

# South Hams District Council



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## Parks and Open Spaces Report

**Sounding Board Panel  
Third Survey Jan 2003**



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## Summary

As part of a review of the parks and open spaces service, the Council asked Sounding Board members for their opinions on the importance of open spaces and their satisfaction with maintenance and provision.

Parks and open spaces include children's playgrounds, sports grounds or fields, parks, gardens and informal spaces where owned or maintained by South Hams DC.

### Results

- The vast majority of respondents felt that the parks and open spaces were 'very important' for the local environment. Only 7 people felt that they were 'not very important' (1%).
- Two-thirds of respondents (69%) rated maintenance of parks and open spaces in the South Hams as 'very good' or 'good'.
- Nearly one-fifth of respondents (135) said that they had contacted the Council regarding parks and open spaces.
- Nearly a third of those who had contacted the Council about parks and open spaces (29%) were dissatisfied with the response from the Council, although the largest single response was 'satisfied' (37%).
- The aspects of parks and open spaces that respondents were most likely to say was 'not particularly well / not well' looked after were 'informal open spaces' (24%) and 'children's play area equipment' (24%).
- Two-thirds (68%) of respondents said that provision of parks and open spaces was 'very good' or 'good'. The other three categories measured attracted about a half of respondents saying that provision was 'very good' or 'good'. Children's playgrounds had the lowest rating, with one-fifth (20%) saying that the provision was 'poor' or 'very poor'.

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## **1.0 Introduction / Background**

This survey was undertaken as part of the third using the permanent sample of the 'Sounding Board'.

## **2.0 Method & analysis**

The survey was sent by post to the panel. It was expected that there would be a much higher response level than usually obtained from this method with no reminder (77% compared to 20 to 30%).

A freepost reply envelope was enclosed with the questionnaire, together with a letter detailing how the panel would be informed of the results.

The responses were processed and analysed by Marketing Means.

### **2.1 Analysis - a note about confidence intervals**

Where possible in the report, a 'confidence interval' has been given for the figures. All confidence intervals in this report have been worked out on a 'confidence level' of 95%. This means that if we were to carry out the questionnaire 100 times, 95 of them would come back with the figures obtained within the bounds of the Confidence Interval given.

The confidence interval (CI) will be expressed as ' $\pm X\%$ '. This will mean that the percentage given would be X% either way 95 times out of 100 (in this case). For example:

Overall satisfaction may have come back as 75% in the survey with a confidence interval =  $\pm 3\%$ . This would mean that 95% of surveys would come up with an overall satisfaction level between 72% and 78%.

## 3.0 Response

At the time of writing this report, 635 responses had been received from 822 'Sounding Board' members. This equates to a 77% response rate, which is very good.

### 3.1 About respondents

The data collected from respondents is important in determining how representative the responses are of Sounding Board.

#### 3.1.1 Economic activity

The response was broadly representative of the 'Sounding Board' panel, with the exception of:

- Full-time students responded less well (this is also reflected in the age groups) – 50% responded, compared with the overall response rate of 74%
- The response rate for 'homemakers' was slightly higher than would be expected, at 84%.

#### 3.1.2 Age (next birthday)

The table below shows that compared to the Sounding Board panel:

- Those under the age of 24, and over the age of 85, responded less well than other age groups (44% and 45% response rate respectively)
- Those belonging to the 55-64 and 65-74 year old age groups responded slightly better than other age groups (78% and 73% response rate respectively).

	Sample		Sounding Board		Variance
	Number	%	Number	%	%
<24	26	4%	59	7%	-3%
25-34	42	7%	58	7%	0%
35-44	138	21%	174	21%	0%
45-54	150	23%	191	23%	0%
55-64	125	19%	152	18%	+2%
65-74	94	15%	116	14%	+1%
75-84	64	10%	88	10%	0%
85+	4	1%	11	1%	-4%
	643	100%	1069	100%	0%

#### 3.1.3 Gender

In terms of gender there was no significant difference in the percentage of males. There was, however, a difference in gender response rates between age groups. The majority of respondents under the age of 55 were female, whereas the majority of respondents aged 55 and above were male. This difference was most pronounced in the under 35 and 85 plus age groups (72%) and females (74%) who responded.

#### **3.1.4 Disability**

Response rates were very similar for those who reported a disability (74%) and for those who did not report a disability (74%).

#### **3.1.5 Ethnicity**

Nine people reported that they had an ethnic origin other than 'White, British', of these 5 responded to this survey (56%).

