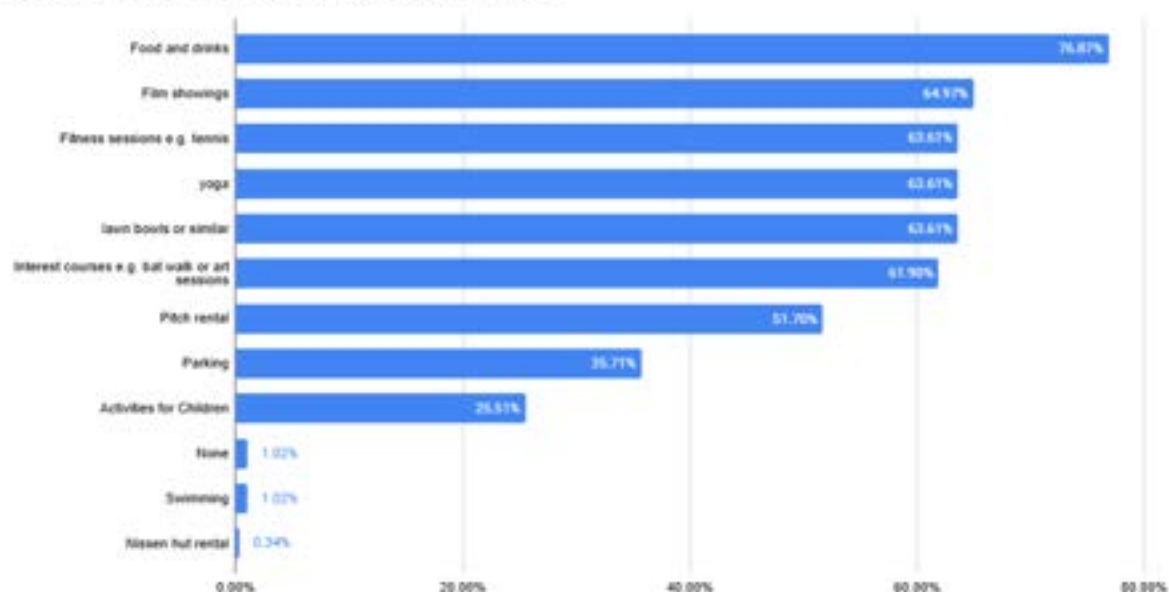
294 responses



4. What do you enjoy about Eastville Park?



2025-26 Park user survey: 9. acceptable paid facilities



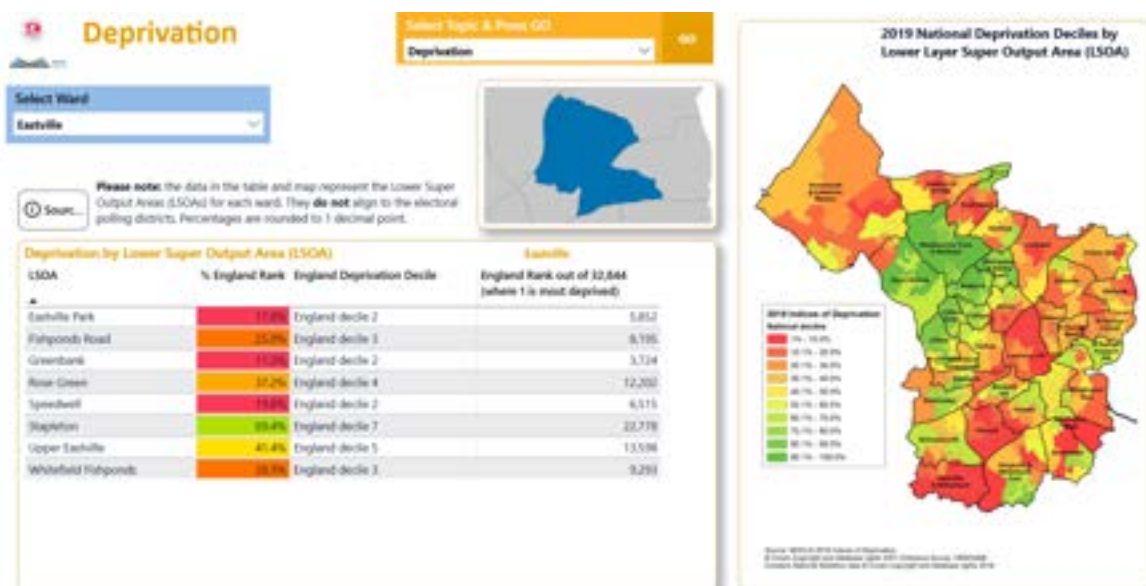
Data extracted from Eastville Park visitor survey 2025-2026 showing the most popular reasons for visits to Eastville Park as a percentage of total responses. The survey was conducted by Friends of Eastville Park both online and in person. For the full survey results and overviews, see the appendix.

3.3 Outdoor Provision Investment Needs

- Eastville Park lake has fallen into disrepair and is filling with silt from the river. The lake requires a full condition report and renovation in consultation with ecologists. Eastville lake is a haven for birdlife and could be made to function better with the River Frome to prevent siltation, excess nutrient pollution, and stagnation. Estimated costs for this work are in excess of £400,000 based on similar repairs on the smaller lake at St George Park, Bristol.
- Eastville Park is at risk of losing play equipment for Children under 7 years old, which has been in the park since 1995 and at the end of usable life.
- Sports pitches are used by cricketers and footballers, but are basic and in need of ongoing maintenance that the amateur league clubs themselves cannot fund. This puts local sports teams at risk of losing places to practise and play along with the many social, physical and mental health benefits that sport provides.
- Pathways and entrances have badly damaged areas and are in need of maintenance for accessibility.
- The car park needs a height barrier to prevent misuse by camping vans staying overnight and blocking access to parking, including disabled parking, for long periods.
- The old bowling green and old swimming pool garden require accessibility improvements to bring these valued nature spaces into more frequent use, and protect them from privatisation.

3.4 Indoor Provision Investment Needs

- The popularity and size of the restored nissen hut means it cannot accommodate a regular community café space in addition to group activities.
- Additional toilet facilities are required to support busier days in the park from cultural, sports, and social events
- Local entrepreneurs use the space for wellbeing or hobby groups but would value a larger space for forest school and youth clubs to run for longer periods.
- Eastville Park Bowling Club pavilion is in a poor condition due to lack of maintenance over the past 20 years. It now needs replacement, if it is to provide an adequate resource to form the basis of a community café with sports facilities.
- Weekly Food Club users require space to wait outside which is dry, shaded and covered.
- Community events and bands lack secure dry equipment storage, shade, or shelter for performance.
- Eastville Park is at risk of inappropriate development proposals that would be harmful to local residents' rights to live in peace, and remove some of the essential green space.
- Antisocial behaviour, vandalism, and theft - driven by high deprivation, create unique challenges for park operations, which require an inclusive, community-driven response.



Bristol City Council ward profile Deprivation index data snapshot from the PowerBI tool showing Eastville as one of the most deprived areas in the country ranking at 17.8% most deprived nationally.

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/council/statistics-census-information/ward-profile-data>

3.5 Healthy City Living and Air Quality

The park connects via the Frome Valley Walkway, to Snuff Mills, Oldbury Court Estate, the Stoke Park heritage estate and Purdown; and Frenchay Common. Therefore, it forms part of a green corridor that connects individual green spaces and natural habitats, facilitating wildlife movement, providing pathways for wildlife to find food and shelter thereby enhancing biodiversity.

It also forms part of the “green lung” for the neighbouring communities and is therefore important for the air quality in the area. In 2025 the population of Bristol reached over 500,000, Eastville is now a heavily built up area. The park is smaller than when it was created due to loss of land for road building. This includes the overpowering presence of the M32 motorway flyover, constructed in the 1960s resulting in the loss of a huge swathe of green land at the western end of the park.

As Eastville Park is at the inner city end of this green corridor it adds to community wellbeing in the urban areas of Eastville and Fishponds by giving people access to nature, routes for sustainable transport into / out of the city through walking and cycling, and by providing space for some grass roots sports activities.



Screenshot of the Bristol city council PowerBI tool showing Eastville Ward Healthy lifestyle data percentage of residents with good mental health, one of the poorest scoring wards in the city.

The recent 2024/25 Quality of Life Survey conducted by Bristol City Council identifies the main issues of residents in Eastville Ward as;

- Traffic Congestion 94.9 %
- Poor Air Quality and Pollution 86.1 %
- Concern about Climate change 87.3%

82.9% of residents say they are satisfied with their parks and green spaces and 62.7 % visit at least once a week.

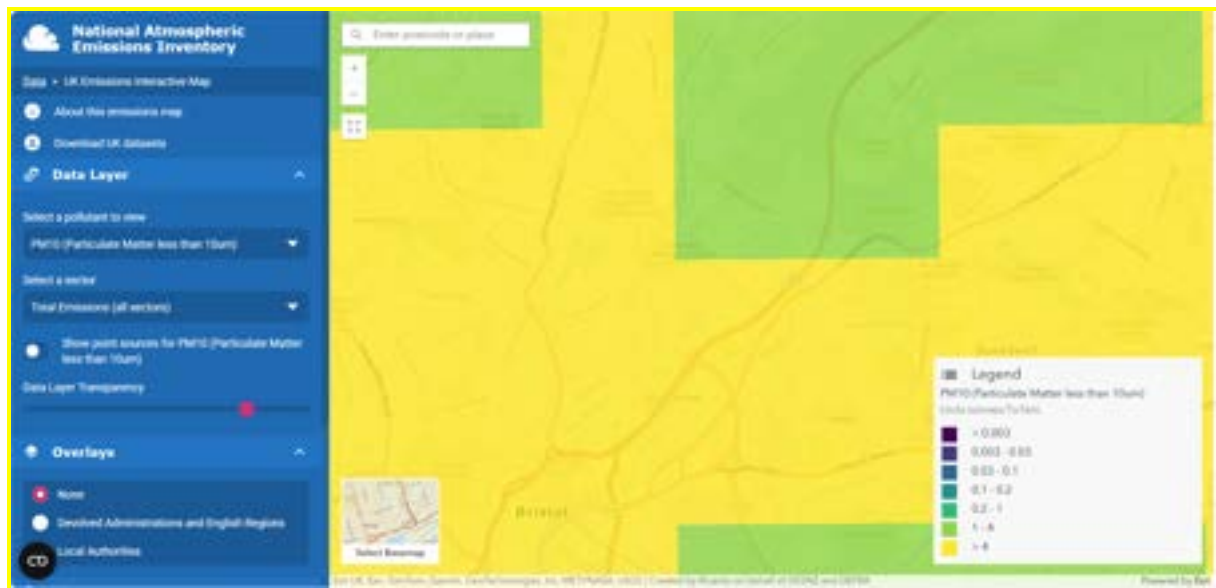
The noise and pollution from heavy industry in Eastville has been replaced by noise and pollution from constant heavy traffic, particularly along the M32 and Fishponds Road, which are noise and air pollution hot spots for the city of Bristol. So after 150 years the noise and pollution problems remain, the causes have changed but there is no doubt people still need and appreciate green spaces for relaxation, recreation and health benefits.

Investing in facilities to support access to parks and greenspace will improve footfall, which prevents vandalism and crime. In addition, investment in facilities will give greater access for vulnerable people, and therefore create more options for a wider demographic to benefit from nature, and to lead healthier lifestyles.

Eastville Ward has some of the lowest scores for mental health in the city, improving the park to provide good access to nature, sports, and community groups will have a positive impact on the ward residents.



