

**Southampton Common Survey 2017**  
*what over 2,100 people across Southampton  
think about their Common and its future*

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This is the largest study of the views of Southampton residents about their Common, comprising over 2,190 respondents from across Southampton and beyond; the last survey was in 1977. The results have been analysed in conjunction with the 2011 census data.

It is representative of the City's adult (18+) users of The Common and provides an authoritative account of their views.

The study shows that:

- **The Common is a valued amenity accessible to the great majority of Southampton residents** (Section 4.5):

- o It is appreciated and used (at least once a month) by residents who live within 3.58 km (2.2 miles) of The Common who mostly use it on a weekly basis.
- o It is readily accessible to the 162,000 city residents (63% of the city's population) who live within 3.58km.
- o It is not the preserve of the residents in its immediate vicinity.

- **Users of The Common reflect the ethnic diversity of the City's population** (Section 4.3):

- o The users of The Common match the overall ethnic diversity of the City, as measured in the 2011 census.

- **The Common is most popular with city residents from 30 to 69 years old** (Section 4.4):

- o 30 to 39 year olds are the largest user group often comprising young families with children.

- **The Common is highly valued as an open, natural green space primarily for walking and recreation** (Section 5.1):

- o It is appreciated as a natural green space in the heart of the City, which is used for a wide variety of activities important to physical and mental well-being.

- **The Common significantly supports green travel in the City** (Section 7.1):

- o The second most popular activity (after walking) is commuting by foot or bike.

- **The top priorities for improvement wanted by users are** (Section 5.3):
  - o **Children’s play facilities:** The provision of sufficient and well maintained, modern play areas (including water play) is a major issue. [The survey was done whilst work on the new play area was continuing, which will go some way to addressing this issue].
  - o **Provision of public toilets**
  - o **Litter and waste management**
  - o **Street lighting and personal safety**
  - o **Quality of the footpaths**
  
- **Inadequate maintenance and resources** (Sections 5.2 & 5.3)
  - o The lack of maintenance and resources underpin the great majority of users’ concerns above.
  - o It is also apparent in the poor condition and state of the lakes and the Hawthorns Wildlife Centre, as well as the failure to effectively deal with anti-social behaviours.
  - o Lack of management of The Common to both enhance its biodiversity (e.g. with wildflower meadows and better habitat management) in some areas and open up wooded and overgrown areas for recreational uses.
  
- Other important issues are (Section 5.3):
  - o **Conflicts between users, notably, pedestrians, cyclists and dog walkers.**
  - o **The nature and management of organised events.**
  - o **Improved eating and drinking facilities.**

Southampton Common Forum Management Committee, December 2017.