#### **3.1.6 Socio-economic grouping**

The response rate was lowest in relation to the group coded as 'never worked / long-term unemployed'. This is mainly due to the poor response rate of many of our younger panel members who were also classed as students.

Across the board response rates varied between 71% and 87%, with the highest response being recorded from the 'routine occupations' group.

## 4.0 Parks and Open Spaces

As part of a review of the parks and open spaces service, the Council asked Sounding Board members for their opinions on the importance of open spaces and their satisfaction with maintenance and provision.

Parks and open spaces include children's playgrounds, sports grounds or fields, parks, gardens and informal spaces where owned or maintained by South Hams DC.

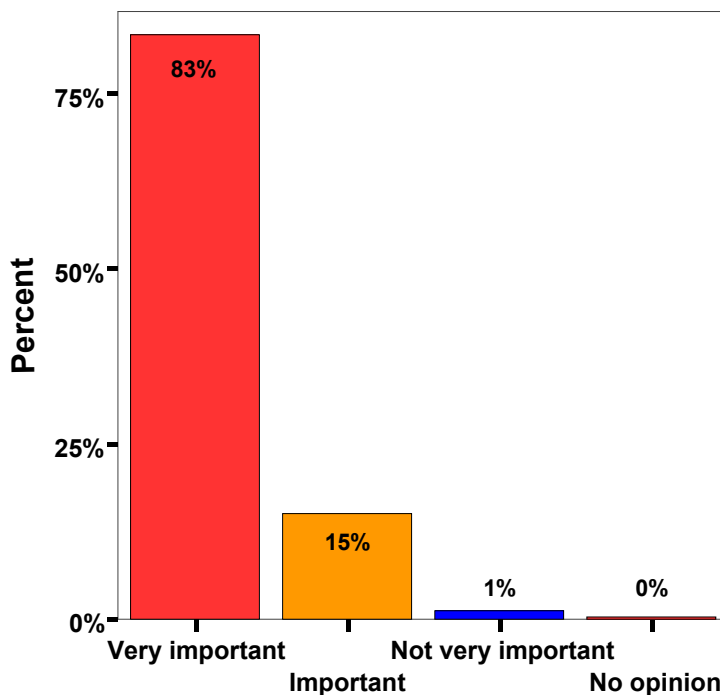
### 4.1 Importance of parks and open spaces for the local environment

Sounding Board members were asked to rate the importance of parks and open spaces for their local environment. (*Appendix 1, Table 1*)

The vast majority of respondents felt that the parks and open spaces were 'very important'. Only 7 people felt that they were 'not very important' (1%).

There was a significant difference based on gender, with women (90%) more likely than men (77%) to say that parks and open spaces were 'very important' for the local environment. Nearly all the other men (21%) thought that parks and open spaces were 'important'. (*Appendix 1, Table 1a*)

#### Importance of parks and open spaces for the local environment



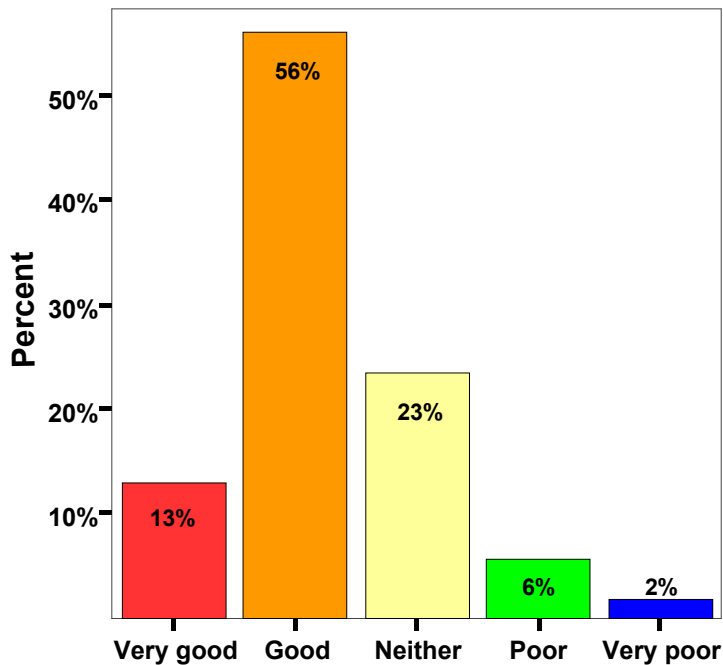
#### 4.2 Rating of maintenance of parks and open spaces

Sounding Board members were asked to rate the how well the Council maintained parks and open spaces in the local area (*Appendix 1, Table 2*).