<https://www.who.int/multi-media/details/green-and-blue-spaces-for-healthier-cities-and-cleaner-air>



National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory PM10 small airborne particulate data for Eastville, showing high emissions in wards surrounding Eastville Park source: <https://naei.energysecurity.gov.uk/emissionsapp/>

3.6 Wildlife and Biodiversity

Eastville Park is 70 acres of wonderful green space near the heart of the city. There is a 3.25 acre lake fed from the adjacent River Frome which runs through the park and this, together with the mixed deciduous woodland and open grassland provides a wide variety of habitats for wildlife to thrive.



Due to this abundance of wildlife the park has become a favoured spot for many local birdwatchers and wildlife photographers. Kingfishers, grey herons and otters are a few of the resident species that feature prominently, with a wider resident species list including, greater spotted and green woodpeckers, dippers, foxes and badgers.

During winter months resident species are joined by species such as cormorants, black-headed gulls and goldcrests as well less common visitors like goosanders and water rail. Summer months are the time to see butterflies, moths and dragonflies as well as many other kinds of invertebrate. These in turn provide an important food source for larger summer visitors such as daubenton's bats, which can be seen feeding low over the lake, Black caps, Chiffchaffs, Swallows, House Martins and Swifts.

Originally part of the Smythe and Badminton estates, the park has many beautiful, well established trees. Around the football pitches avenues of lime and oak mark the lines of old hedgerows. Down around the lake larger more mature oaks and beech put on a wonderful autumn display as well providing for an abundance of wildlife. The mixed woodland around the park contains species such birch, ash, oak, hornbeam, hawthorn and blackthorn and in the spring can be carpeted with bluebells, wood anemones and wild garlic.

The beautiful serpentine lake, once known as second only to the Serpentine in Hyde Park, is at the heart of Eastville Park and has significant wildlife and heritage value. It was built in 1910 at the instigation of Ernest Bevin, a local politician, in order to provide work for men who had applied to the Distress Committees Labour Bureau. It became known as 'Bevin's Lake'. Ernest Bevin went on to have an illustrious career in politics, he co-founded and served as General Secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union (1922-1940) and was Minister of Labour & National Service in Churchill's Wartime Coalition Government. He became Foreign Secretary in Atlee's post-war government and was involved in setting up the Berlin Airlift, the Marshall Plan and the creation of NATO. After his death in 1951, his ashes were interred in Westminster Abbey and he was praised as one of the most important creators of the post-war world.

As the lake is adjacent to, and fed by, the River Frome it is liable to silting up due to the sediment deposited during winter flooding of the river. Twice in the past twenty years the lake has been partially dredged to remove silt brought into the lake by seasonal floods. These floods and general wear and tear have also affected the integrity of the perimeter walls of the lake and the coping stones and the footpath that runs around the lake.

The outflow to the River Frome is frequently blocked. These issues reduce water quality, biodiversity, and the lake's heritage value. Restoration is required to meet the aims of Bristol City Council's **Parks & Green Spaces Strategy 2024-2039**, which prioritises improving natural habitat, enhancing biodiversity, and restoring culturally historic park features.



Eastville Park lake is 3.25 acres (1.32 hectares) with two small islands providing habitat for a variety of fish.

Estimates to refurbish the lake are outlined in the appendix, conservatively running between £173,000 and £408,000. There is currently no funding available at Bristol City Council to fund lake improvements and the size of the task requires significant investment outside of the scope of small grant funding.

Friends of Eastville Park have access to an enthusiastic local community willing to volunteer their time to shape and write a Heritage Lottery bid. Although there are many challenges, there is also opportunity here to enhance the lake for wildlife habitat and provide greater connection to nature for residents, all while restoring an essential piece of local cultural heritage. Many of the responses to the Friends of Eastville Park survey mention the poor condition of the lake and express concern for the wildlife. Securing investment to repair and enhance this wonderful natural heritage feature would secure the lake for many generations in a superb collaboration between community and council.

4. Vision and objectives

The Friends of Eastville Park vision for this bid is:

To protect, restore, enhance, and future-proof Eastville Park as an inclusive, intergenerational, and environmentally resilient green space that celebrates its cultural heritage while meeting the needs of today's communities.

Key Objectives

- Provide regular, reliable income through improved infrastructure and appropriate community activities
- Protect the park's cultural heritage and landscape character
- Restore key features and improve accessibility for all residents
- Enhance play, sport, biodiversity, and community facilities
- Future-proof the park through sustainable design and community stewardship

These objectives align with the Heritage Lottery Fund's priorities of heritage conservation, community engagement, inclusion, and environmental sustainability.



Image: Friends of Eastville Park host the Bristol Refugee festival.

5. Proposed Improvements

Summary of key improvements

- café, toilets, storage and gift shop construction on Bowling Pavillion site
- Play area renovation
- Forest / Sensory garden and workshop space to hire on the old bowling green supporting vulnerable people to enjoy greenspace
- Lake renovation
- Enhanced sports provisions, social bowling and games facilities
- Improved accessibility and pathways to provide access to nature and enhanced social prescribing opportunity
- Create an accessible peace garden within the old swimming pool
- Repairs and additions to the perimeter fencing to provide security from unauthorised vehicle access.
- Enhanced biodiversity and climate resilience through tree planting, and habitat zones with interpretation information.
- Create income to support jobs that facilitate community activities, volunteering and stewardship.
- Expansion of the park with 2 acres of woodland and known badger habitat

Further details and visualisations of these key areas of improvement are outlined in the rest of this chapter.

5.1 Play for Young Children

- New, inclusive, nature-inspired play equipment for children under 7 years
- Maintenance of sand and sensory play elements
- Improved seating and shade zones
- Replacement of the retaining wall sleepers around the sand pit
- Improved fencing and gates to prevent loose dogs getting in and small children becoming lost
- Bike stands
- Bins for recycling
- Estimate costs of equipment and installation £200,000



Example of how the Eastville Play park could look with new play equipment in the sand pit.

5.2 Outdoor Sports & Fitness for Teens and Adults

- Outdoor gym equipment
- Calisthenics and bodyweight training stations
- Marked running and fitness trails
- Improvements to the existing multi-use games area for welcoming and inclusive play
- Safety lighting
- Estimated cost of equipment sports equipment £30,000 plus installation



<https://www.freshairfitness.co.uk/success-stories/windlesham-outdoor-gym>

Colourful Multi-use games areas (MUGA) help invite people to use the space and balance the perception of these being spaces only for teenage boys. Community sports events can also invite many people to explore a variety of sports in these spaces, including roller skating on the smooth surface. There is a vibrant skate community in Bristol that has already embraced the MUGA at Eastville for skate dancing sessions on summer evenings.



<https://www.collateral.al/en/art-court-basketball-court-london-street-art/>

5.3 Forest / Sensory Gardens & Biodiversity Enhancements

- Sensory planting schemes
- Wildlife habitats and interpretation
- Accessible pathways
- Community-led forest garden planting and maintenance programmes to reduce food insecurity for vulnerable people
- Modular classroom building to hire and run regular workshops and classes for community benefit and revenue generation.
- Renovation of the lake to prevent silting, enhance habitat, and connection to nature
- Community workshop space
- Lake renovation
- Purchase of Badger habitat off Ashdene Avenue





Renovations of the lake could allow for a more naturalistic beach shoreline, friendly to bird life that currently struggles to exit the water. Part of the lake could return to people for leisure pursuits such as boating, similar to Thorpeness in Suffolk, or Hyde park in London. The platform and launch for the boathouse already exists and would only require a suitably secure structure to complete the work.

Boating was enjoyed up to 1999 in Eastville, when it was possible to hire rowing boats for a small fee. With appropriate secure building, such as a low cost shipping container conversion to secure small boats on the existing plinth, this income generator could return to the park once more. Boating is excellent exercise, provides people with access to nature, and generates revenue.



5.4 Café & Social Hub

- A community-run or social-enterprise café
- Indoor/outdoor seating
- Year-round revenue generation to support maintenance
- Flexible indoor spaces for clubs, classes, and events
- Changing facilities for sports teams
- Storage for community groups
- Sustainable design (solar, rainwater harvesting, green roofs)
- History panels on the café walls
- Café build estimated cost £550,000 to £700,000

Modular buildings have become the go-to design to prevent lengthy build times, and to provide easy to assemble structures on site. Many kinds exist for public park spaces that provide much needed services, with secure structures, shutters, and vandal resistant toilets.

A barista coffee machine has already been purchased by the Friends of Eastville Park for their summer community café, this would be best put to use in a more frequent café running on a timetable that supports sports and social events.

Table 1: Projected Annual Income (Conservative Scenario)

Income Stream	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Community Building Hire	£30,000	£40,000	£50,000	£55,000	£60,000
Café Lease / Profit Share	£12,000	£13,000	£14,000	£15,000	£16,000
Events & Seasonal Activities	£5,000	£6,000	£7,500	£9,000	£10,000
Sports Club Use & Storage	£2,000	£3,000	£4,000	£4,500	£5,000
TOTAL ANNUAL INCOME	£49,000	£62,000	£75,500	£83,500	£91,000

Five-year cumulative revenue: £361,000

This represents a **significant uplift** compared to the current £20,000/year baseline, and demonstrates that the new facilities will be financially sustainable while delivering major community benefits.



Left - case study of a modular park building <https://www.wernick.co.uk/case-study/morton-stanley-park/>
Right - photo of Eastville Community café volunteer and cakes



Stories and photos from the history of Eastville Park, already fully researched by Friends of Eastville Park, could cover the café and hire space walls connecting the lives of early Victorian Bristolians with modern day park users.



Image: Artist visualisation of what a café space could provide at Eastville Park, seamlessly blending social bowling, lawn games for all ages, and a place to socialise.



Friends of Eastville park already fundraise through selling second hand books, duck food, calendars, and Elderflower cordial. A small gift shop in the café could sell these items and more such as toys, games, dog accessories, locally sourced food and drink picnic items. Inspired by this Park shop at Nene Park, Ferry Meadows, Peterborough.



Colourful bollards would protect the park from frequently problematic unauthorised vehicles while still allowing access and exit for pedestrians, and acknowledging the city as a mecca for street art.

How the Proposed Improvements Will Benefit Local Communities

5.5 Increased Social Cohesion

The park improvements will create more opportunities for people to meet, interact, and participate in shared activities. This includes:

- A café and social hub
- Community buildings for clubs and events
- Spaces designed for intergenerational use
- Inclusive play and sensory areas that welcome families of all backgrounds

These features strengthen community bonds and help build a sense of shared ownership and pride.

The Heritage Lottery Fund's *State of UK Public Parks* report highlights parks as **critical social infrastructure**, providing places where communities mix, build trust, and participate in shared activities.

Research by the University of Exeter shows that parks with cafés, community buildings, and well-designed gathering spaces **increase social interaction and reduce loneliness**.

Natural England's research shows that volunteering in parks increases **community pride, social networks, and long-term stewardship**.

The new café, community buildings, and inclusive play and sports facilities will create a vibrant social hub, strengthening community ties and supporting intergenerational connection.

5.6 Improved Physical Health

The new facilities directly support active lifestyles:

- Outdoor gym and fitness trails
- Multi-use games areas
- Accessible play for young children
- Walking routes and sensory gardens

Public Health England (PHE) reports that **access to quality green space increases physical activity levels**, particularly among children, older adults, and low-income households.

The World Health Organization (WHO) states that people living near well-maintained parks are **up to 50% more likely to meet recommended physical activity levels**.

Regular physical activity in parks is associated with **lower rates of cardiovascular disease, obesity, and type 2 diabetes**.

Outdoor fitness equipment and active travel routes have been shown to **increase moderate-to-vigorous activity**, especially in communities with limited access to gyms or sports facilities.

