

Crayford Marshes Vision
Online Survey Summary Report
June 2023



Survey background

From February to May 2023, [Friends of Crayford Marshes](#) community group ran an online survey titled 'Crayford Marshes Vision' through [Survey Heart](#). To predominantly target local people and site users the survey was mainly publicised locally by the Friends of Crayford Marshes group through social media, local community groups and local media.

This survey is not intended to be a formal consultation, but to be a snapshot of the opinions and perspectives of the people who visit Crayford Marshes. It is important to acknowledge that together with the environmental focus of the questions, it likely both underestimates the popularity of non-nature activities but may also not be representative of the entire Crayford Marshes community. A thorough consultation exercise which is representative of the entire community was considered to be beyond the scope of the friends group, however, it is thought that this survey accurately demonstrates the support for a new approach to the future of the Crayford Marshes from those who actively use and benefit from the site.

This report summarises the 262 responses received during the survey period.

The survey consisted of 19 questions with closed options and ended with an open question to allow respondents to provide unguided feedback for what they would like to see happen at Crayford Marshes. Each of the closed questions was also followed by an 'other' option which enabled respondents to add further information. Relatively few additional comments were received, however, they are analysed in this report and can be viewed in the unedited survey data for transparency.

This report was prepared by Donna Zimmer on behalf of the Friends of Crayford Marshes.

Survey Questions and Options

Note that there was no requirement for all questions to be answered, allowing respondents to move on without answering questions. Coupled with some questions allowing for multiple choice answers, the number of responses varies throughout. The numbers and answer options presented are listed below.

1. How often do you visit Crayford Marshes?

Several times a week/ once a month/ occasionally/ never visited/ other

2. Do you visit Crayford Marshes:

Alone/With Friends or family/Brownies, Cubs or other children's groups/Wildlife led walks/other

3. In what way do you currently enjoy your time at Crayford Marshes?

Observing wildlife/wildlife photography/walking rambling/ cycling / boating/dog walking/ other

4. How do you currently travel to the Peninsula?

Walk/ by car/ cycling/ bus/ train/ other

5. Do you find this site accessible?

I can access the site and comfortably move around the Peninsula/ I have some trouble with access and finding my way around/other

6. What facilities would you like to see on offer?

An information centre/ toilets/a cafe/ a hide for birdwatching/ boardwalks/ Bins for dog waste/ no facilities needed/ other

7. What extra signage or information do you think would be beneficial?

Directional signs at intermittent points/ educational display boards for wildlife/ educational display boards for history/ mobile location app/ all of the above/ other

8. What events have you/would you like to participate in around Crayford Marshes?

Guided walks/ bird ringing/ restoration projects/ group art projects/ litter picks/ guided wildlife photography/ star gazing/ bat walks / all of the above/ other

9. How important is Crayford Marshes as it is today, for your physical or mental well-being? (Please pick one)

Very important/ somewhat important/ neither important nor unimportant/ somewhat unimportant/ not at all important

10. In developing ideas for the future of Crayford Marshes, how important is it to involve local youth organisations, and opportunities for young people to be involved? (Please pick one)

Very important/ somewhat important/ neither important nor unimportant/ somewhat unimportant/ not at all important

11. Which, if any other local outdoor spaces do you visit regularly? Please add a comment in the "other" box to indicate what facilities and features are important to you when visiting these outdoor spaces.

Crossness Nature Reserve/Braeburn Park/Danson Park/Thames Road Wetland/Lesnes Abbey Woods/Footscray Meadows/RSPB Rainham/others.

12. How much do you know about the past and future threats to Crayford Marshes? (If there are particular threats that concern you, please provide details in the "other" box.)

Very aware/ somewhat aware / unaware / other

13. How much do you know about the value of Crayford Marshes as a breeding ground for numerous existing and some declining species? (Please pick one)

Very aware / somewhat aware/ unaware

14. In the alternative vision for Crayford Marshes would you like to see dedicated areas that would focus on the conservation of such species?

Yes /No /Other

15. Are you a member of any local history or wildlife conservation organisations? If yes please list them in the "other" box.

Yes/ No / Other

16. Beyond the boundary of Crayford Marshes are you aware of the other sites within the vision? (Thames Road Wetland, River Cray, Stanham Farm)

Very aware / somewhat aware / unaware

17. So as to gather information on the demographic answering these questions, what age bracket do you belong to? (Please pick one)

18 - 30 / 30 - 45 / 45 - 60 / 60 plus / I'd rather not say

18. What else would you like to see happen at Crayford Marshes to make it a better quality, nature-rich green space or resource for the local community?

