

Ward River Regional Park

A Community Consultation

First Phase Public Consultation Feedback

November 2022



Comhairle Contae
Fhine Gall
Fingal County
Council



Contents

Introduction

Section 1:	A Community Survey Community Survey Introduction Adult Survey Results Youth Survey Results
Section 2:	In Person Community Workshop What was Displayed? Workshop Activity - Park Life and Activities Workshop Activity - Park Routes, Entrances and Favourite Areas Workshop Activity - Children
Section 3:	Emerging Themes and Outcomes from the Community
Section 4:	Next Steps for Further Consultation

Contributors

Connect the Dots
DFLA
Fingal County Council
Photography of Community Workshop: Alex Foster

Introduction

The first phase of public consultation for the future of Ward River Regional Park took place through an online community survey and an in person workshop held in the Rivervalley Community Centre on the 8th of October 2022.

The in person workshop was a successful day where people met with the design team from DFLA & Fingal Parks and Green Infrastructure Division. An interactive workshop designed by DFLA and Connect the Dots allowed the community to see the existing conditions of the park, to discuss what they would like to see in a new park and how spaces could be re-imagined for people of all ages. Activity sheets were provided to attendees which helped to visualise how the park is used in terms of routes through and how they would like to see it used, through a pictorial guide.

The community survey provided vital information from people that use the park regularly and will help to inform any design for the park going forward. The survey was closed on the 16th of October. A youth survey was sent to local secondary schools, youth groups and sports clubs, inviting young people to share their insights for the future of Ward River Regional Park.

Emerging themes and suggestions from the community will be taken into consideration for any design development going forward.

If you were unable to attend the community workshop or fill out the community survey please go to page 43 to find out more information on the project and how to give further feedback.

A second phase of consultation will take place in the first half of 2023 to display how the design of the park is being developed. Fingal County Council and the design team look forward to showing you an exciting new community vision for the park.

Phase One Second Half of 2022	Phase Two First Half of 2023	Phase Three Second Half of 2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Community Survey– In Person Workshop– Non-Statutory Public Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Design Development of the Park– Public Webinar– In Person Design Development Display Consultation– Non-Statutory Public Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Planning Application Lodgement– Statutory Process– Period of Lodgement for Public Observations



Community workshop event

Section 1

A Community Survey

Community Survey Introduction

Adult Survey Results

Youth Survey Results



A Community Survey

Community Survey Introduction

It is important for any future developments of Ward River Regional Park to have a focus on how the park is currently used by the community of Swords. A community survey was developed to gain insights to how people use the park and what they would like to see in the future for the park.

Two separate surveys were held for the community and for the Young People of Swords

There were **800 participants** in both the Adult and Youth Surveys

Multiple choice answers were encouraged.