Public Health England estimates that **every £1 invested in green space generates at least £7 in health benefits**, through reduced GP visits, improved mental health, and increased physical activity.

The proposed outdoor gym, fitness trails, and improved play areas will provide free, accessible opportunities for physical activity in an area with known health inequalities.

5.6 Enhanced Mental Wellbeing

Nature, social connection, and physical activity are proven to improve mental health. Improving the old swimming pool garden and creating an accessible community Forest Garden on the old bowling Green will deliver:

- Quiet sensory spaces
- Biodiversity-rich planting
- Safe, welcoming areas for relaxation
- Opportunities for volunteering and community involvement
- Support for mental health social prescribing and green prescribing
- Active lifestyles for those with limited mobility
- Food security for those most vulnerable to the rising cost of living.

These features support stress reduction, emotional resilience, and overall wellbeing.

Natural England's evidence review found that spending time in green spaces leads to **significant reductions in stress and anxiety**, and improves mood and self-esteem.

The Mental Health Foundation reports that contact with nature can **reduce symptoms of depression** and improve emotional resilience.

Sensory gardens and biodiverse planting support **mindfulness, relaxation, and cognitive restoration**, particularly for neurodiverse individuals, those with long-term health conditions or disability.

The proposed sensory gardens, quiet spaces, and biodiversity enhancements will create restorative environments that support physical and mental wellbeing for all ages.

5.7 Supporting Families and Young People

The new play and sports facilities will:

- Provide safe, stimulating environments for children
- Offer positive outlets for teenagers
- Support family bonding and outdoor learning
- Reduce barriers to participation for low-income households

This aligns directly with the park's historic purpose as a place for working families to access clean air, recreation, and dignity.

Play England and the NHS note that high-quality play spaces support **social development, confidence, and resilience**, and reduce anti-social behaviour.

5.8 A Heritage of Public Health and Social Justice

The needs of East Bristol residents today echo those expressed in the 1871 leaflet “**The Cry of the Poor**”, which called for:

- Clean air
- Public parks
- Recreation for working families
- Relief from overcrowded, unhealthy living conditions

Eastville Park was created in response to that call. The same principles — **health, fairness, community, and access to nature** — remain just as relevant.

By investing in Eastville Park now, we honour its founding purpose and ensure it continues to serve the people it was created for.

Parks with cafés, events, and improved facilities attract more visitors, supporting local businesses and creating opportunities for social enterprises.

A community-run café and improved event infrastructure will generate sustainable income and support local economic resilience.

Why This Evidence Matters for Eastville Park

Eastville Park's surrounding population is young, diverse, and vibrant — but also faces significant health and social challenges. The improvements proposed for Eastville Park are not simply desirable — they are **evidence-based interventions** that will:

- Reduce health inequalities
- Improve mental wellbeing
- Strengthen community cohesion
- Support children, young people, and older adults
- Deliver long-term economic and public health value
- Provide inclusive, accessible facilities for all ages

This aligns directly with the park's historic purpose, as expressed in *The Cry of the Poor* (1871), which called for clean air, recreation, and dignity for working people. The evidence shows that these needs remain, and that investment in Eastville Park will deliver measurable, lasting benefits for the communities it serves.

6. Community Engagement & Partnership Working

FOEP has consulted with:

- The local community through surveys (in person and online), a website, and social media presence
- Local history groups
- Bristol Parks Forum
- Your Park Bristol & Bath
- Friends groups with successful Heritage Lottery projects
- Local schools and sports clubs
- Ward councillors and Area 5 Committee

This network provides expertise, support, and a strong foundation for co-design and community involvement throughout the project.

6.1 A history of success

During World War 2 the park was used as a temporary camp for soldiers, a large area for food allotments, and hosted a searchlight battery and defensive barrage balloon. One of the nissen hut buildings erected during this period was relocated to the Bowling Green enclave after the war, and following refurbishment by Friends of Eastville Park in 2020-21 now serves as a small community hub, available for rent to the local community, and hosting several community out-reach activities, including an over-55's creativity club, a youth club and a food club.

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www.fishpondsvoice.co.uk

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FRIENDS OF EASTVILLE PARK

Variety is the spice of life at food club

THIS is not just a food club - it's renovated-Nissen-hut, bowling-green-adjacent food club! Every Friday lunchtime, between noon and 1pm, the hut welcomes its members.

It came into being in 2022, in response to awareness of the rising cost of living and a desire to prevent needless food waste.

To qualify for membership you need to live within a one-mile radius of the park and pay a fee of £1 to join - no other qualifying factors and no means-testing or referral is required. That's it - you are in! There is a charge of £4 each visit, but those visits are often more rewarding than a standard shopping trip.

What is on offer? A wide and varied variety of food. The bulk is sourced from the Fare Share charity in St Jade's, which does a sterling job and last year was able to collect and re-distribute 2,830 tonnes of in-date, quality food that would otherwise have been wasted.

Other contributors include Essentials Foods, Somerset farmers and Fishponds allotment holders, adding to the welcome offer of seasonal vegetables.

In addition to the veg on offer, there is a wealth of dried kitchen staples, from rice, flour and pasta to polenta, macchi and mung beans, not forgetting herbs, fruits, seeds, kernels and humble salt.



Vegetables at a food club session

A delicious array of bread and pastries goes without saying, plus soft drinks and dairy, chilled and frozen deli-meats, pies, cheeses, yoghurts and more.

You won't find better value for your £4! That being said, the willing volunteers who spend two days collecting the various items, sorting and setting them out for your

selection, never quite know what to expect, firmly believing that "variety is the spice of life" - and remembering which dog must have a carrot saved for him.

High days and holidays see extra-generous offers of relevant foodstuffs, often from the likes of Waitrose, Asda and M&S (so in a way they do food clubs!). We had whole turkeys last Christmas, and both volunteers and customers agreed, in the end, that puddings and mince pies are not "just for Christmas", as we valiantly ploughed through the extraordinary amount donated.

The atmosphere on a Food Club Friday is welcoming, inclusive and often good fun.

Many recipes and ideas are exchanged and there is a general feeling of friendships being forged: people come early or stay after they have filled their bags, for a chat and a catch-up outside.

If you would like to help stop perfectly good food ending up in landfill, whilst making money go further, or help run the club (caution: this may involve reducing unfeasibly huge swedes into manageable portions) please email - ecvillparkfoodclub@gmail.com or call into the Nissen Hut on the Bowling Green between noon and 1pm any Friday.

Karen Harris

Friends of Eastville Park drove investment by gathering community needs through surveys and applying for grants for older children's play equipment, a multi-use games area, configured as a basketball / 5-a-side plate area; and some table tennis tables near the refurbished tennis courts. All of this was achieved by building trust and cooperation with area council officers.

2020 Engagement survey responses

Word Cloud of responses to Q1 Please describe your favourite play park and what you like best

climbing court pirate ship zip wire equipment
Oldbury Court high park water sand
Oldbury court pirate slides play equipment swings
basketball court things big slides ages really one seesaw play basketball
Eastville park lots



The bowls club reformed after Covid-19 lockdown prompted the closure of the former club and continues to use the bowling green in front of the pavilion. The poor condition of the pavilion has resulted in a decline in the number of bowls teams using the bowling greens and consequently the second green has fallen into disuse. Friends of Eastville Park have responded to this situation by using the space for community events, makers markets, book fairs and Christmas fairs.

The old swimming pool garden was used to stage outdoor performances by a local theatre group, and small community festivals have taken place in the wider park area. Whilst the park is a large space, it is important to note it is surrounded by residential areas and the only

car park is accessed via narrow streets, which must be taken into account when planning and organising events within the park.

We have seen that smaller, community focussed events work best in Eastville Park, which bring in steady revenue with minimal disruption to the nearby residential streets. Friends of Eastville Park have worked with all of the festival and event organisers over the years to ensure success and raise funds for park projects in the process, including Bristol Refugee Festival who we partnered with in 2024 and 2025.



Friends of Eastville Park calendar is created by the trustees using photographs donated to the charity by local wildlife photographers. The calendar sales generate funds for many small projects to maintain features in the park. The Friends of Eastville Park work with Bristol City Council and the local community to ensure the park is a vibrant and welcoming space capable of hosting a range of events and activities; ensuring the park continues to serve the local community as a place to meet, relax, play sports and enjoy the benefits of a large open space.

Our social media pages have in excess of 12,000 followers, generating conversation, suggestions for improvements, and photos of wildlife. In 2026 Friends of Eastville park funded murals, painted by Graff, on the Eastville lake plinth with designs chosen by the park user community through social media engagement.





Local volunteers renovated old wood notice boards that had become aged and worn, reinstalling them to welcome people to Eastville Park. Small improvements like this cost very little and show that the park is cared for by the local community, which helps to reduce vandalism and antisocial behaviour. Small improvements have led to a groundswell of support and a strong network of volunteers to help our park community thrive.





South Bristol Ukulele band at the 2025 summer community café.

We have collaborated with many groups across the city to bring a vibrant mix to our summer community cafés, which have hosted activities, art displays, workshops, local bands, choirs, and performance groups at various points in the year. All showcasing artistic talent in the community and bringing people together over music.

Some of the workshops include collaboration with police secure bike marking and Bike Bristol maintenance sessions, to encourage active travel for wellbeing and environmental sustainability. The small community focussed events attract many local people while keeping numbers manageable for the existing limited car park infrastructure.

6.2 A Network for the Future

The connections that Friends of Eastville Park have created over the last 9 years through the local community are foundations for future success. We know what our community has asked for, we have brought many improvements already through small grant funding. We are now ready to deliver a park that both meets the needs of East Bristol, and creates infrastructure that keeps the park financially resilient for future generations.

7. Governance & Track Record

Friends of Eastville Park are a Charity run by local residents who are trustees. We fundraise for the improvement and benefit of the park while working with Bristol City Council and park users. We also campaign against inappropriate development that threatens local green spaces that are essential for the wellbeing of Bristol's communities.

Registered charity 1199637

All volunteer time to liaise with local residents, [Bristol City Council](#), [Bristol Parks forum](#), interest groups, and Neighbourhood networks to make projects happen. There are currently 8 members of the committee including chair, secretary, and treasurer, events, volunteering, history, and wildlife experts. More about the history of Friends of Eastville Park can be found on the website www.eastvilepark.org.uk

Friends of Eastville Park Charity has:

- Delivered over **£400,000** of improvements
- Built a **£40,000 match fund** through community events and fundraising
- Established a well-governed charity with strong volunteer leadership
- Delivered successful capital and revenue projects for community benefit
- Built partnerships with Bristol City Council, local businesses, and funders

This track record demonstrates FOEP's capacity to lead community engagement, fundraising, and long-term stewardship.



8. Support from Bristol City Council & Stakeholders

We have secured support for Friends of Eastville Park to produce this community led vision of improvement, building up a strong working relationship and trust over the years we have been operating in Eastville Park. We now seek a letter of support from Bristol City Council to proceed with a Heritage Lottery Fund bid. Initial conversations with Heritage Lottery Fund have been positive and encouraging, though land owner permission is required to launch a full funding bid.

We have shared this vision for feedback and support with:

- Local Ward Councillors
- Senior Parks staff
- Bristol Parks Forum
- Your Park

This political and operational support strengthens the bid and ensures alignment with citywide strategies.