An open question to which respondents could write what they liked with no closed options.

19. Do you live within the London Borough of Bexley if not please state which town/area you live.

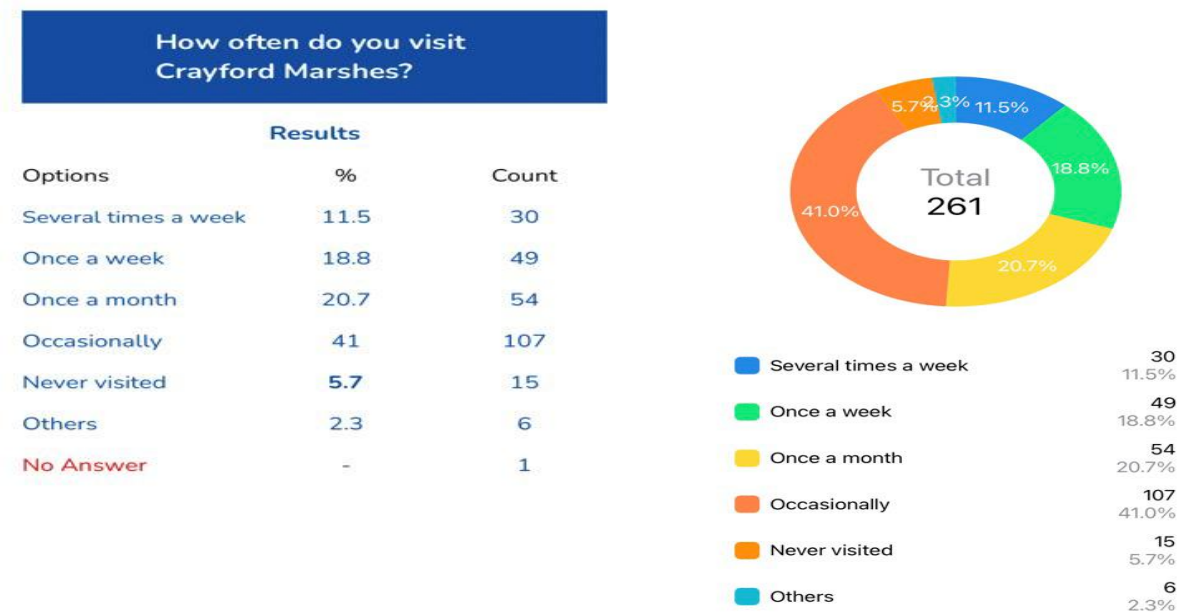
Yes / No /other

Survey responses summary

1. How often do you visit Crayford Marshes?

51% of respondents visited Crayford Marshes at least once a month or more frequently

41% visiting occasionally which suggests a large core of regular visitors among the respondents.

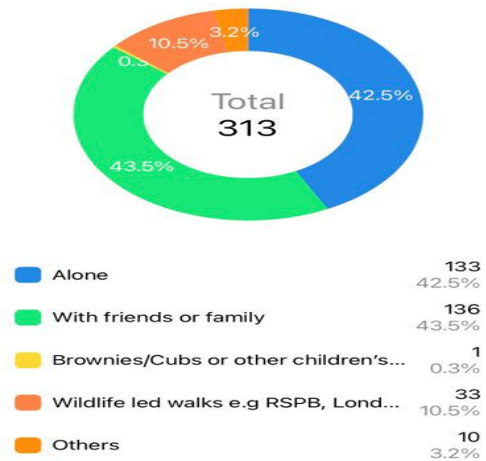


2. Do you visit Crayford Marshes:

43.5% respondents visit Crayford Marshes with family and friends, 42% visit alone, 10.5% of respondents join wildlife led walks, 0.3% join Brownie/Cubs walk.

Do you visit Crayford Marshes:

Results		
Options	%	Count
Alone	42.5	133
With friends or family	43.5	136
Brownies/Cubs or other children's grou...	0.3	1
Wildlife led walks e.g RSPB, London Bi...	10.5	33
Others	3.2	10
No Answer	-	17



3. In what way do you currently enjoy your time at Crayford Marshes?

This multiple-choice question showed observing wildlife to be the most popular reason for visiting Crayford Marshes (39.3 %), followed by walking/rambling (28.5%) and photographing wildlife (14.9%). These results are not surprising considering that Crayford Marshes has an excellent variety of bird, invertebrate and plant life, and the presence of several public footpaths including the England Coast Path to allow access.

6.8% of respondents walk their dogs here, 5.3% cycled and 1.7% sail/use a boat.