There was less agreement about the level of maintenance than the importance of parks and open spaces. Two-thirds of respondents (69%) rated maintenance as 'very good' or 'good'.

There were no significant differences when analysed by demographic groupings.

#### Rating of maintenance of parks and open spaces in the local area



### 4.3 Contacting the Council about parks and open spaces

Nearly one-fifth of respondents (135) said that they had contacted the Council about parks and open spaces.

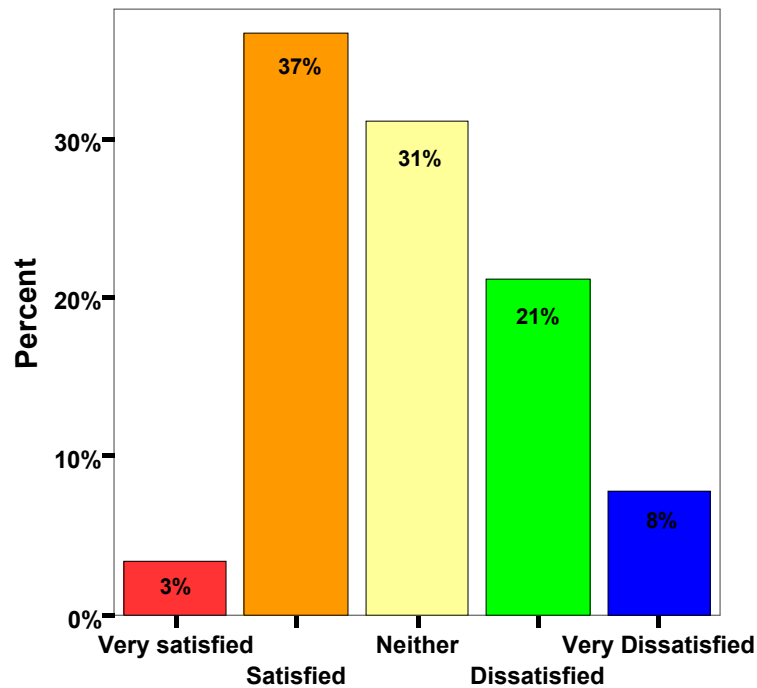
**Have you ever had to contact the Council regarding parks & open spaces in your local area?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	135	21%	22%
	No	482	76%	78%
	Total	617	97%	100%
	Did not answer	18	3%	
Total		635	100%	

Nearly a third of those who had contacted the Council about parks and open spaces (29%) were dissatisfied with the response from the Council, although the largest single response was 'satisfied' (37%) (*Appendix 1, Table 3*).

There were no significant differences when analysed by demographic groupings.