Image: Eastville Ward Councillor Lorraine Francis with trustees, volunteers and members of the park community in the Nissen Hut community hub

9. Action Plan & Priorities

Following surveys, audits, and consultation, FOEP has produced an Action Plan outlining:

- **Immediate priorities** Present to 2027
 - ☐ Improved safety through natural surveillance and community activities
 - ☐ Accessibility improvements in partnership with Your Park
 - ☐ CIL funding for play repairs
 - ☐ Essential repairs to small features
 - ☐ Initiate council approved bid to HLF
- **Short- to medium-term priorities** 2027 to 2030
 - ☐ Playpark improvements
 - ☐ Fitness outdoor gym zones
 - ☐ Improved biodiversity,
 - ☐ Develop site for improved community buildings
- **Long-term vision** 2030 to 2040
 - ☐ Full heritage restoration
 - ☐ Expanded facilities
 - ☐ Enhanced programme of community activities
 - ☐ established revenue streams

All actions align with FOEP's core aims: **protect, restore, enhance, and future-proof.**



Image: Eastville Park at sunset. Credit Sarah West

10. Funding Strategy

Match Funding

- £40,000 already raised by FOEP
- CIL contributions (supported by ward members) in progress
- Additional small grant applications in progress

Heritage Lottery Funding

The HLF bid will enable a cohesive, strategic programme of improvements that cannot be delivered through piecemeal funding. With Bristol City Council letter of support, Friends of Eastville Park can continue conversations with Heritage Lottery, who have shown interest in our proposals. A successfully delivered small Heritage Lottery Bid that results in strong community driven outcomes will provide a great case study for other parks in need of similar restoration work.

• Café build	£700,000
• Removal of tired old buildings and erecting temporary storage	£300,000
• Final Play area renovations	£200,000
• Climate resilient forest garden with sensory space	£50,000
• Additional hire space for community workshops	£500,000
• Lake renovations (conservative estimate)	£500,000
• Restore boating	£30,000
• Wildlife and Biodiversity enhancement zones	£50,000
• Outdoor fitness gym	£40,000
• Sports Changing rooms	£500,000
• Improvements to paths for accessibility, lighting, renovated original fences and gates	£1,000,000
• Accessible toilet with Changing Places facility	£50,000
• Additional costs for bid support staff and engagement events	£100,000
• 3-year programme of community heritage events and support staff on completion	£400,000
• Inflation buffer at 10% of bid	£442,000
TOTAL	£4,862,000

Ongoing Income

Updated Infrastructure will add strength to our current annual fundraising portfolio of activities to bring in regular income that we put back into the park.

- Community café performance events
- Eastville Park merchandise (Calendars, duck food, Elderflower cordial, Christmas trees, Eastville Park History Book)
- Hosting community events through providers in the community
- Space for community use



Friends of Eastville Park: accounts going from strength to strength with the small community hub at the Nissen Hut.

11. Long-Term Sustainability

The project will deliver:

- Reduced maintenance costs through sustainable design
- Increased volunteer involvement
- Revenue generation through the café and room hire
- Stronger partnerships with schools, clubs, and community groups
- Creation of jobs and opportunities for training schemes
- Food security in a changing climate
- A resilient model for long-term stewardship

11.1 Current Income Baseline

Friends of Eastville Park currently generates **over £20,000 per year on average** from a small Nissen hut community hub alone. This demonstrates strong local demand for community space and aligns with national findings that parks and green spaces are “**vital public assets**” valued by their communities and central to public health and social cohesion.

Further income is achieved at occasional volunteer led community cafes over the summer, despite the building being small. A modern, purpose-built facility would significantly increase both usage and revenue. A typical volunteer led Sunday cafe can generate gross takings of £1500, while Saturday has a busy sports scene in the morning that creates high demand and gross takings of £1000 on busy days.

How New Facilities Will Increase Direct Revenue

11.2 Café Revenue

Government evidence shows that parks are increasingly expected to generate sustainable income through diversified assets such as cafés and community buildings. The UK Government’s *Sustaining Success in Parks* review highlights the need for new models of income generation and recognises cafés as part of the “successful methods of working for parks teams.”

Typical park cafés in comparable UK cities generate **£60,000–£150,000 annual turnover**, with councils commonly receiving **£10,000–£25,000 per year** through leases or profit-share arrangements.

This aligns with national guidance encouraging councils to make better use of local assets to generate revenue and support community services.

11.3 Community Buildings & Room Hire

The Local Government Association emphasises that community asset development — including community buildings — is a proven way to generate sustainable income while supporting local wellbeing.

Given that the current small hut already generates £20,000 annually, a larger, modern, accessible building could realistically generate:

- **£40,000–£60,000 per year** in rental income
- Additional income from events, training, and private hire
- Increased usage due to improved accessibility and capacity

This aligns with national findings that parks are “treasured public assets” that support community activity and should remain accessible while being financially sustainable.

11.4 Events, Markets, and Seasonal Activities

The House of Commons Public Parks Inquiry notes that parks play a central role in bringing communities together and supporting local culture. This creates opportunities for:

- Seasonal markets
- Outdoor performances
- Community festivals
- Sports events
- Boating at the lake

These activities typically can generate **£5,000–£10,000 per year** in direct income for councils through hire fees and concessions, while also increasing footfall for cafés and community buildings.

Reduced Costs for the Council

11.5 Lower Maintenance Burden

The *Sustaining Success in Parks* review stresses the importance of modernising parks infrastructure to reduce long-term maintenance costs and improve operational efficiency.

New buildings designed with:

- Energy-efficient systems
- Solar panels
- Durable materials
- Rainwater harvesting

Reduce ongoing maintenance and utility costs.

11.6 Increased Volunteer Stewardship

National evidence shows that when parks receive investment, volunteer involvement increases, reducing operational costs and improving maintenance outcomes. The Public Parks Inquiry highlights that parks “help to bring communities together” and support shared stewardship.

This reduces:

- Littering
- Vandalism
- Grounds maintenance costs

11.7 Estimated Revenue Model (With Evidence)

Facility	Conservative Annual Income	Supporting Evidence
Existing Nissen Hut	£20,000	Demonstrated FOEP income; aligns with LGA asset-use guidance
New Community Building	£40,000–£60,000	Community assets generate sustainable revenue when modernised
café (leased or social enterprise)	£10,000–£25,000	Parks require diversified income; cafés are key revenue sources
Events & Seasonal Activities	£5,000–£10,000	Parks support community events and cultural activity
Sports Club Use / Storage	£2,000–£5,000	Supported by LGA guidance on maximising local assets

Total Potential Annual Revenue:

£57,000–£120,000 per year

This represents a **three- to six-fold increase** on current income.

11.8 How Revenue Growth Supports the Community

The Local Government Association emphasises that community asset development should deliver both financial sustainability and community benefit.

Increased revenue will:

- Reduce pressure on council budgets
- Support free and low-cost community activities

- Enable subsidised hire rates for local groups
- Provide employment and training opportunities
- Strengthen long-term stewardship

This aligns with national policy encouraging councils to maintain parks as accessible public assets while ensuring financial resilience.

Summary

The proposed improvements will transform Eastville Park into a financially sustainable asset for Bristol City Council. With a proven baseline of £20,000 annual income from a small, outdated building, the addition of a café and modern community facilities could realistically generate **£57,000–£120,000 per year**, supported by national evidence on the economic value of parks and community assets.

This investment will deliver both **immediate direct financial returns** and **significant social value estimated at £840,000 per year in health and wellbeing benefits**, aligning with government guidance on sustaining parks and empowering communities.

Investing in Eastville Park through delivering this proposal provides a **low risk high return** investment for Bristol city council compared to projects that take many years to deliver and have high capital investment costs.

All elements of the proposals can be delivered in contained, separate projects, easy to install on site within a few weeks, minimising disruption to residents and ongoing park enjoyment. This is particularly important for maintaining crucial community assets and activities such as the play area, Food Club, Youth Club, Roots to Wellbeing, and Community Connect group for the over 55's.

In the unlikely event that Friends of Eastville Park Charity ceased to exist and assets were left to Bristol City Council to manage, all would fall under the existing skills and expert knowledge of parks officers. New management could be tendered for the café and no asset or green space would be left at risk of privatisation.

12. Conclusion

Eastville Park is a vital community asset with enormous potential. With Heritage Lottery Funding, match funding from Friends Of Eastville Park Charity, and the support of Bristol City Council, we can deliver a transformational project that protects the park's heritage, enhances its facilities, and ensures it thrives through community stewardship for generations to come.

Friends of Eastville Park stands ready to lead this work, supported by a strong network of partners and a committed local community. We look forward to further discussions and a letter of support to back a Heritage Lottery Fund bid, led by Friends of Eastville Park and Bristol City Council.



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Appendix

Five-Year Financial Projections for Eastville Park Improvements

1. Overview

This appendix provides a 5-year financial projection for the proposed new facilities at Eastville Park, including:

- A new community building
- A café (leased or operated as a social enterprise)
- Outdoor event space
- Sports club storage and hire

The projections are based on:

- FOEP's proven income of **£20,000 per year** from the existing Nissen hut
- Conservative utilisation assumptions
- Benchmark data from comparable UK park cafés and community buildings
- A gradual increase in usage as facilities become established

All figures are estimates and will be refined during the development phase.

2. Assumptions

2.1 Community Building

- Capacity: 2–3 hireable rooms
- Hire rate: £15–£25 per hour (community rate)
- Average utilisation:
 - Year 1: 30%
 - Year 2: 40%
 - Year 3: 50%
 - Year 4: 55%
 - Year 5: 60%

2.2 café

- Operated by a social enterprise or leased to a local business
- Council/FOEP income via:
 - Lease: £10,000–£20,000 per year **or**
 - Profit share: 10–15% of turnover

- Conservative assumption: **£12,000 per year** rising with footfall

2.3 Events & Seasonal Activities

- Outdoor markets, fairs, performances, community festivals
- Hire fees and concessions
- Conservative assumption: £5,000 in Year 1 rising to £10,000 by Year 5

2.4 Sports Clubs & Storage

- Annual contributions from clubs using facilities
- Conservative assumption: £2,000–£5,000 per year

3. Five-Year Revenue Projection

Table 1: Projected Annual Income (Conservative Scenario)

Income Stream	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Community Building Hire	£30,000	£40,000	£50,000	£55,000	£60,000
Café Lease / Profit Share	£12,000	£13,000	£14,000	£15,000	£16,000
Events & Seasonal Activities	£5,000	£6,000	£7,500	£9,000	£10,000
Sports Club Use & Storage	£2,000	£3,000	£4,000	£4,500	£5,000
TOTAL ANNUAL INCOME	£49,000	£62,000	£75,500	£83,500	£91,000

4. Five-Year Cumulative Revenue

Year	Total Income
Year 1	£49,000
Year 2	£111,000
Year 3	£186,500
Year 4	£270,000
Year 5	£361,000

Five-year cumulative revenue: £361,000

This represents a **significant uplift** compared to the current £20,000/year baseline, and demonstrates that the new facilities will be financially sustainable while delivering major community benefits.

5. Sensitivity Analysis

To ensure robustness, the projections include a conservative scenario. However, a **moderate scenario**—based on typical performance of park cafés and community buildings—would yield:

- **£70,000–£120,000 per year**
- **£400,000–£550,000 over five years**

A **high-utilisation scenario** (seen in popular parks with strong community hubs) could exceed **£150,000 per year**.

6. Operating Costs (Indicative)

Operating costs will depend on the final management model. Indicative annual costs include:

Cost Area	Estimated Annual Cost
Utilities (reduced by sustainable design)	£5,000–£8,000
Cleaning & maintenance	£8,000–£12,000
Insurance	£1,500–£3,000
Management/admin	£5,000–£10,000
Total Estimated Costs	£19,500–£33,000

Even under conservative assumptions, the facilities generate a **healthy annual surplus**.

Even under conservative assumptions, the facilities generate a **healthy annual surplus**.