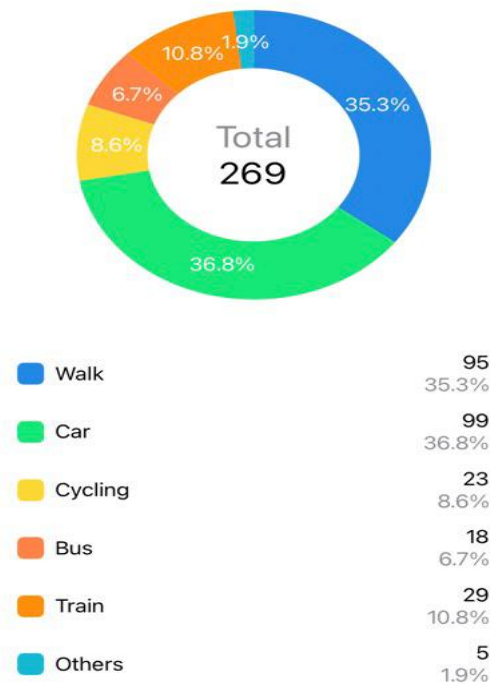
In what way do you enjoy your time at Crayford Marshes?		
	Results	
Options	%	Count
Observing wildlife	39.3	185
Wildlife photography	14.9	70
Walking/rambling	28.5	134
Cycling	5.3	25
Boating	1.7	8
Dog walking	6.8	32
Others	3.4	16
No Answer	-	27

4. How do you currently travel to Crayford Marshes?

36.8% of respondents indicate that visits to Crayford Marshes are made by car, followed by 35.3% by walking. The multiple-choice nature of the question was to allow people to indicate if they travel by different methods perhaps for different purposes, length of visit or time of year. However, the significant proportion of visitors walking to the site indicates that many of the respondents are local.

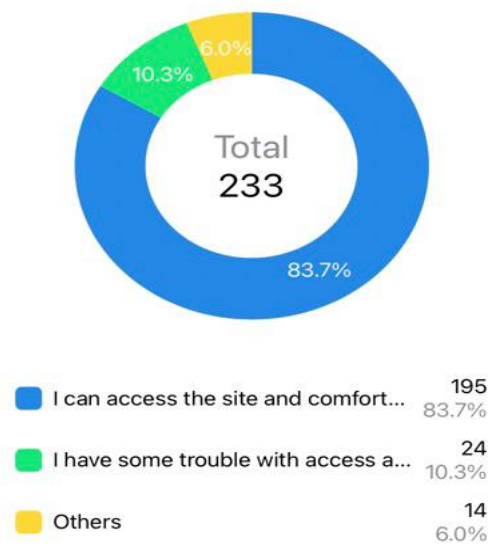
How do you currently travel to Crayford Marshes?

Results		
Options	%	Count
Walk	35.3	95
Car	36.8	99
Cycling	8.6	23
Bus	6.7	18
Train	10.8	29
Others	1.9	5
No Answer	-	28



5. Do you find this site accessible?

83.7% of respondents indicated that they have no problems with accessing and moving around Crayford Marshes
10.3% respondents had trouble with finding their way around, were unable to use the pathway and several comments in the 'other' section that footpaths being uneven makes them unsuitable for wheelchair users and some respondents found it difficult to walk on the uneven footpaths.

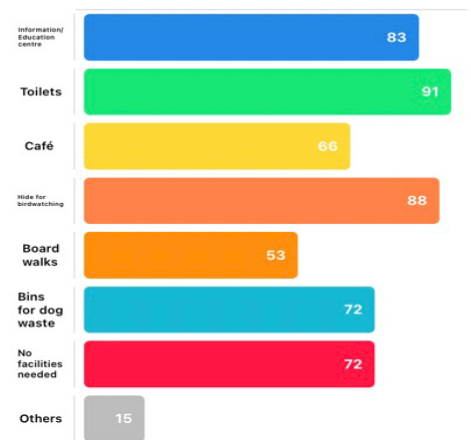


6. What facilities would you like to see on offer?

This multi-choice question showed toilets was the most popular option for additional facilities on site (16.9%), followed by a hide for birdwatching (16.3%). There is a clear interest in a 'destination' on site, such as a visitor/information centre (15.4%), for a café (12.2%) although interestingly 13.3% opted for no facilities needed.

What facilities would you like to see at Crayford Marshes?