#### Satisfaction with contact about parks and open spaces



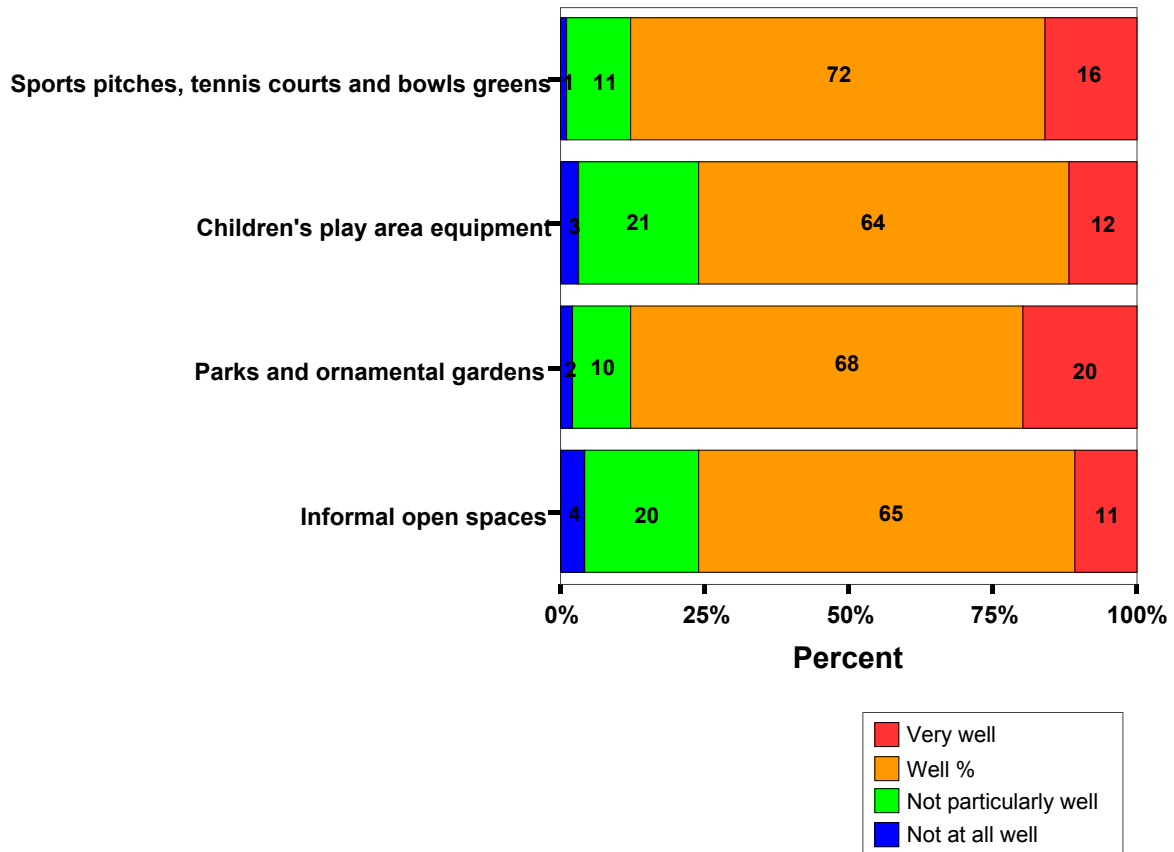
#### 4.4 How well the Council is looking after parks & open spaces

Members were then asked to rate the Council's ability to look after parks and open spaces on a scale of 'very well', 'well', 'not particularly well' or 'not well at all'. (Appendix 1, Table 4).

The aspects of parks and open spaces that respondents were most likely to say was 'not particularly well / not well' looked after were 'informal open spaces' (24%) and 'children's play area equipment' (24%).

Those from higher socio-economic groups (SOC codes 1.1 and 1.2), and those who were in younger age groups were more likely to rate 'children's play area equipment' poorly. (Appendix 1, Tables 4a & 4b)

#### How well the Council has looked after aspects of parks and open spaces



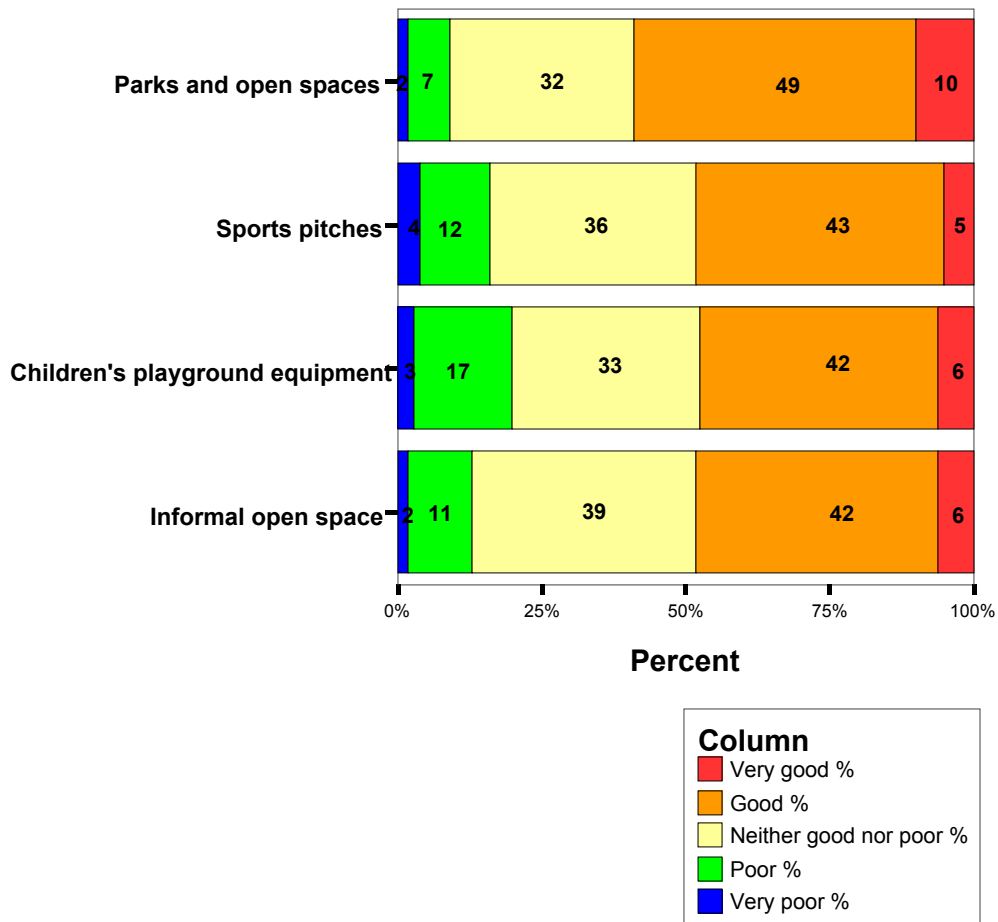
#### 4.5 Level of provision of parks and open spaces