7. Net Surplus Projection

Year	Income	Costs	Net Surplus
Year 1	£49,000	£30,000	£19,000
Year 2	£62,000	£31,000	£31,000
Year 3	£75,500	£32,000	£43,500
Year 4	£83,500	£33,000	£50,500
Year 5	£91,000	£33,000	£58,000

Five-year net surplus: £202,000

8. Summary of Financial Benefits

Direct financial benefits to Bristol City Council

- Significant increase in annual revenue
- Reduced maintenance burden through modern, efficient buildings
- Sustainable income streams supporting long-term park management

Benefits to the community

- Affordable, accessible spaces for groups and families
- A café that becomes a social anchor
- More events, activities, and opportunities for local enterprise
- Reinforced community cohesion and wellbeing

Strategic alignment

- Supports Bristol's health, wellbeing, and climate strategies
- Demonstrates strong value for money for the Heritage Lottery Fund
- Creates a financially resilient park for future generations

Eastville Park Lake Restoration Plan

desk study

1. Introduction

Eastville Park's ornamental lake (approx. **330m long** and **up to 70m wide**) covers an estimated **1.4–1.7 hectares**. Over decades, the lake has become heavily silted, and the outflow to the River Frome is frequently blocked. These issues reduce water quality, biodiversity, and the lake's heritage value.

Restoration is required to meet the aims of Bristol City Council's **Parks & Green Spaces Strategy (2020–2030)**, which prioritises improving water bodies, enhancing biodiversity, and restoring historic park features.

2. Current Issues Identified

2.1 Heavy Siltation

- Urban lakes typically accumulate **1–3 cm of silt per year**, leading to significant depth loss over decades (Environment Agency guidance).
- Shallow lakes warm faster, reducing oxygen levels and harming aquatic life.

2.2 Blocked Outflow

- Blocked outflows reduce water circulation, increasing stagnation and algal blooms (Natural England, *Green Infrastructure Standards*).

2.3 Biodiversity Decline

- Loss of marginal vegetation and habitat complexity is typical of silted lakes (LGA Nature Recovery Case Studies, 2023).

3. Required Restoration Works

3.1 Bathymetric & Ecological Survey

- Required under the **Water Framework Directive** for any waterbody restoration.
- Includes depth mapping, sediment sampling, water quality testing, and ecological assessment.

3.2 Desilting / Dredging

- Mechanical or suction dredging to remove accumulated sediment.
- Disposal must comply with **Environment Agency Waste Classification Guidance**.

3.3 Outflow Improvements

- Clearing blockages, re-profiling channels, installing silt traps.
- Recommended in EA's *Working with Natural Processes* guidance.

3.4 Biodiversity Enhancements

- Reedbeds, marginal planting, habitat structures, and long-term monitoring.
- Supported by DEFRA's *Local Nature Recovery Strategy* framework.

4. Cost Breakdown (With Citations)

4.1 Surveys & Assessments

Item	Cost Range	Evidence
Bathymetric survey	£5,000–£12,000	Typical UK consultancy rates (HydroSurvey Ltd; EA procurement frameworks)
Sediment sampling & lab analysis	£3,000–£6,000	Environment Agency sediment classification requirements

Subtotal: £8,000–£18,000

4.2 Desilting / Dredging (Scaled to 1.4–1.7 ha)

Lake Area	Low Estimate	High Estimate
1.4 ha	£112,000	£210,000
1.7 ha	£136,000	£255,000

UK benchmarks for lake dredging:

- **£80,000–£150,000 per hectare** (CABE Space, *The Value of Public Space*; EA case studies; local authority procurement data). **Estimated desilting cost: £110,000–£255,000**

4.3 Outflow & Watercourse Improvements

Item	Cost Range	Evidence
Clearing blocked outflow	£5,000–£10,000	Local authority drainage contractor averages (LGA procurement)
Re-profiling channel	£15,000–£30,000	River restoration benchmarks (RRC Case Studies)
Installing silt traps / debris screens	£5,000–£15,000	EA <i>Working with Natural Processes</i> guidance

Subtotal: £25,000–£55,000

4.4 Biodiversity Enhancements

Item	Cost Range	Evidence
Reedbed creation	£10,000–£25,000	LGA Nature Recovery Case Studies (2023)
Marginal planting	£5,000–£15,000	Local authority wetland planting projects
Habitat structures	£5,000–£20,000	RRC (River Restoration Centre) case studies
Water quality monitoring (5 years)	£10,000–£20,000	UKCEH monitoring frameworks

Subtotal: £30,000–£80,000

5. Total Estimated Cost Range

Category	Estimated Cost
Surveys & assessments	£8,000–£18,000
Desilting & disposal	£110,000–£255,000
Outflow improvements	£25,000–£55,000
Biodiversity enhancements	£30,000–£80,000
Total Estimated Cost	£173,000–£408,000

This range is consistent with UK lake restoration projects of similar scale.

6. Case Studies referenced

6.1 Loch Leven Restoration (UKCEH)

- Major dredging and ecological restoration project.
- Demonstrated significant improvements in water quality and biodiversity.
- Cited by UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology as a model for lake recovery.

6.2 Local Government Association — Nature Recovery Case Studies (2023)

- Includes wetland and lake restoration examples.
- Shows typical costs for reedbeds, marginal planting, and habitat creation.
- Demonstrates how councils deliver biodiversity improvements at scale.

6.3 River Restoration Centre (RRC) Case Studies

- Provides costed examples of channel re-profiling, silt management, and habitat creation.
- Used by councils and the Environment Agency for project planning.

6.4 DEFRA — Local Nature Recovery Strategies

- Emphasise restoring water bodies as a priority for reversing biodiversity decline.
- Aligns with Bristol's Nature Recovery Network.

7. Benefits of Restoration

Biodiversity

- Increased habitat diversity
- Improved conditions for fish, amphibians, birds, and invertebrates

Hydrology & Water Quality

- Improved flow to the River Frome
- Reduced stagnation and algal blooms

Climate Resilience

- Enhanced flood mitigation
- Increased carbon sequestration

Heritage & Visitor Experience

- Restores a key historic feature
- Improves visual amenity and educational value

8. Summary

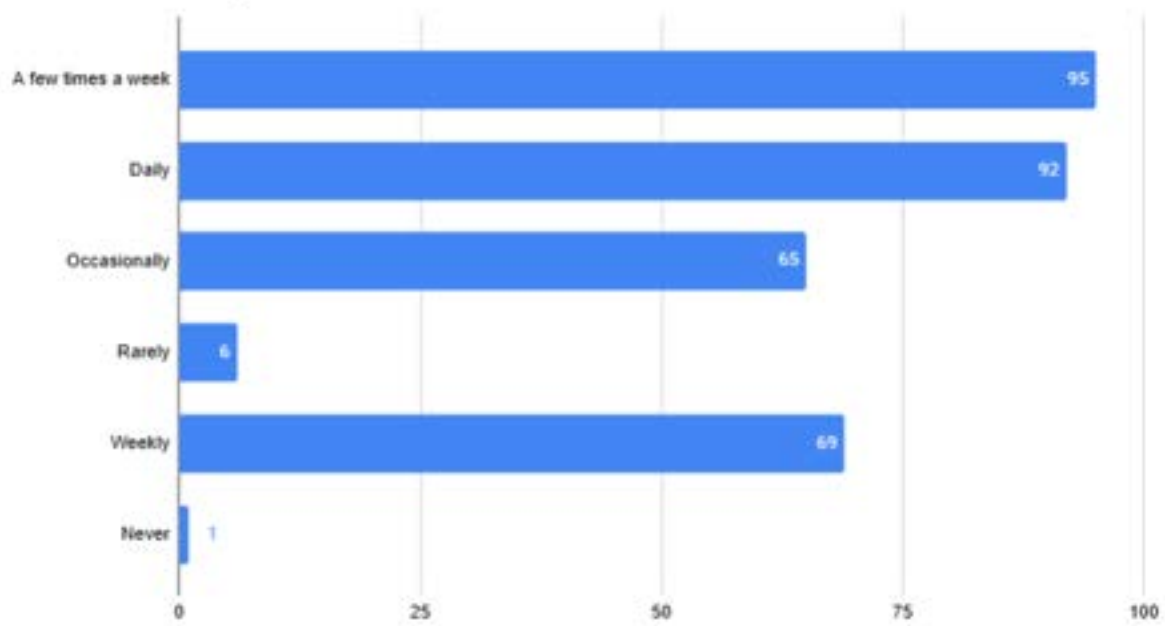
Restoring Eastville Park Lake will cost an estimated **£173,000–£408,000**, based on UK benchmarks and case studies. This investment will significantly improve biodiversity, water quality, hydrology, and visitor experience, aligning with Bristol's Parks & Green Spaces Strategy and national nature recovery priorities.

Questions Asked in the 2025-2026 survey of park users

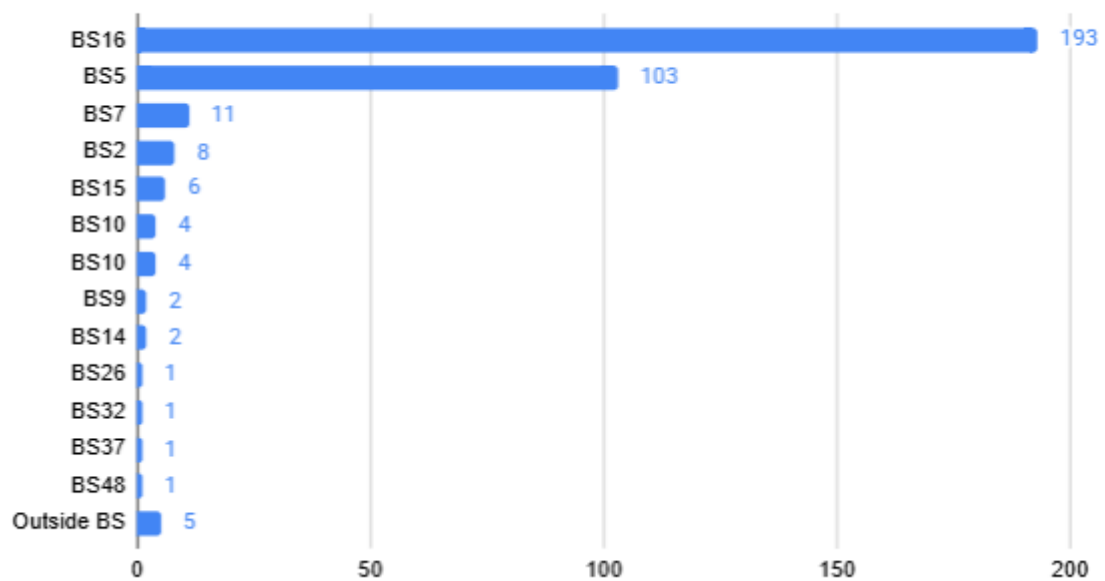
1. How often do you visit Eastville Park?
2. What is your postcode? *Used to understand where our park visitors are travelling from
4. What do you enjoy about Eastville Park?
If you answered "other" above, please tell us more about what you enjoy at Eastville
5. How would you rate facilities at Eastville Park?
6. Are there any barriers to your visit or enjoyment of the park?
If you answered "other" on the previous question, please tell us more about your barriers to enjoying the park
7. What improvements would you like to see at Eastville Park?
If you answered "other" in the previous question, please tell us more about improvements you'd like to see
2.2 What age group do you belong to?
What religious celebrations and events do you usually enjoy? This does not need to match your religious belief
9. What park facilities do you feel it is acceptable to pay for?
10. How much per month do you feel is affordable to pay for additional facilities like those previously listed?
11. How many of the following park activities have you enjoyed in the past year?
If you answered "other" in the previous question, what activities were not listed?
12. Have you heard of Friends of Eastville Park Charity?
13. To a maximum of 5, how satisfied are you that activities offered in Eastville Park meet your needs?
14. How important are green spaces like parks to you?
15. How concerned are you about climate change?
16. How much have you been impacted by the rising costs of living in Bristol?
17. What else would you like to share about your experience of Eastville Park?
2.1 Do you have a disability, impairment or health condition which affects your day-to-day activities?
2.3 What is your ethnicity? This may be different to your nationality, place of birth or citizenship.
2.4 What is your religion or belief?
2.5 What is your sex?
2.6 Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex recorded at birth?
2.7 What is your sexual orientation?
8. What facilities and services are important for you at the current community cafes? Select all that apply
3. How do you normally travel to Eastville Park?