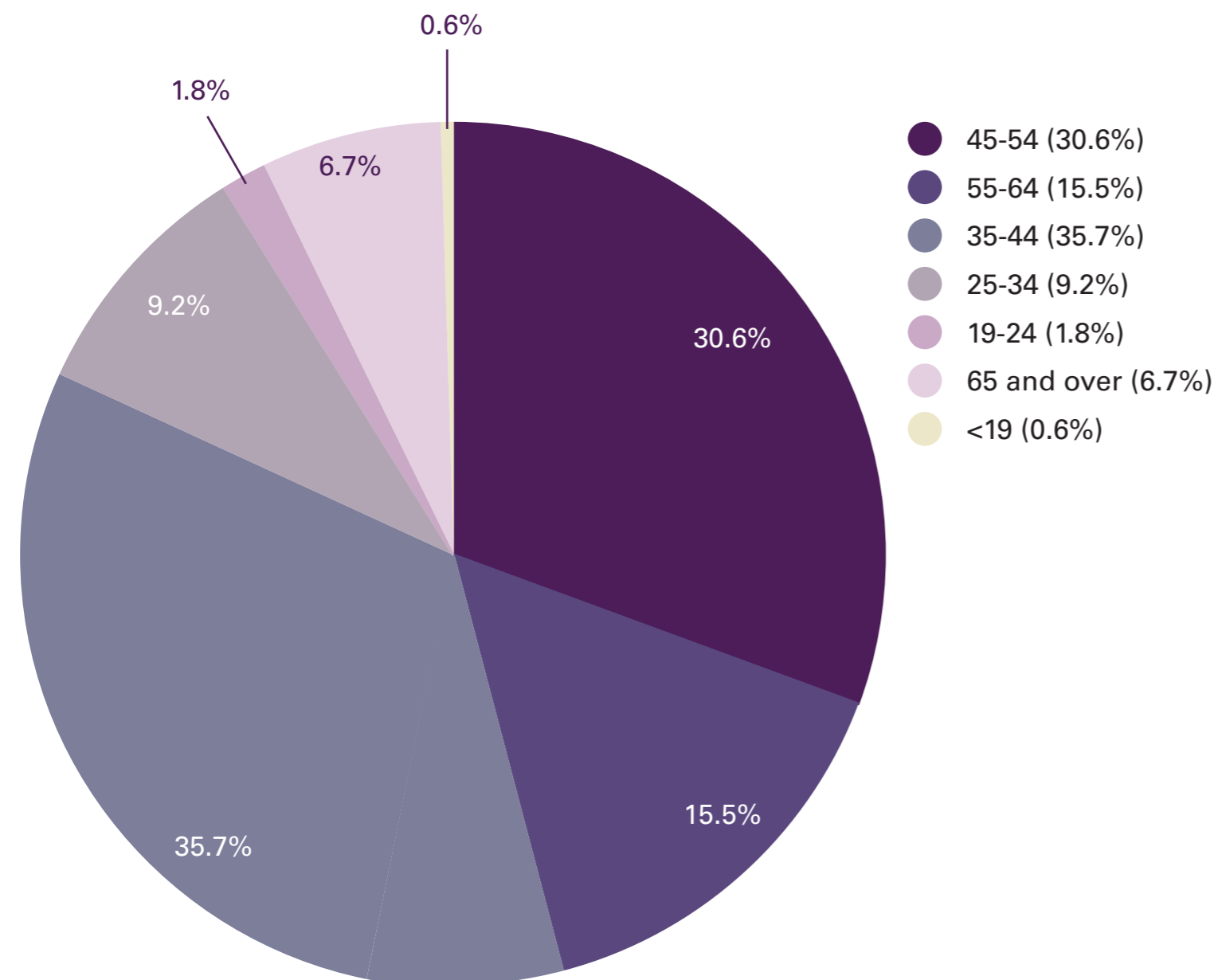


Community workshop event

A Community Survey

Adult Survey Results

What were the age ranges of survey participants?