Respondents were also asked to rate the level of provision of parks and open spaces in the District on a scale of 'very good', 'good', 'neither good nor poor', 'poor' or 'very poor'.

The rating was highest for 'parks and open spaces', with two-thirds (68%) of respondents saying that the provision was 'very good' or 'good'. The other three categories attracted about one-half of respondents saying that provision was 'very good' or 'good'. Children's playgrounds had the lowest rating, with one-fifth (20%) saying that the provision was 'poor' or 'very poor' (*Appendix 1, Table 5*).

There were no real differences when analysed by demographic groups.

**Rating of level of provision of parks and open spaces**



#### 4.5.1 Why?

If respondents rated the provision as 'poor' or 'very poor', an option was given to express why they were dissatisfied.

There were 155 comments given. These have been loosely categorised in the table below:

<b>Category</b>	
More provision	47
More provision - children	38
Maintenance	30
Cleanliness	15
More provision - villages	6
No building	6
Other	5
Dartmouth	4
Vandalism	4

The comments split roughly into 2: 'more provision' or 'maintenance' / 'cleanliness'. The largest categories related to more provision of some kind (*full comments in Appendix 1, Table 6*).

## **Appendix 1: Tables**

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**Table 1**

**Importance of parks and open spaces for your local environment**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very important	525	83%	83%	83%
	Important	95	15%	15%	99%
	Not very important	7	1%	1%	100%
	No opinion	2	0%	0%	100%
	Total	629	99%	100%	
	Did not answer	6	1%		
Total		635	100%		

**Table 1a**

**Importance of parks and open spaces for the local environment by Gender**

			Gender		Total
			Male	Female	
For your local environment	Very important	Count	232	292	524
		% within Gender	<b>77%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>84%</b>
	Important	Count	65	29	94
		% within Gender	<b>21%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>15%</b>
	Not very important	Count	5	2	7
		% within Gender	<b>2%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>1%</b>
	No opinion	Count	1	1	2
		% within Gender	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>
Total		Count	303	324	627
		% within Gender	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 2**

**How do you rate maintenance of the parks & open spaces**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very good	79	12%	13%	13%
	Good	342	54%	56%	69%
	Neither good nor poor	143	23%	23%	92%
	Poor	35	6%	6%	98%
	Very poor	11	2%	2%	100%
	Total	610	96%	100%	
	Did not answer	25	4%		
Total		635	100%		

**Table 3**

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**How satisfied were you with the response from the Council?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very satisfied	3	0%	3%	3%
	Satisfied	33	5%	37%	40%
	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	28	4%	31%	71%
	Dissatisfied	19	3%	21%	92%
	Very Dissatisfied	7	1%	8%	100%
	Total	90	14%	100%	
Not applicable		545	86%		
Total		635	100%		

**Table 4**

**How well the Council is looking after parks and open spaces**

	Very well		Well		Not particularly well		Not at all well	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
	Sports pitches, tennis courts and bowls greens	82	16%	361	72%	56	11	5
Children's play area equipment	65	12%	339	64%	114	21	14	3%
Parks and ornamental gardens	110	20%	373	68%	57	10	9	2%
Informal open spaces	62	11%	362	65%	111	20	22	4%