2025-2026 Park user survey results

1. How often do you visit Eastville Park?

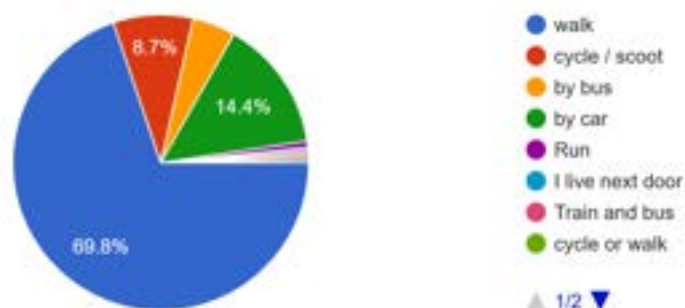


2. What is your postcode?

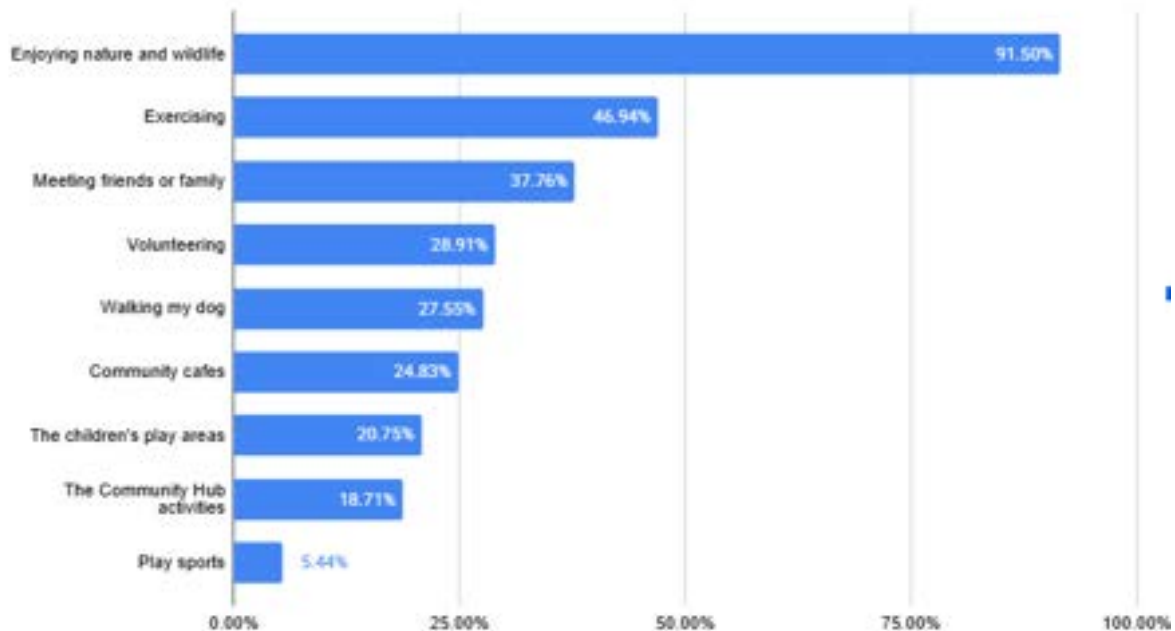


3. How do you normally travel to Eastville Park?

298 responses

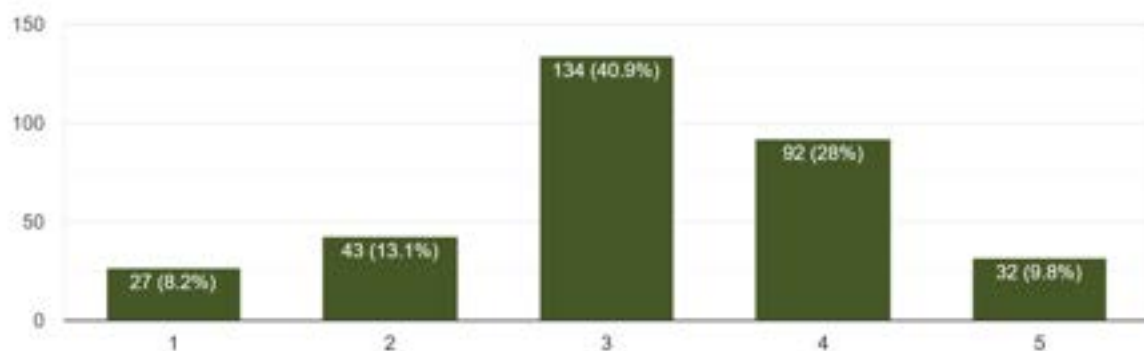


4. What do you enjoy about Eastville Park?

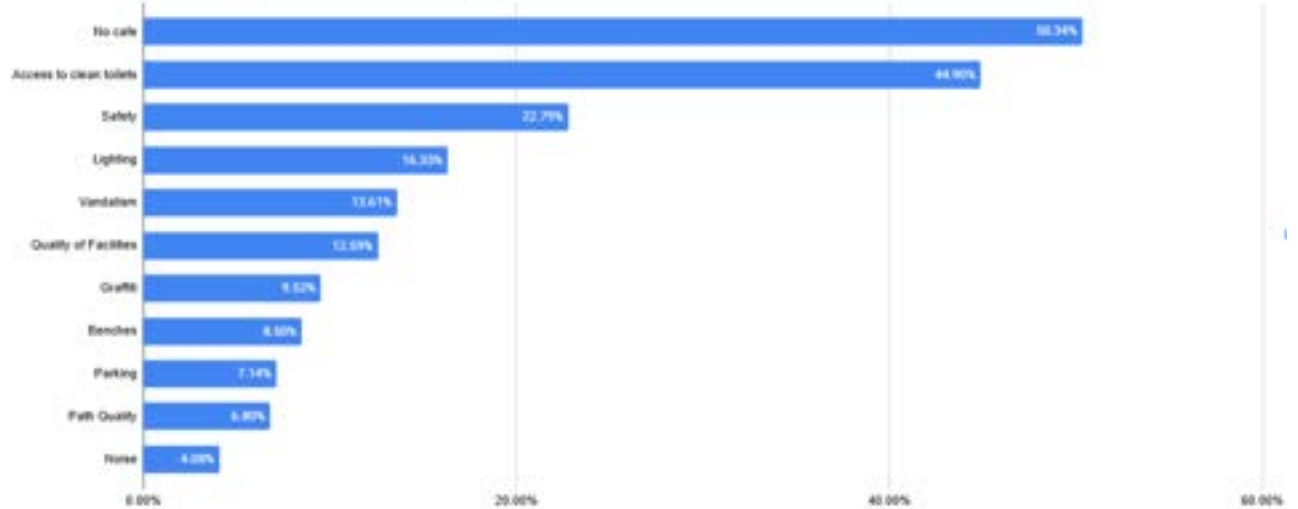


5. How would you rate facilities at Eastville Park?

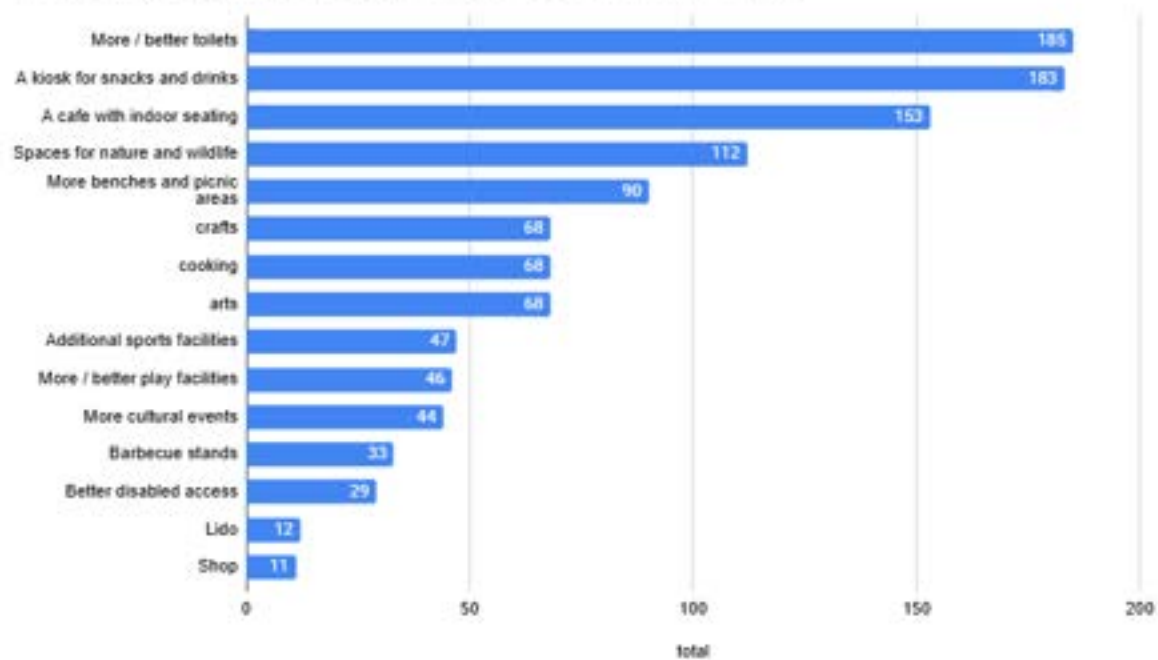
328 responses



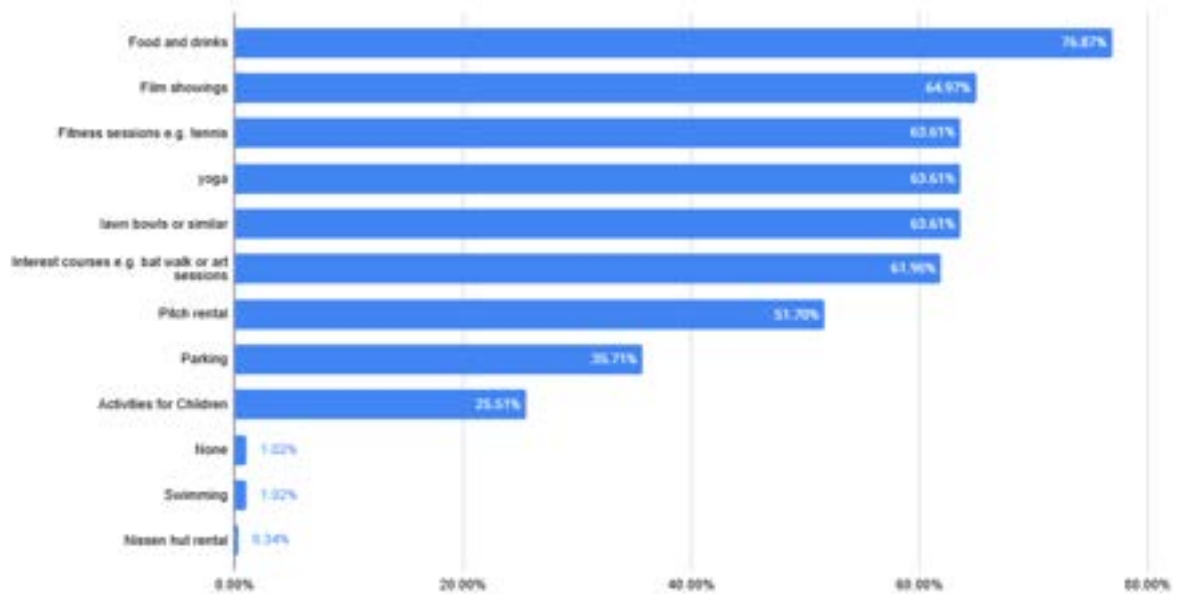
2025-26 Park user survey: 6. main barriers to enjoyment