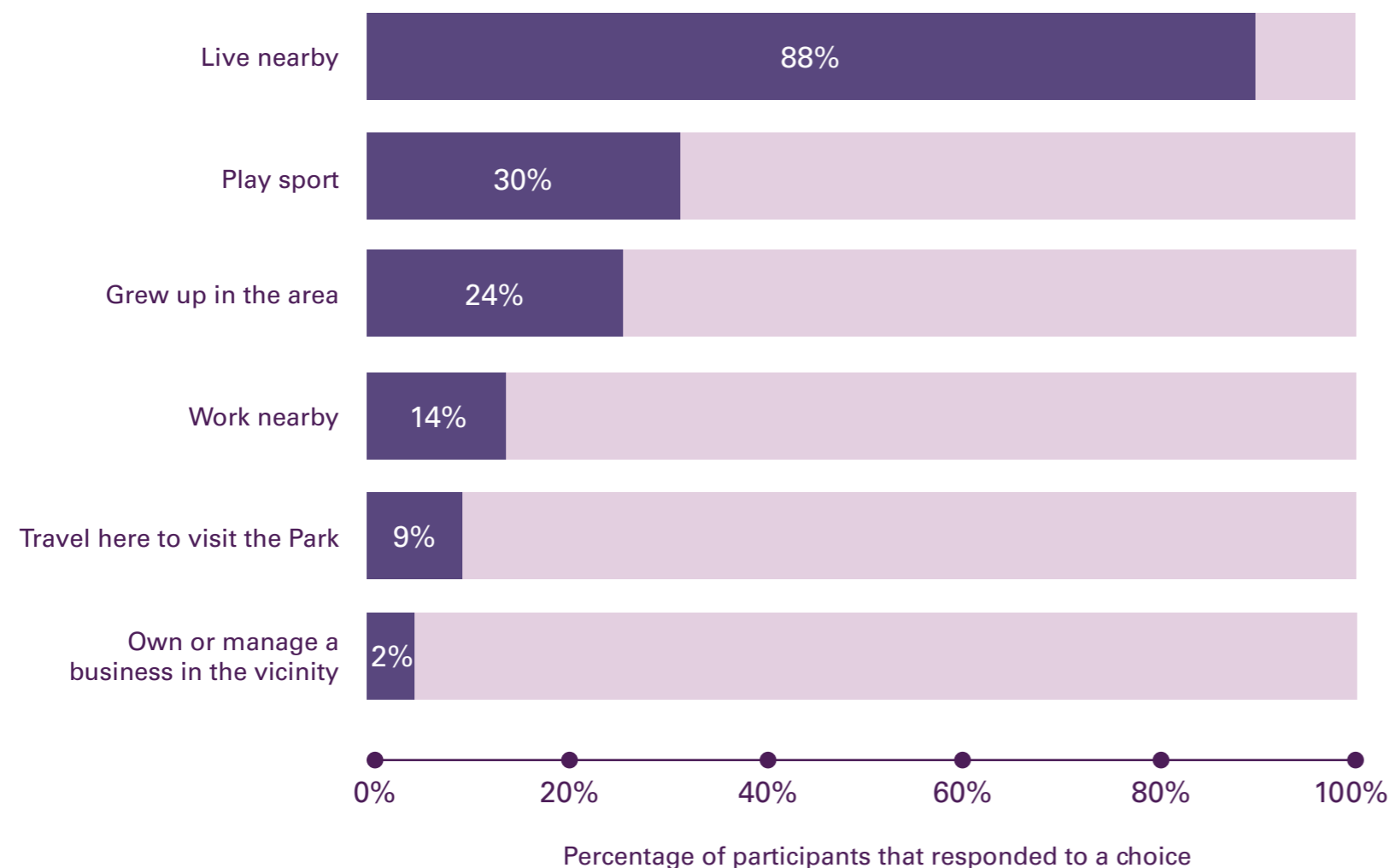


Community workshop event

A Community Survey

Adult Survey Results

What relationship do the participants have with the area of the park?*



*This was a multiple choice question

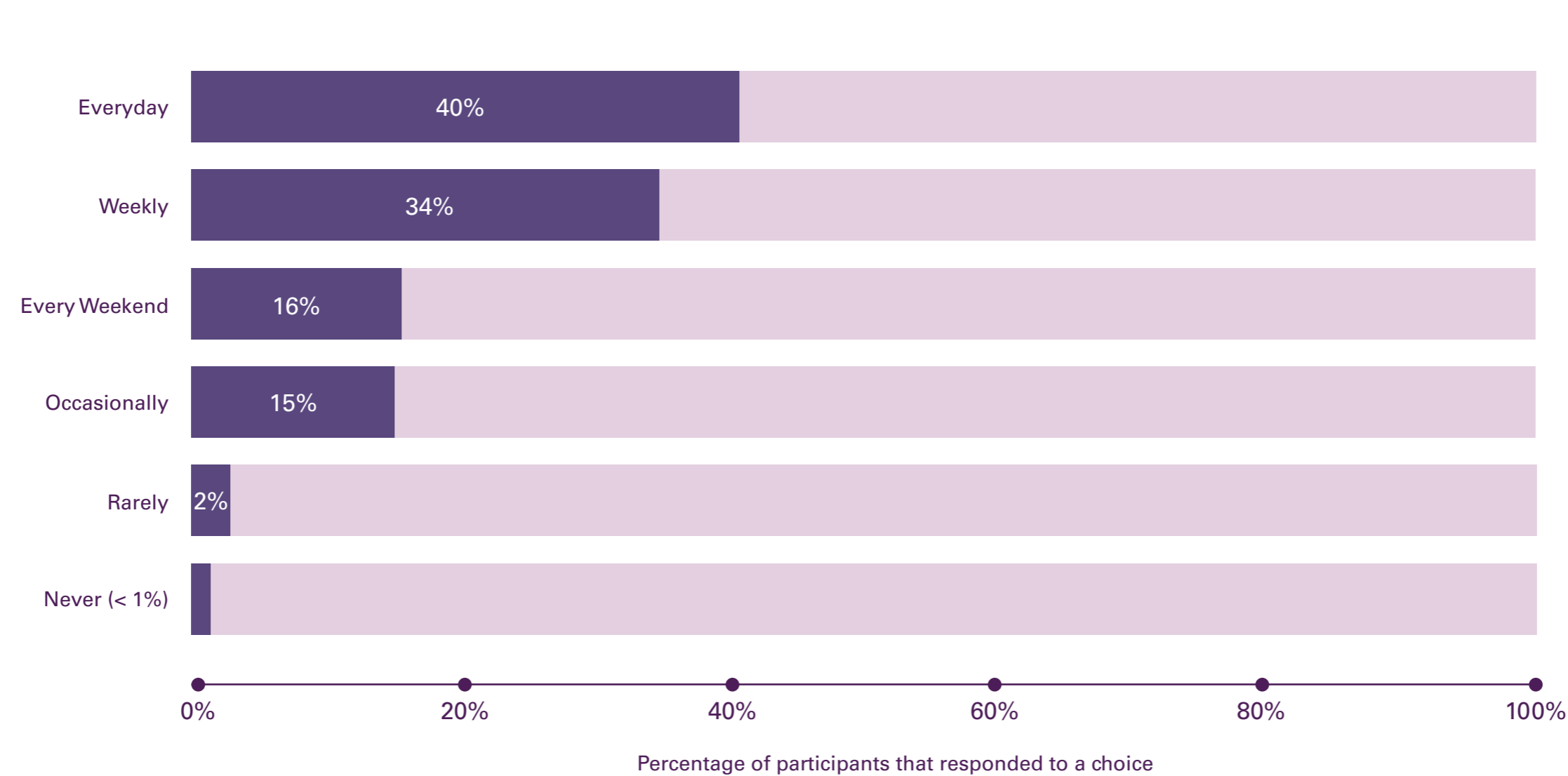
Other Responses from Participants to this Survey Question

- Participants are part of a volunteer organisations that meet the park (litter picking, or walk and talk groups)
- Participants visit the area when they come to visit their parents
 - A participant uses the park as part of survey work as an ecologist