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**Table 4a**

**Socio-economic group \* Children's play area equipment Crosstabulation**

			Children's play area equipment				Total
			Very well	Well	Not particularly well	Not at all well	
Socio-economic group	1.1	Count	3	22	15	2	42
		% within Socio-economic group	7%	52%	36%	5%	100%
	1.2	Count	14	86	27	3	130
		% within Socio-economic group	11%	66%	21%	2%	100%
	2.0	Count	11	60	14	0	85
		% within Socio-economic group	13%	71%	16%	0%	100%
	3.0	Count	9	59	14	2	84
		% within Socio-economic group	11%	70%	17%	2%	100%
	4.0	Count	6	26	6	2	40
		% within Socio-economic group	15%	65%	15%	5%	100%
	5.0	Count	4	9	3	0	16
		% within Socio-economic group	25%	56%	19%	0%	100%
	6.0	Count	6	15	6	3	30
		% within Socio-economic group	20%	50%	20%	10%	100%
	7.0	Count	2	8	6	1	17
		% within Socio-economic group	12%	47%	35%	6%	100%
	8.0	Count	1	5	9	0	15
		% within Socio-economic group	7%	33%	60%	0%	100%
	9.0	Count	9	46	14	1	70
		% within Socio-economic group	13%	66%	20%	1%	100%
Total	Count	65	336	114	14	529	
	% within Socio-economic group	12%	64%	22%	3%	100%	

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**Table 4b**

**Crosstab**

			Children's play area equipment				Total	
			Very well	Well	Not particularly well	Not at all well		
Age Grouped	Under 25	Count	0	6	9	1	16	
		% within Age Grouped	<b>0%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>100%</b>	
	25 to 34	Count	6	23	10	3	42	
		% within Age Grouped	<b>14%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>100%</b>	
	35 to 44	Count	9	75	29	4	117	
		% within Age Grouped	<b>8%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>100%</b>	
	45 to 54	Count	12	92	30	2	136	
		% within Age Grouped	<b>9%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>100%</b>	
	55 to 64	Count	12	66	10	2	90	
		% within Age Grouped	<b>13%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>100%</b>	
	65 to 74	Count	11	47	22	0	80	
		% within Age Grouped	<b>14%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>100%</b>	
	Over 75	Count	15	26	4	2	47	
		% within Age Grouped	<b>32%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>100%</b>	
	Total		Count	65	337	114	14	530
			% within Age Grouped	<b>12%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 5**

**Rating of level of provision of parks and open spaces in the District**

	Very good		Good		Neither good nor poor		Poor		Very poor	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Parks and open space	60	10%	283	49%	183	32%	40	7%	11	2%
Sports pitches	27	5%	233	43%	198	36%	65	12%	20	4%
Children's playground equipment	32	6%	229	42%	183	33%	92	17%	15	3%
Informal open space	32	6%	236	42%	218	39%	64	11%	14	2%

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**Table 6**

If you rated the level of provision as 'poor' or 'very poor', what could we do better?

Category	Comment
Cleanliness	Better provision of "poop scoop" bins & refuse collection
Cleanliness	Clean up dog mess, provide better drainage at coronation park, provide a leisure centre for Dartmouth
Cleanliness	clean up waste ground, look at footpaths, plant sympathetically, sign appropriately
Cleanliness	Dog mess duncombe park
Cleanliness	Dog mess, wings in separate areas, play areas for over 5's
Cleanliness	Empty dog bins more frequently, Long Marsh is a disgrace
Cleanliness	Improve river path walks, remove litter, provide more litter and dog bins on Longmarsh and keep them emptied and clean
Cleanliness	Insufficient provision of litterbins and dog fouling bins. Those litter bins that there are, are either too small or not emptied often enough
Cleanliness	Keep play areas free of dangerous mess on the ground. Keep all areas litter free and undergrowth cut back.
Cleanliness	More dog bins and existing ones to be emptied more regularly
Cleanliness	More frequent removal of broken beer bottles
Cleanliness	More litter bins and dog bins
Cleanliness	More of it in more areas which are cleaner and better maintained
Cleanliness	Remote areas set aside with 'no dogs' - the only people to walk to these areas are people with dogs. If dogs were allowed here it would take the pressure off areas where children/football teams play
Cleanliness	Tidy parks and keep up on general maintenance on the children's' play areas & toys
Dartmouth	Sports in Dartmouth
Dartmouth	Dartmouth desperately needs basic facilities including a swimming pool. The river takes a life a year and we live by the sea, yet the facilities are atrocious!
Dartmouth	I don't know of any informal open space in Dartmouth
Dartmouth	Provide sports centre/swimming pool in Dartmouth (instead of talking about it!)
Maintenance	Better maintenance
Maintenance	Better maintenance and care
Maintenance	Clean & repair
Maintenance	Employ park keepers, grounds persons, and wardens to maintain upkeep. Patrols to monitor litter, dog fouling, vandalism
Maintenance	Improve maintenance and upkeep, more imaginative planting
Maintenance	Improve parking and maintenance Also enforce dog fouling laws and stop kids skateboarding and stop vandals!!
Maintenance	Improve the maintenance/ground keeping. offer more facilities
Maintenance	Improve upkeep and maintenance of provision