Results		
Options	%	Count
Information/Education centre	15.4	83
Toilets	16.9	91
Café	12.2	66
Hide for birdwatching	16.3	88
Boardwalks	9.8	53
Bins for dog waste	13.3	72
No facilities needed	13.3	72
Others	2.8	15
No Answer	-	30



7. What extra signage or information do you think would be beneficial?

The most popular option for additional signage or information was for educational display boards for wildlife (27.6%) followed by directional signs (24.1%) mobile location apps (10.5%) 35.2% of respondents wanted all of the above.

What signage do you think would be beneficial?

Results		
Options	%	Count
Directional signs at intermittent points	24.1	76
Educational display boards for wildlife...	27.6	87
Mobile location app	10.5	33
All the above	35.2	111
Others	2.5	8
No Answer	-	38

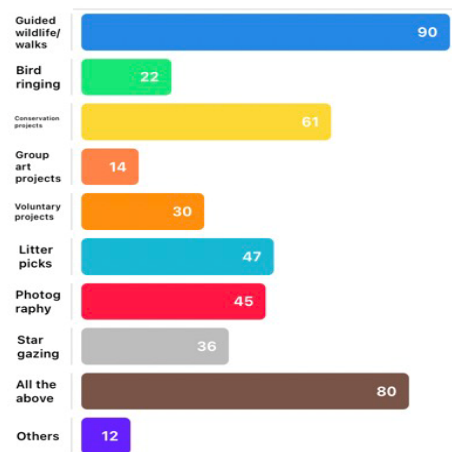


8. What events have you/would you like to participate in around Crayford Marshes?

Previous wildlife walks at Crayford Marshes have been proven popular often selling out within a few days. Respondents expressed an interest in a wider range of activities in this multiple-choice question. Guided wildlife walks were most popular (20.6%) following by conservation projects (14%) Litter picks (10.8%) and star gazing (8.2%) 18.3% of respondents indicated that they would be interested in all the above events.

What events have you/would you like to participate in around Crayford Marshes?

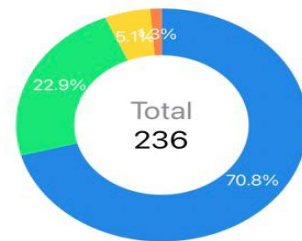
Options	%	Count
Guided wildlife/walks	20.6	90
Bird ringing	5	22
Conservation projects	14	61
Group art projects	3.2	14
Voluntary projects	6.9	30
Litter picks	10.8	47
Photography	10.3	45
Star gazing	8.2	36
All the above	18.3	80
Others	2.7	12
No Answer	-	47



9. How important is Crayford Marshes as it is today, for your physical or mental well-being? (Please pick one)

- **93.7%** of respondents said Crayford Marshes was either very important or somewhat important for their physical or mental well-being!

How important are the Crayford Marshes as they are today, for your physical or mental well-being? (please pick one)



Results

Options	%	Count
Very important	70.8	167
Somewhat important	22.9	54
Neither important nor unimportant	5.1	12
Not at all important	1.3	3
No Answer	-	26

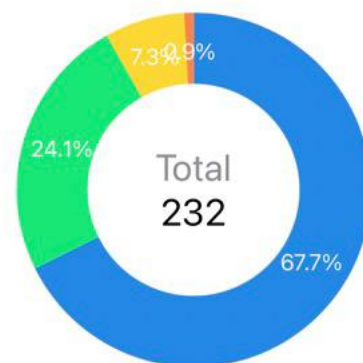
Very important	167	70.8%
Somewhat important	54	22.9%
Neither important nor unimportant	12	5.1%
Not at all important	3	1.3%

10. In developing ideas for the future of Crayford Marshes, how important is it to involve local youth organisations, and opportunities for young people to be involved? (Please pick one)

- **91.8%** respondents think it is either very important or somewhat important to involve local youth organisations in developing ideas for the future of Crayford Marshes.

In developing ideas for the future of Crayford Marshes, how important is it to involve local youth organisations, and opportunities for young people to be involved? (please pick one)

Results		
Options	%	Count
Very important	67.7	157
Somewhat important	24.1	56
Neither important nor unimportant	7.3	17
Not at all important	0.9	2
No Answer	-	30



Very important	157	67.7%
Somewhat important	56	24.1%
Neither important nor unimportant	17	7.3%
Not at all important	2	0.9%