A Community Survey

Adult Survey Results

How often do the participants currently visit Ward River Regional Park?*



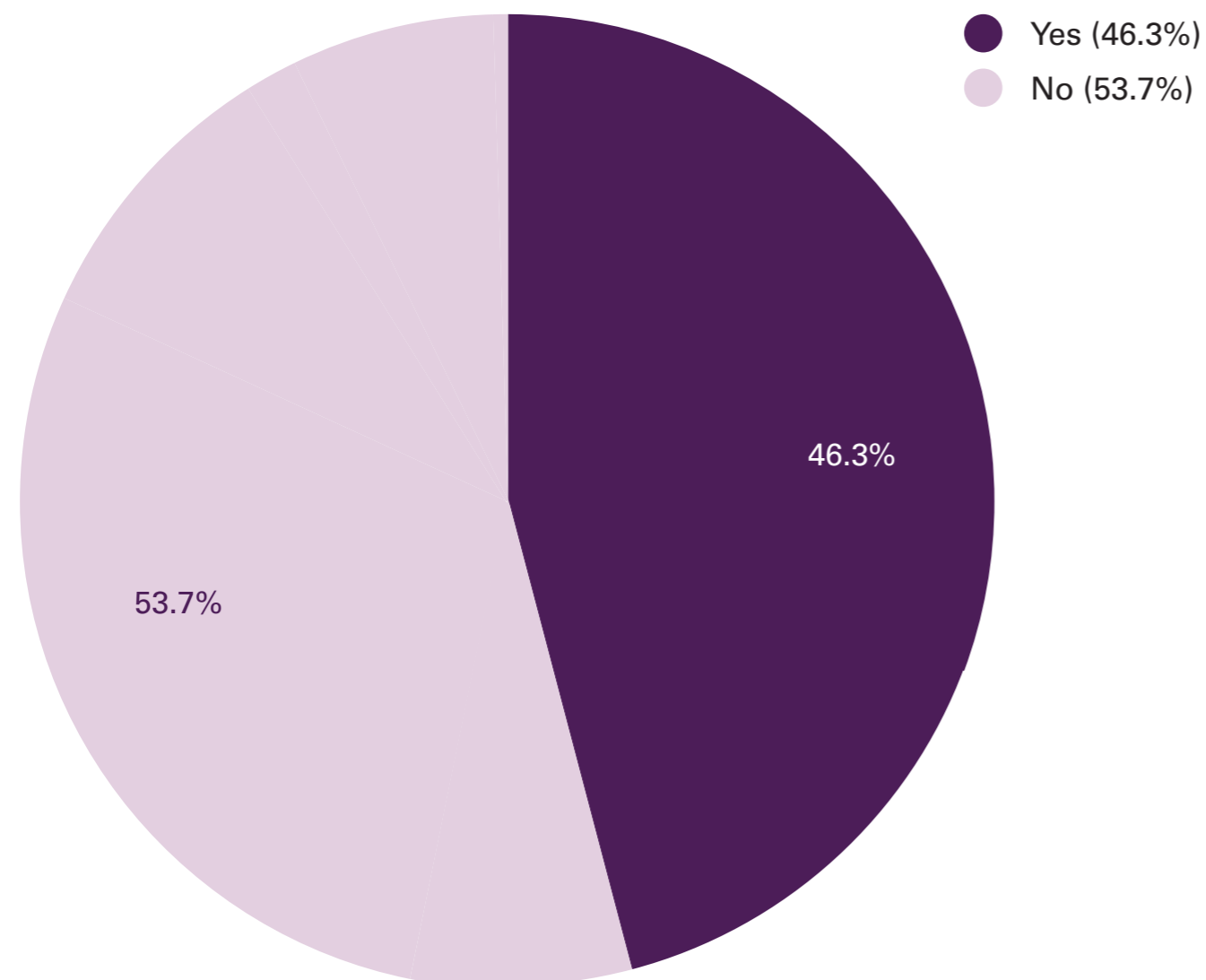
*This was a multiple choice question



A Community Survey

Adult Survey Results

Are there any local community groups, institutions or businesses that the participants affiliate with?