7. What improvements would you like to see at Eastville Park?



2025-26 Park user survey: 9. acceptable paid facilities



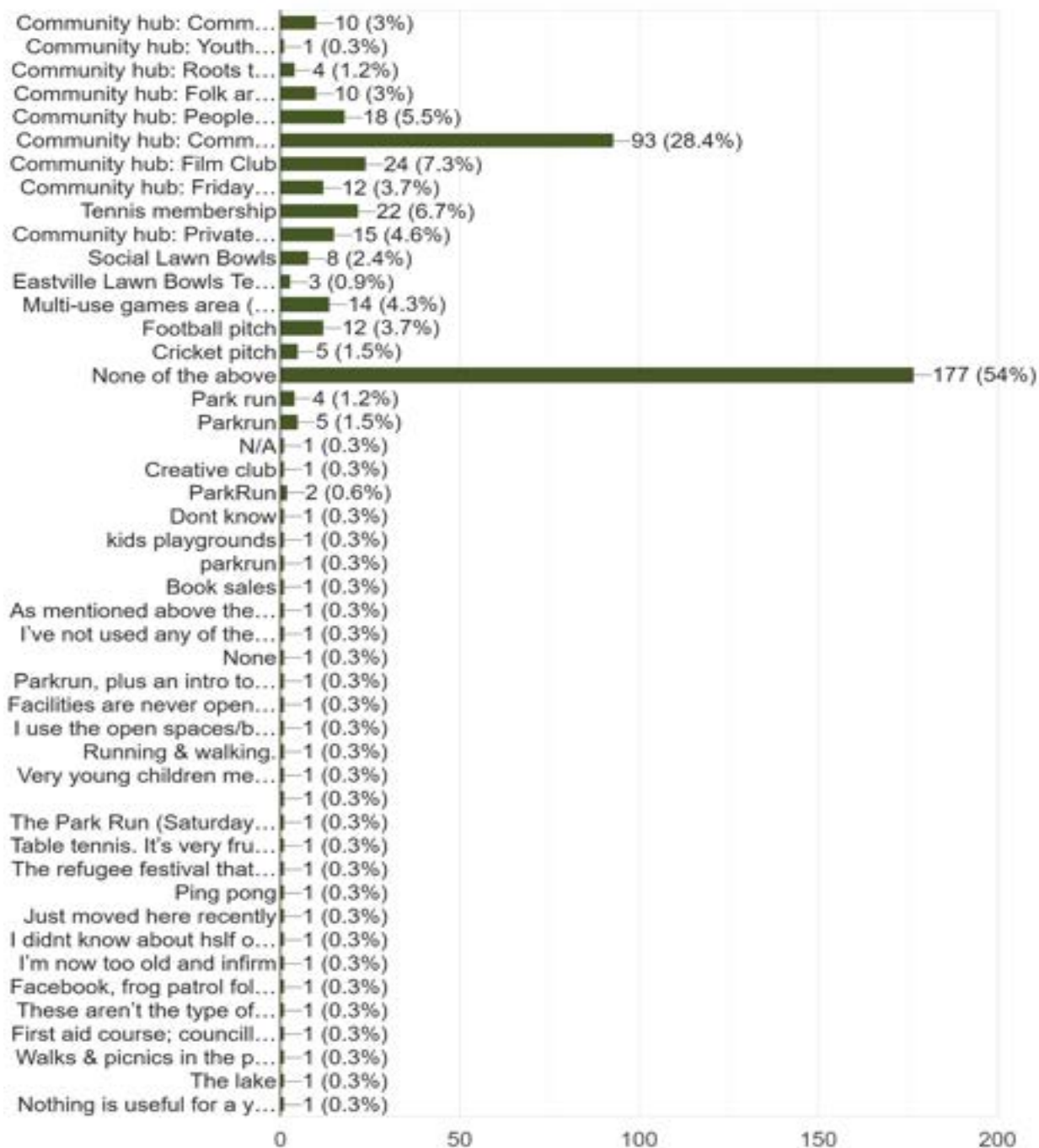
10. How much per month do you feel is affordable to pay for additional facilities like those previously listed?

326 responses



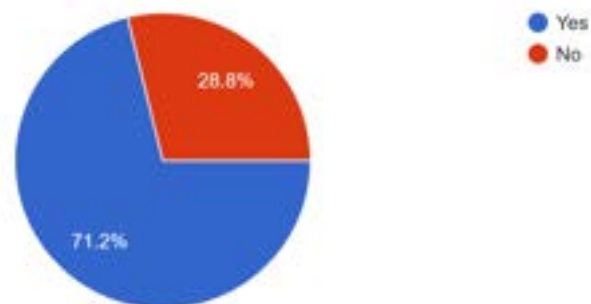
11. How many of the following park activities have you enjoyed in the past year?

328 responses



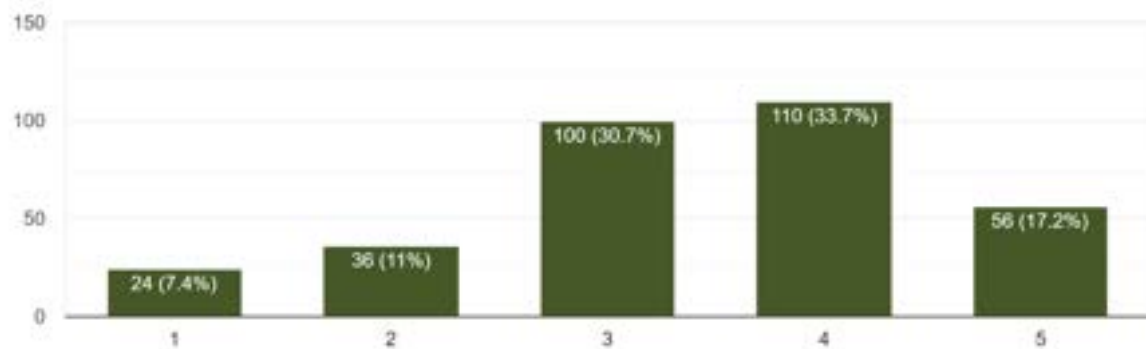
12. Have you heard of Friends of Eastville Park Charity?

326 responses



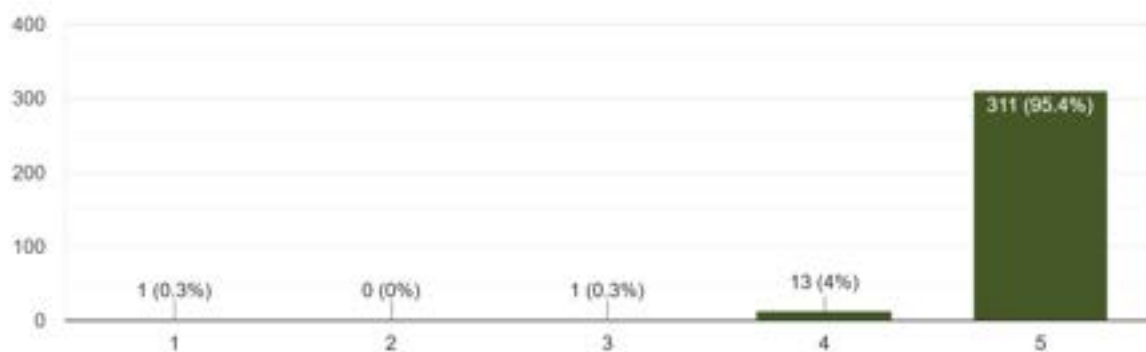
13. To a maximum of 5, how satisfied are you that activities offered in Eastville Park meet your needs?

326 responses



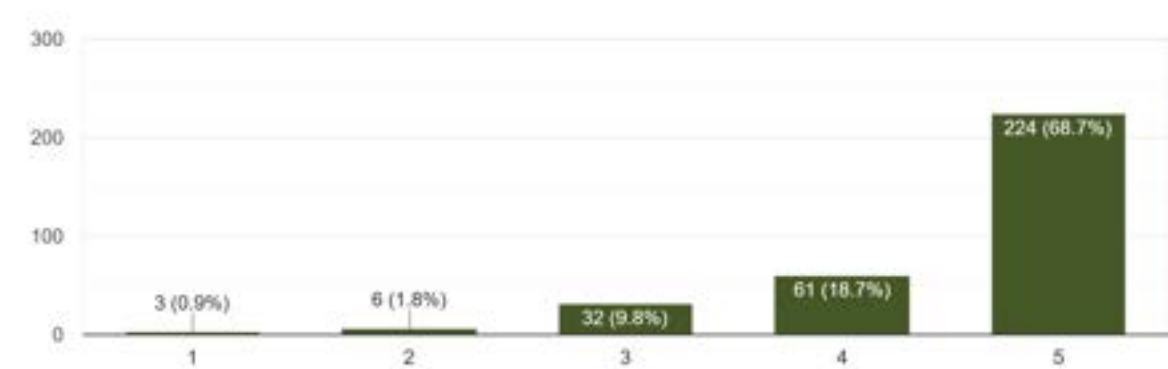
14. How important are green spaces like parks to you?

326 responses



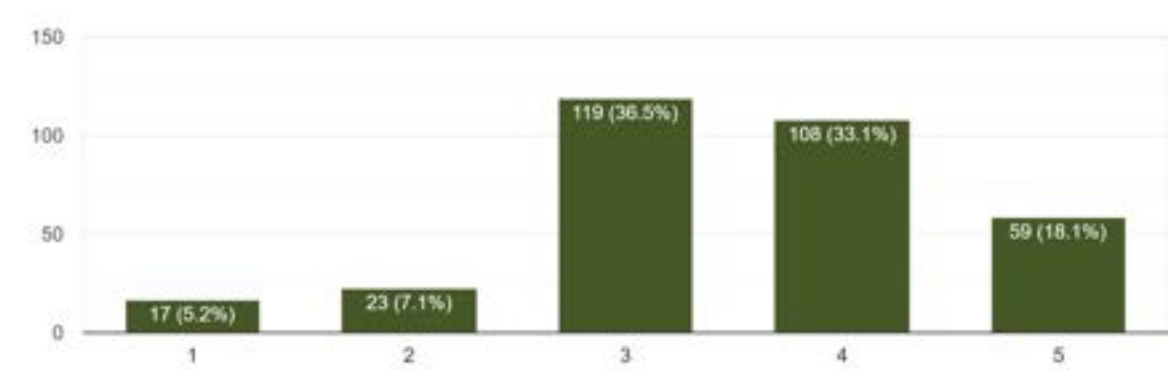
15. How concerned are you about climate change?

326 responses



16. How much have you been impacted by the rising costs of living in Bristol?

326 responses



17. What else you would like to share about your experience of Eastville Park?

194 responses

I love it!

It's a lovely park it just needs more money and attention from the council.

I appreciate the time and effort that goes into running the friends of group. I enjoy the feeling of being involved just by being a member of the Facebook group. Wish the nissan hut was used more for family/craft/free community events.