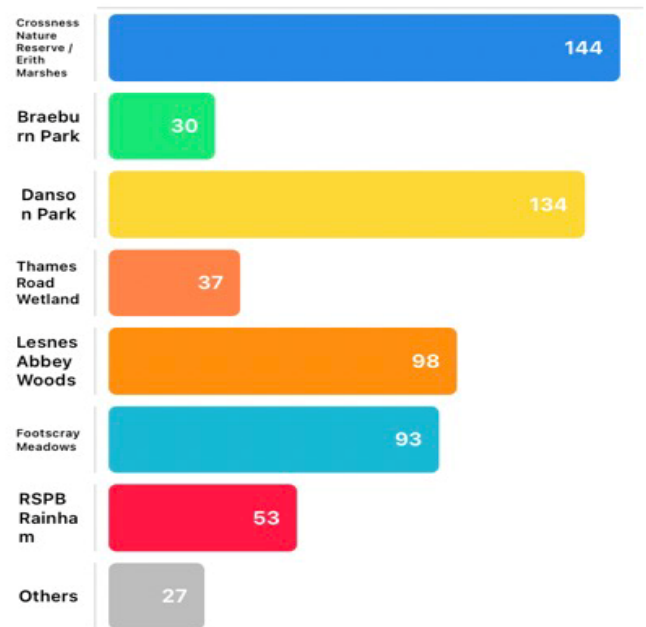
11. Which, if any other local outdoor spaces do you visit regularly? Please add a comment in the "other" box to indicate what facilities and features are important to you when visiting these outdoor spaces.

Crossness Nature was the most popular local outdoor space to visit (23.3%) followed by Danson Park (21.7%), Lesnes Abbey Woods (15.9%), Footscray Meadows (15%)

Which, if any other local outdoor spaces do you visit regularly? Please add a comment in the "other" box to indicate what facilities and features are important to you when visiting these outdoor spaces.

Results

Options	%	Count
Crossness Nature Reserve/Erith Marsh...	23.3	144
Braeburn Park	4.9	30
Danson Park	21.7	134
Thames Road Wetland	6	37
Lesnes Abbey Woods	15.9	98
Footscray Meadows	15	93
RSPB Rainham	8.6	53
Others	4.4	27
No Answer	-	35

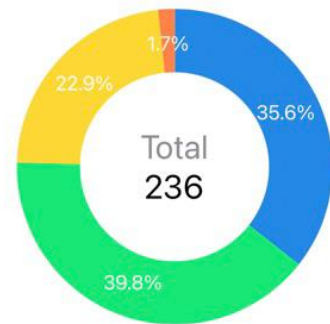


12. How much do you know about the past and future threats to Crayford Marshes? (If there are particular threats that concern you, please provide details in the “other” box.)

75.4% of respondents were either very aware or somewhat aware of the past and future threats to Crayford Marshes, 22.9 % said they were unaware. Some respondents listed in ‘others’ examples of the known threats including housing development.

How much do you know about the past and future threats to Crayford Marshes? (If there are particular threats that concern you, please provide details in the “other” box.)

Results		
Options	%	Count
Very aware	35.6	84
Somewhat aware	39.8	94
Unaware	22.9	54
Others	1.7	4
No Answer	-	26



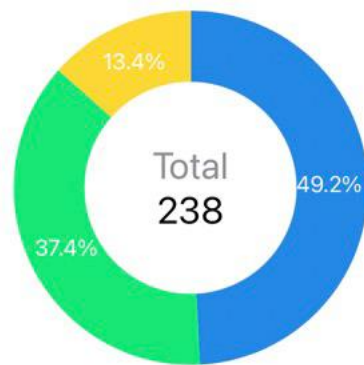
Very aware	84	35.6%
Somewhat aware	94	39.8%
Unaware	54	22.9%
Others	4	1.7%

13. How much do you know about the value of Crayford Marshes as a breeding ground for numerous existing and some declining species? (Please pick one)

86.6% of respondents were either very aware or somewhat aware of the value of Crayford Marshes as a breeding ground for numerous existing and some declining species.

13.4% of respondents were unaware.

How much do you know about the value of Crayford Marshes as a breeding ground for numerous existing and some declining species? (please pick one)



Results

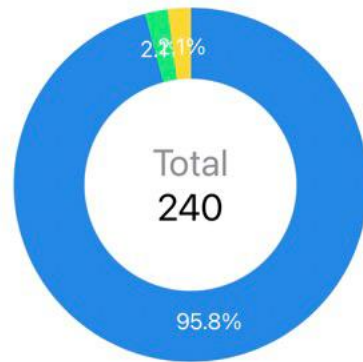
Options	%	Count
Very aware	49.2	117
Somewhat aware	37.4	89
Unaware	13.4	32
No Answer	-	24

Very aware	117	49.2%
Somewhat aware	89	37.4%
Unaware	32	13.4%

14. In the alternative vision for Crayford Marshes would you like to see dedicated areas that would focus on the conservation of such species?