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Maintenance	Improve/renew equipment & keep tidy. cheaper parking close by
Maintenance	Keep in good repair
Maintenance	Lack of equipment and maintenance
Maintenance	Maintained to be more attractive and user friendly
Maintenance	Maintenance of children's play equipment is slow and provision insufficient
Maintenance	More bins/supervision/security
Maintenance	More regular grass cutting and hedge/edge trimming
Maintenance	Pay better attention to range of pitches and the upkeep. The level of playground equipment is poor due to the age and limited access to this.
Maintenance	Regular maintenance and visits (incl evenings and weekends)
Maintenance	Shorter periods between maintenance so they don't get out of hand and overgrown
Maintenance	State of pitches often waterlogged
Maintenance	Very overgrown, dead plants, dog bins full, cemetery unkempt, hedges overgrown
Maintenance	Access road to Fulham Park is very poor/lighting/safety not great
Maintenance	At the new sports field at Town stall the drainage systems seems to have gone wrong
Maintenance	Care for existing areas
Maintenance	Working safety catches on gates
Maintenance	Do something with the civic centre area and/or the Rutherford so they get used more
Maintenance	Replace castle cove steps
Maintenance	Replace equipment rather than remove due to Health & Safety restrictions.
Maintenance	Replace faulty/broken play equipment
Maintenance	Stronger equipment, so it can not be broken or damaged so easily
Maintenance	There could be better lighting and parking near parks and gates which exclude dogs should all be sprung to avoid being left open.
More provision - villages	All sports facilities in Yealmpton are run and maintained by the village. There are no SH sports facilities e.g. tennis courts
More provision	Children in Wembury have a small playground and for older children there is a basketball net and a small skate park.
More provision	Could have more
More provision	Have more parks
More provision	In Yealmpton more provision for sports eg tennis, skate park
More provision	Increase park facilities or erect additional park
More provision - villages	Increase provision in villages
More provision	increase variety of amenities

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More provision	Lack of sports pitches could be addressed. also we have no swimming pool inadequate playgrounds and equipment
More provision - children	Lee Mill has very little in the way of a park - children's park and area could be upgraded to include plants and flowers
More provision	More
More provision	More areas needed. Kingsbridge
More provision	Changing rooms/clubhouse with sports pitches.
More provision	Have some of these facilities in this specific locality
More provision	Improve sports and leisure facilities across the board
More provision	Lift the standard of provision
More provision	More green spaces within towns
More provision	More needed
More provision	More of them
More provision	More open spaces in towns plus seating areas
More provision	More parks in ivybridge
More provision	More regular review a bit more creativity of design
More provision	More sports grounds and play areas
More provision	More sports pitches
More provision	More sports pitches in kingsbridge
More provision	More sports pitches, especially football pitches in Kingsbridge
More provision	New equipment needed
More provision	No parks or sports pitches in our village (Bittaford)
More provision	No real parks or open space in the area of Buxton
More provision	Not enough park space or playground areas on east side of ivybridge. Basketball hoops on grass area should be on hard surface.
More provision	Not many open spaces or parks in west of S Hams
More provision	Proper public garden to sit in
More provision	Provide a better level of sports facilities
More provision	Provide a football pitch in Kingsbridge
More provision	Provide an ornamental park in Ivybridge
More provision	Provide changing accommodation
More provision	Provide changing rooms for existing sports pitches
More provision	Provide more
More provision	Provide more all weather sports pitches