A lovely cafe would be well received by this park especially on a Saturday morning after park run.

No to a lido! Park spaces shouldnt be sold off to businesses but free for all to enjoy. wd like to see more rewilding instead

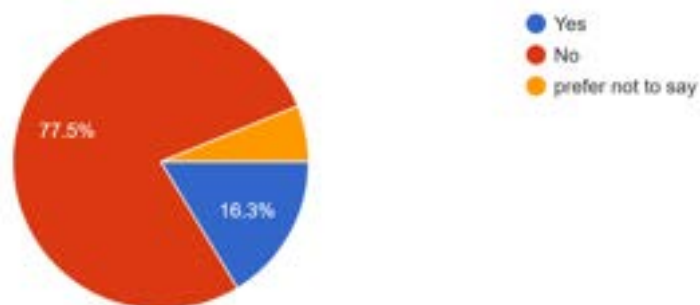
Developing the park as a 'commercial undertaking' is wrong its original purpose was for the people of Easton to get fresh air and some gentle exercise (as in go for a walk)

I live on the road that the car park is on and it would be helpful if able bodied people could be encouraged to walk/bus/cycle to the park. Our road is absolute chaos sometimes and is known as 'the

A selection of the 195 additional comments covering many topics from safety, concerns about inappropriate development and some people keen to have a lido. Many people commented on the lack of investment in the existing buildings and facilities.

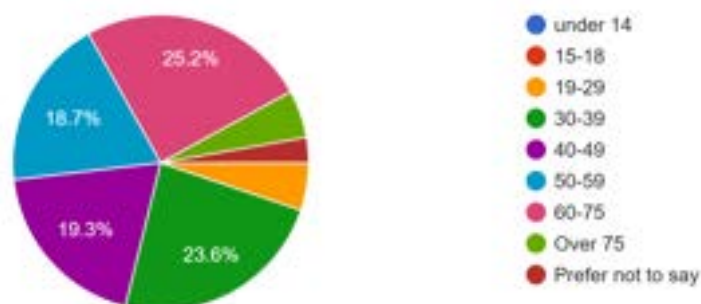
2.1 Do you have a disability, impairment or health condition which affects your day-to-day activities?

325 responses



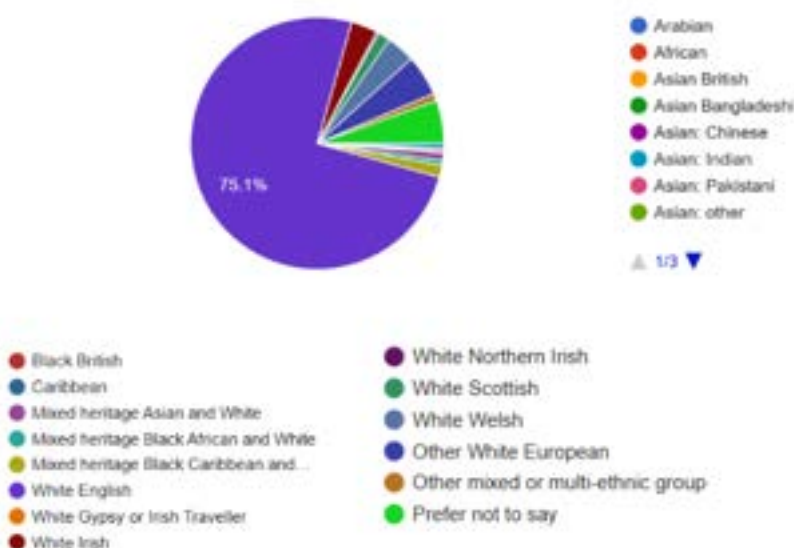
2.2 What age group do you belong to?

326 responses



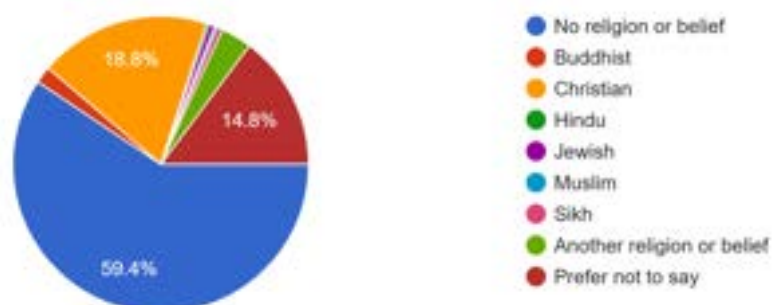
2.3 What is your ethnicity? This may be different to your nationality, place of birth or citizenship.

325 responses



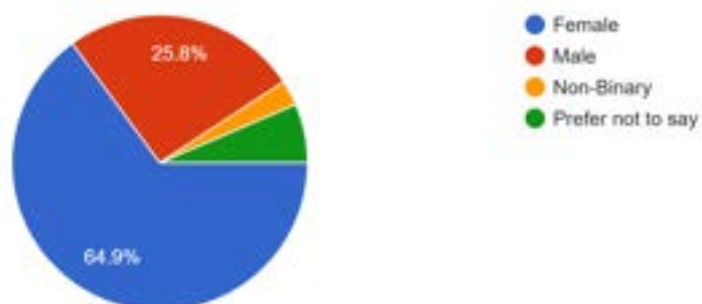
2.4 What is your religion or belief?

325 responses



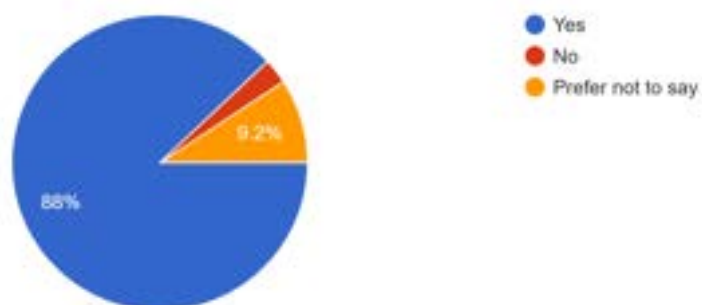
2.5 What is your sex?

325 responses



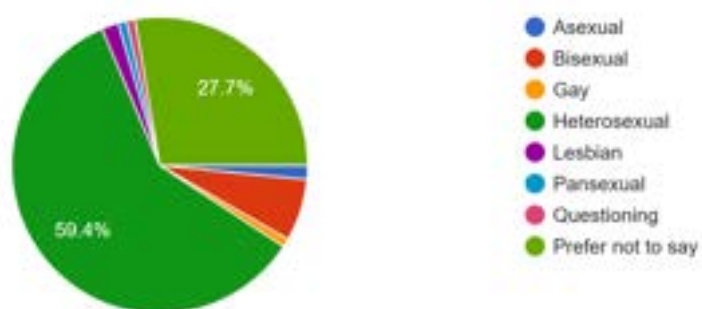
2.6 Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex recorded at birth?

325 responses



2.7 What is your sexual orientation?

325 responses



Key benefits of forest gardens

- working with the land rather than against it
- low maintenance
- yields a wide range of products
- resilient to changes and biologically sustainable
- environmental benefits – CO₂, erosion, shelter
- aesthetically pleasing
- promotes biodiversity
- can be exploited commercially
- efficient systems of production
- little or no greenhouse gas emissions

Click on an image below to find out more:



Icons made by [Goodhook](#) from [www.flaticon.com](#) is licensed by [CC 3.0 BY](#)



Case study [community garden examples – National Forest Gardening Scheme](https://nationalforestgardening.org/benefits-of-forest-gardens/building-community/community-gardens/)
<https://nationalforestgardening.org/benefits-of-forest-gardens/building-community/community-gardens/>

Evidence archive [Evidence Archive - NHS Forest](#)

Achievements and Performance

We continue to celebrate what has been achieved in the park and reflect on all the activities which have been happening in the refurbished Nissen Hut Community Hub. Many groups from last year have gone from strength to strength and we have welcomed many new projects and initiatives to continue to fulfil our charitable objectives for the community in and around Eastville Park.

We still looking for new trustees. We have gained some amazing new volunteers who are not able to commit to be a trustee at the moment. If you are interested please email friendsofeastvillepark@gmail.com

Here is an overview of where we focussed our voluntary energy over the past year or so.



Our Thursday drop-in social group, **Community Connect** continued to be an important project for Friends of Eastville Park and is still providing company, friendship, activities, advice, fun and a lovely lunch all for free! This project for over 55's is **now funded by The People's Health Trust** and still managed by Laura Cobbett who brings her experience and ideas to continue creating a welcoming group every **Thursday from 11 till 2pm**. Many thanks to Laura and her volunteers.



Roots to Wellbeing the leading green social prescribing service met weekly at the Community Hub with a programme of outdoor nature connection activities in the park for anybody struggling with their mental health, loneliness anxiety or isolation.

We continued to host the eclectic and popular **People's University of Fishponds** monthly on Sunday nights.



On Thursday nights music fills the air with the blissful **Songbird's choir** led by the inspirational **Jannah Warlow**.

Every Friday **Eastville Park Food Club** continued to provide support for the local community by sourcing and distributing donated food and other items at this important weekly event.

Eastville Bowls Club continued to meet regularly. Membership numbers have been a problem and there are thoughts of folding the club.



Friends of Eastville Park continued to support local teenagers doing their **Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Awards Scheme**. Their contribution in the park is invaluable many thanks to Andy for co ordinating this!

Five hugely popular **Book Fayres** and **Fundraising Cafés** also took place in the Summer, some with some great live music performances too.

Frome Fairies got their waders on and cleared tons of tree debris from the river near the weir great family fun!

The Community Hub hosted **Folk Around Fishponds** every fortnight, a very special fortnightly event out for musicians and audience.



Nature Sub Group News

2025 was a busy year for the Habitat Management Volunteers as they continued to manage the blackthorn saplings in Redhill Drive field. Using funds awarded by Quartet Community Foundation, some wildflowers were sown at the end of the year (with lots more planned for this autumn!).

Nature Habitats in the park

The Habitat Management Volunteers are always keen to attract more people to their monthly sessions. These take place on the last Sunday of each month and involve enhancing and improving habitats for nature around the park, such as removing blackthorn saplings encroaching into grassland areas.

All tools are provided and we meet at 10am in the car park. If you would like to get involved, please drop an email to epnaturegroup@gmail.com.

Children's Play Area

Please support us in the next phase of renovating the beloved sandpit and it's equipment. We are in talks with the council about replacing the sandpit and some equipment within it.



Eastville Park Bowls Club were in full swing with home and away games and the occasional win!

The Nissen Hut Community Hub became extremely busy with bookings nearly every day of the week with parties, corporate days in which teams painted, gardened and made a difference.

We also supported **Special Friends Film Club** a group which uses the Community Hub to enable young people who find mainstream cinemas hard to access to enjoy a cinema experience together.

Other "one off" events included a couple of corporate away days and team building events and we hosted a lovely fundraising café for the charity **Bristol After Stroke**. We also have close links with the **Nordik Walkers** who love walking in the park.



Imayla Youth Club continued to meet at the Community Hub on Thursdays. The teenagers who use our space really enjoy it.

Christmas tree sales went well as well as the wonderful **Eastville Park Calendar** and **A History of Eastville Park** booklet provided us with a fantastic fundraising boost. Our lovely **Elderflower Cordial** is also available while stocks last.

Throughout 2025 and into 2026 we have continued to try to keep the local community aware of our activities and dreams with regular "**Parkie**" articles in the Fishponds Voice thank you Ken for always making space for us.

We are so grateful for all the volunteers who have made events happen, too many to name here and to all the wonderful people who have come and been part of this unique journey.