- **95.8%** of respondents would like to see dedicated areas focusing on the conservation of such species

In the alternative vision for Crayford Marshes would you like to see dedicated areas that would focus on the conservation of such species?



Results		
Options	%	Count
Yes	95.8	230
No	2.1	5
Others	2.1	5
No Answer	-	22

Yes	230	95.8%
No	5	2.1%
Others	5	2.1%

15. Are you a member of any local history or wildlife conservation organisations? If yes please list them in the “other” box.

- 13.7% of respondents are members of various organisations which include;

Are you a member of any local history or wildlife conservation organisations? If yes please list them in the “other” box.

Results		
Options	%	Count
Yes	13.7	32
No	63.9	149
Others	21.5	50
No Answer	-	29

RSPB

London Bird Club

Kent Wildlife Trust

Thames 21 Volunteer

London Natural History Society

Friend of Crossness NR

Friends of the Old English Garden Danson Park

Dartford and Crayford Creek Restoration Trust

London Wildlife Trust

CPRE The Countryside Charity

Braeburn Park Volunteer

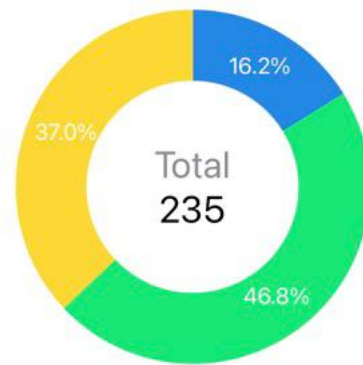
Thames Road Wetland Volunteer
WWT
Butterfly Conservation
Kent Ornithological Society
Botanical Society of Britain & Ireland
Bexley Archaeology
North West Kent Countryside Partnership
English Heritage
RSPCA
Sustrans

16. Beyond the boundary of Crayford Marshes are you aware of the other sites within the vision? (Thames Road Wetland, River Cray, Stanham Farm)

63% of respondents were either very aware or somewhat aware of the other sites within the vision (Thames Road Wetland, River Cray, Stanham Farm)

37% of respondents were unaware

Beyond the boundary of Crayford Marshes are you aware of the other sites within the vision? (Thames Road Wetland, River Cray, Stanham Farm)

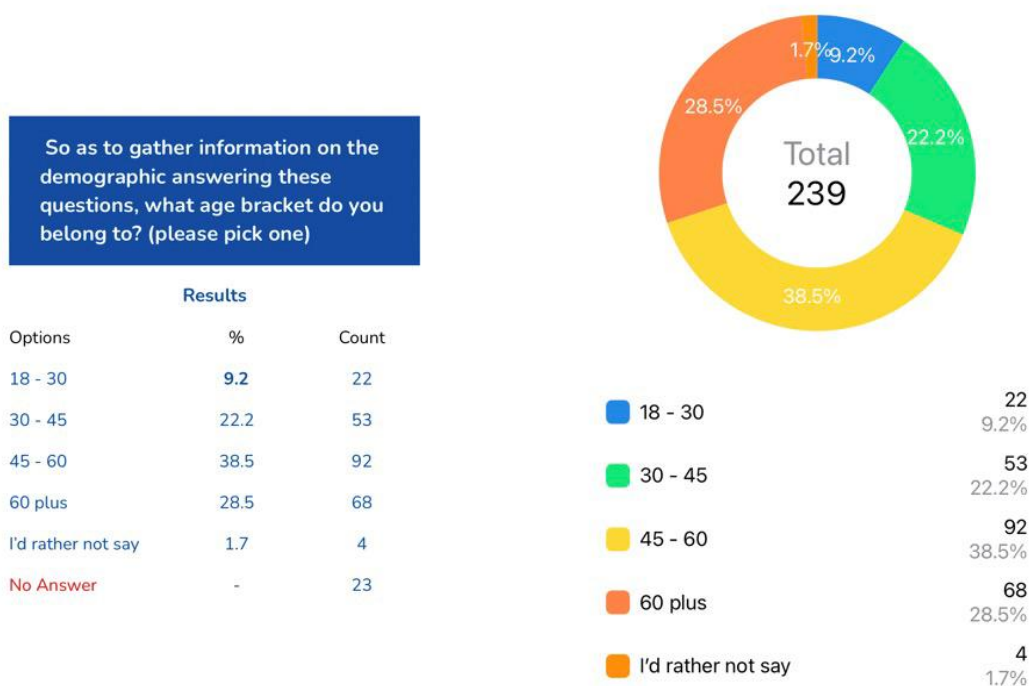


Options	Results	
	%	Count
Very aware	16.2	38
Somewhat aware	46.8	110
Unaware	37	87
No Answer	-	27