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More provision	Provide more facilities - need to have more than just a pair of goal posts
More provision	Provide more facilities
More provision	Provide more pitches etc for local teams - some are still playing in fields
More provision	Provide recreational areas at out of town housing estates
More provision	Provide some more, make those existing more attractive
More provision	The need for more opens spaces and general sports pitches and sport facilities.
More provision	There are no parks/open spaces etc in my local area
More provision	There are no sports facilities in my area
More provision	There need to be more informal spaces, which are sited where people would use them.
More provision	Would enjoy more!
More provision	Increase available land south of, but close to, Totnes town centre, increase seating for the elderly
More provision - children	Better facilities for children
More provision - children	Could do with more children's play areas
More provision - children	Give children what they want not what you want
More provision - children	Have more play areas in tones
More provision - children	Improve quality & quantity of playground equipment and make regular safety checks
More provision - children	In Ivybridge, Holbeton and Noss Mayo children's play areas are very variable in quality. I am unaware of "parks" in these localities. It is
More provision - children	More facilities for Children, Adults etc. Need to encourage better facilities than we currently have, the area I particularly live in is qui
More provision - children	More for young children
More provision - children	More imaginative and challenging equipment for wider age range. excellent example st.nicholas park in warwick.
More provision - children	More imaginative play space for children, adventure playground for 7-13,bigger skate park, nice gardens
More provision - children	More open spaces apart from pitches where children can play
More provision - children	More playgrounds

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More provision - children	More park and play facilities for children 6-12 yrs
More provision - children	More play equipment for children in Kingswear, cameras extended from Avenue Gardens to the play park as it is regularly vandalised by young adults
More provision - children	More playgrounds clean and free from dog waste
More provision - children	More provision for teenagers' activities
More provision - children	No children's' play areas in the old part of Totnes. It is a long walk to the park
More provision - children	Play equipment could be much better, more care with playing fields
More provision - children	Provide and maintain facilities for children and young adults in villages such as Cornwood. Apart from basic swings for children there and no
More provision - children	Provide many more children play areas, and more sporting facilities.
More provision - children	Provide more children's play space/equipment in the more rural areas
More provision - children	Provide more family park spaces, and children's play areas suitable for older as well as young children.
More provision - children	Provide more such areas, especially where children could cycle safely
More provision - children	Shortage of football pitches in ivybridge area and no playground equipment in the dairy lane/brook road area
More provision - children	Skateboard area for Salcombe
More provision - children	Skateboarding/teenage facilities needed
More provision - children	Skatepark has been wrecked
More provision - children	Skatepark needs better maintenance
More provision - children	Supply more areas with play equipment
More provision - children	Too few areas for children to play or just open space for people to walk and let dogs children run around.
More provision - children	Update equipment in children's' play areas, enforce bylaws re dog mess, no more space for skateboarding

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children	
More provision - children	A bigger area for skateboard park and a special area to prevent children from riding on pavements
More provision - children	Additional and improved children's' play areas
More provision - children	Replace some children's play equipment, which is badly designed.
More provision - children	Play equipment could be much better, more care with playing fields
More provision - children	Make playgrounds more interesting and fun. Also make them look better - made out of wood rather than bright plastic
More provision - children	Need new play areas all ages
More provision - villages	Help with individual village needs for sports facilities
More provision - villages	Provide more of each for village use. We are currently plagued by use of our short cul-de-sac by skateboarders, footballers and trick cyclists
More provision - villages	Provide open spaces & play equipment in all rural villages/areas
More provision - villages	Provide Children's play equipment in South Milton ( and possibly other villages)
No building	do not build on them
No building	Don't sell any more sports grounds
No building	Stop development on open (greenfield) sites
No building	Stop filling every empty space with property
No building	Stop selling green spaces to developers
No building	There should be more space allowed for sports pitches and parks etc instead of using the land for building second homes
Other	As I live in Woolwell it is difficult to know what is the responsibility of SHDC and what is Plymouth City Councils responsibility. Some area
Other	Recognise that not everyone is a rich oap
Other	Remove the skatepark
Other	The park in skylark rise, woolwell has been removed without any consultation.
Other	Probably not relevant but very sad there are no allotments in Totnes area. Gardens have become too small to grow veg. Rang to find this info
Vanadlisim	Deter vandals and enforce by laws
Vandalism	get expert advice on how each area could be made to look better and kept better. more protection from vandalism. Use working CCTV

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	cameras in kingsbridge.
Vandalism	Repair vandalism/graffiti quicker, make more playgrounds available, put in skateparks/facilities for children over age 8, more pro-active combat against dog fouling and enforce fines
Vandalism	Provide patrolling warden to reduce vandalism
155	Total