Very aware	38
	16.2%
Somewhat aware	110
	46.8%
Unaware	87
	37.0%

17. So as to gather information on the demographic answering these questions, what age bracket do you belong to? (Please pick one)

38.5% of respondents gave their age as between 45-60, 28.5% are 60 plus, 22.2% aged between 30-45, 9.2% aged 18-30 with 4% preferring not to say. This is important given the response to question 10 where 91.8% of people taking the survey said that it was very or somewhat important to involve youth organisations and opportunities in developing the future of the Crayford Marshes. The demographics of survey respondents indicates a clear gap between the survey respondents and this aspiration.



18. What else would you like to see happen at Crayford Marshes to make it a better quality, nature-rich green space or resource for the local community?

This was an open question to which respondents could create their own replies. As such it enabled people to reinforce or qualify previous responses or raise new ideas. The responses are reproduced below in full without editing or interpretation. They have been broadly grouped into related topics or sentiments but can also be viewed in the raw data tables

No attempt has been made here to interpret these statements within this document to avoid misreading statements. Further analysis would require more in-depth and moderated research, which were not available within the available resources. However, these responses provide useful insight for future analysis and have been provided for transparency.

Site Management Suggestions & Improvements

- *I'd like to see it safely managed, secured and protected by a wildlife charity*
- *Remove horses from fields*
- *Benches*
- *Leave it alone*
- *I would like to see the Tithe Barn in Slade Green restored, and the hedges replaced along the river walkway near the Moat. There used to be hundreds of bats there before the tall avenue of scrub trees were felled.*
- *Protect the hedgerow pathway which offers food, safety and essential habitat for so much rare wildlife all year long.*
- *More sitting places*
- *Grazing cattle*

- *A farm or gardening allotment. An educational Center , a shelter incase of rain. Small animal holding, pond dipping, teaching local school about the history of the marshes, how to look after biodiversity, environment, teaching how to grow vegetables, easy access for wheelchair.*
- *Restoration of the Tithe Barn and the Moat to visit*
- *Boating and river restoration*
- *Land management to attract insect and thus birds*
- *Creation of more suitable habitat, such as wader scrapes and scrubland, suitable for birds*
- *Have a permissive footpath to create a loop around the marsh from yacht club back to the moat.*
- *It is vital to retain a large area of wild, unmanaged space for wildlife. I would be very sceptical about the claims of net wildlife gain from developers where it's too late once the site has gone it's gone. A few trees planted does not replace important Sal marsh, rough grassland and reedbed habitats.*
- *Tree planting*
- *Would like to see some water, wader scrapes to encourage waders*
- *Would be good to improve grassland to encourage even more butterflies and invertebrates*
- *Information boards or centre, regular guide walks for adults only in different seasons reflecting the habitat of species, flora, fauna, biota, this walks also could be in school times for families, toilets. Café, bird watching hides.*
- *Better placemaking so more people are aware of whats on their doorstep.*

- *Wild flowers meadow*
- *An outdoor learning experience for school children aged 3-18years*
- *It would be better if the river was cleared of most of the silt.*
- *More accessibility for disabled people.*
- *Parking for those who can't take public transport*
- *More wildlife and fauna information*
- *Improved communication, maybe use Bexley Magazine, or Council newsletters. Maybe a text service when events are taking place.*
- *Dogs only on short leads, motorcycle barriers*
- *Improved managed habitat areas for targeted species of animals and plants*
- *Benches. Occasional pier-like structure above the ground going towards the Thames, so to avoid disturbing the wildlife below fires in the industrial estate – are they legal?*

Anti-social behaviour and Fly-Tipping Issue

- *Get rid of the motorbikers*
- *Fly-tipping needs clearing and permanent solution needs to be found for this problem.*
- *The area cleaned up and made more safer with lights, seating and help points.*
- *Ban moter bikes*

- *Collection of fly tipped rubbish and ways to stop fly tipping*
- *Stop the motorcross bikes*
- *Stop the fly tipping, stop the motor bikes*
- *Cutting back to make access easy, cleaning it up getting rid of the motor bikes racing over there*
- *Cameras to spot fly tipping & determined prosecutions*
- *No entry to dirt motor bikes so fields can recover and grow wild flowers, no fly tipping at Erith Yacht Club walk entrance, dog & rubbish bins. Land patrol wardens to prevent anti social youths setting fires to burn stolen bikes.*
- *Littering and fly tipping to stop, more control to stop this and more effort to add facilities.*
- *Stop motorcycles and quad bikes being ridden in the marshes*
- *Ban the bikes*
- *Management to deter motorbikes*
- *Curtailment of heavily polluting and disruptive activities at the Manor Road industrial estate at Crayford Ness.*
- *Fly tipping to be removed by landowners and site secured to prevent it happening again.*
- *Protection order*
- *Proper enforcement to stop people driving motorbikes on the footpaths*

- *Perhaps something to prevent bikers/quad bikers from driving on the marshes. It's led to one or two risky moments as a pedestrian and it's been a strong deterrent from visiting the marshes.*
- *Stop the fly-tipping*
- *Stop the motor bikes/quad bikes and flytippers*
- *Less motorbikes*
- *Stop or clear any fly-tipping and litter. Leave nature to flourish without human interference.*
- *More enforcement with regards fly tipping*
- *All those reed ditches on the surrounding roads need to be cleared up as a priority. Should be wild life havens.*
- *Less litter and waste dumping*
- *More accessibility for disabled people. Targeted action on fly tipping.*
- *Stop the illegal waste*
- *Dogs only on short leads, motorcycle barriers*
- *More tidying up especially towards the Erith side*
- *Benches. Occasional pier-like structure above the ground going towards the Thames, so to avoid disturbing the wildlife below. Monitoring fires in the industrial estate – are they legal? Controls for fly tipping*
- *Crack down on fly tipping and bikes*

Access issues and improvements

- *I would like to see improved access*
- *Crossing at Thames Road between Thames Rd wetland and the Footpath to Crayford marshes*
- *Easy to access for all young, old, disabilities. But also keeping some areas remote. No motorbike*
- *Provide access for disabled people and ensure participation with provisions of the equal opps act.*
- *Safer access rather than using the main road to get there.*

Protection from development

- *I'd like to see it protected from development threats*
- *Crayford Marshes needs protecting from development*
- *Protect from development*
- *I'd like to know it is protected for my children and their children and others to enjoy in the future.*
- *Protected and never built on make it safe forever for everyone to enjoy*
- *Protected status*
- *Nothing. Leave as is. As long as the animals and nature are happy*
- *Get full SSSI protection*
- *Protected from houses or development*
- *Guarantee of conservation status*

- *Protected and improved for wildlife*
- *Essential to save and develop for wildlife*
- *Protect what's left and manage to encourage as much biodiversity as possible*
- *Proper conservation and upgraded like RSPB Rainham*
- *I'd like to see the designation of the area upgraded to an SSSI*
- *The integrity of the existing historic landscape needs preserving; previous, daft plans infusing bird 'lagoons' and boardwalks over ancient ditch systems need to be ignored. The site needs a new, thorough, ecological survey and should be a candidate SSSI*
- *Maintain and secure what's already there*
- *No development or disturbance and destruction of valuable wildlife habitats*
- *Leave it like it is*
- *I'd like to see the SINC Grade 1 site improved as a better grassland. The whole site needs to be upgraded to SSSI.*
- *It's future as a haven for people and wildlife secured*
- *Protected from any developments*
- *Clear up flytipping. Make the site a nature reserve.*
- *Protect from development*
- *Keep this area peaceful for wildlife and people*
- *Protect the marshes*
- *Green belt so hands off developers!*

- *With so little space left in Bexley for wildlife no more building should be allowed on our marshes*
- *Let's see it improved by cleaning up the fly tipping and sorting a permanent solution to this problem then secure the site as a nature reserve.*
- *As a local teacher it would be great to have a visitors centre so that walks could be organised for local children to learn about this incredible biodiverse rich site.*

Micellaneous

- *Art and youth stuff*
- *It is little known but maybe that is a good thing?*
- *More publicity. Local education of nature & reserving is important to all of us*

19. Do you live within the London Borough of Bexley if not please state which town/area you live.

95.6% of respondents live within the borough of Bexley which shows that the survey reached the intended local area however it is important to note the interest from outside the borough which demonstrates Crayford Marshes is already a destination of interest from further afield.



Respondents outside the borough came from;

Greenwich
Bromley
Abbey Wood
Plumstead
Lewisham
Australia (when visiting relatives)
Dartford
North Wales
Newington
Sevenoaks
Islington
Maidstone
Haringey
Enfield
Tower Hamlets
Lee
Kensington
Hastings
Croydon
Swanley
Northfleet
Swanscombe
Eltham
Camden
Brent