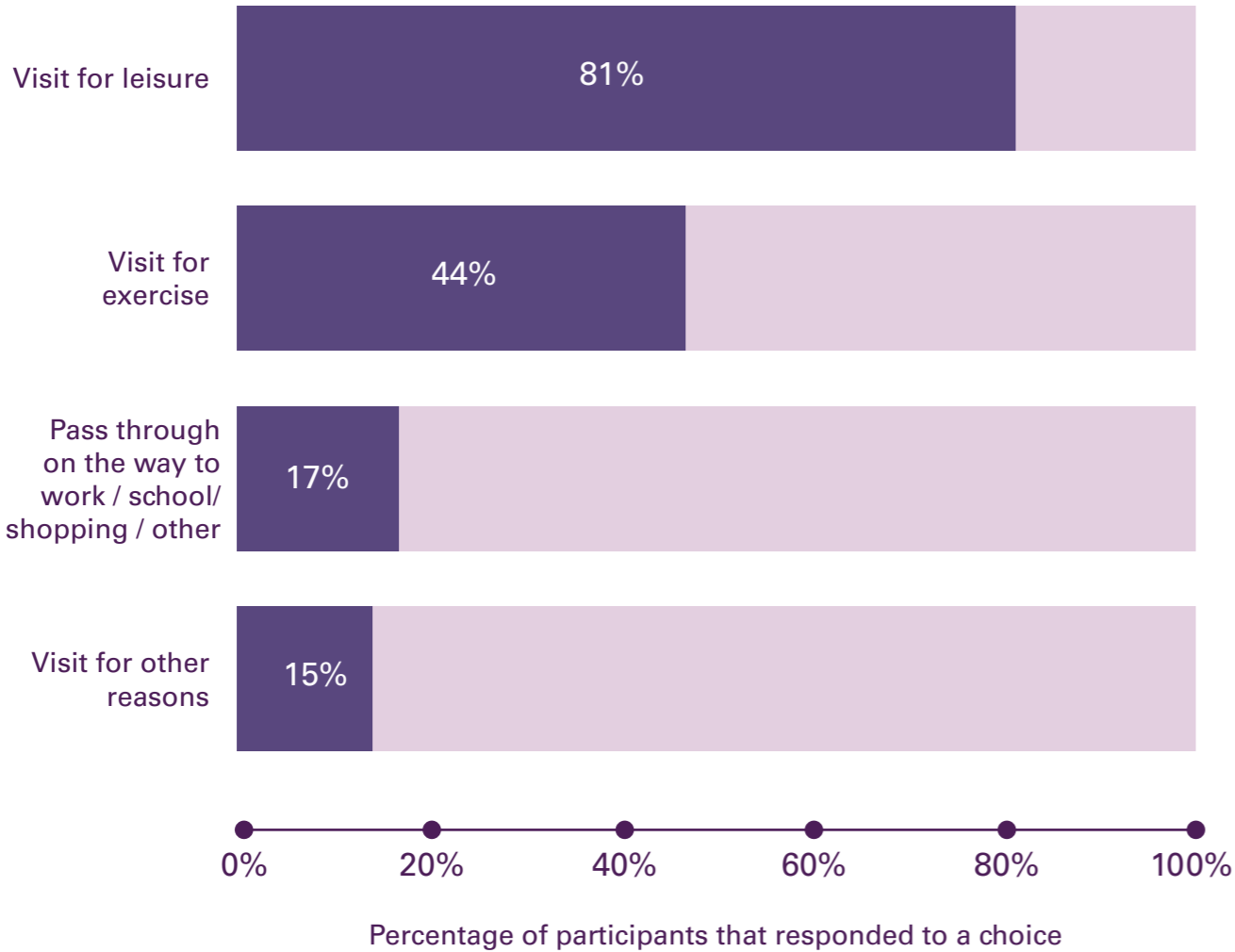
Groups, Institutions and Businesses Who Took Part in this Survey

- St Finians Gaelic Club
- Rivervalley Rangers Football Club
- Swords Manor Football Club
- River Valley Park Run
- Swords Celtic
- Fingal Women's Running Group
- Scouts
- Local photography group
- Knocksedan Demesne Residents
- Dog Walking Group
- Swords Men's Walk and Talk Group
- Swords Pickers
- Fingal Dog Owners Group
- Halcyon (local business)
- Local Barbershop
- Local schools, after school clubs and playgroups
- Swords Tidy Towns
- The Swords Woodland Association
- Rivervalley Folk Group
- Fingal Active Travel
- Colmcilles GAA
- Parents Council of Local Gaelscoil
- Fingal counselling service
- St.Margarets GAA
- Rathbeale Residents Association
- Swords Men's Shed
- Rivervalley Community Centre
- Loreto College Secondary School
- SVP
- Graingers The Manor Inn
- A group of volunteers work at keeping the park litter free and advocate for better care of biodiversity under the name of Swords Pickers and using the Twitter handle @WardValley
- Cycling Without Age
- Local Youth Volunteering
- Starlights GFC
- Broadmeadow Community Garden
- Parks & Green Infrastructure
- Fingal County Council
- Forrest Little Golf Club
- Karate club in Fingallians GAA
- Sanctuary Runners
- Member of Swords Sinn Fein Cumann
- Brackenstown Scout Group
- Fingal Triathlon club
- Save Swords Greenbelt
- 171st Rivervalley Scouts
- Swords & District Lions Club
- River Valley and Rathingle Residents Association
- Fingal Walking and Sport Club

A Community Survey

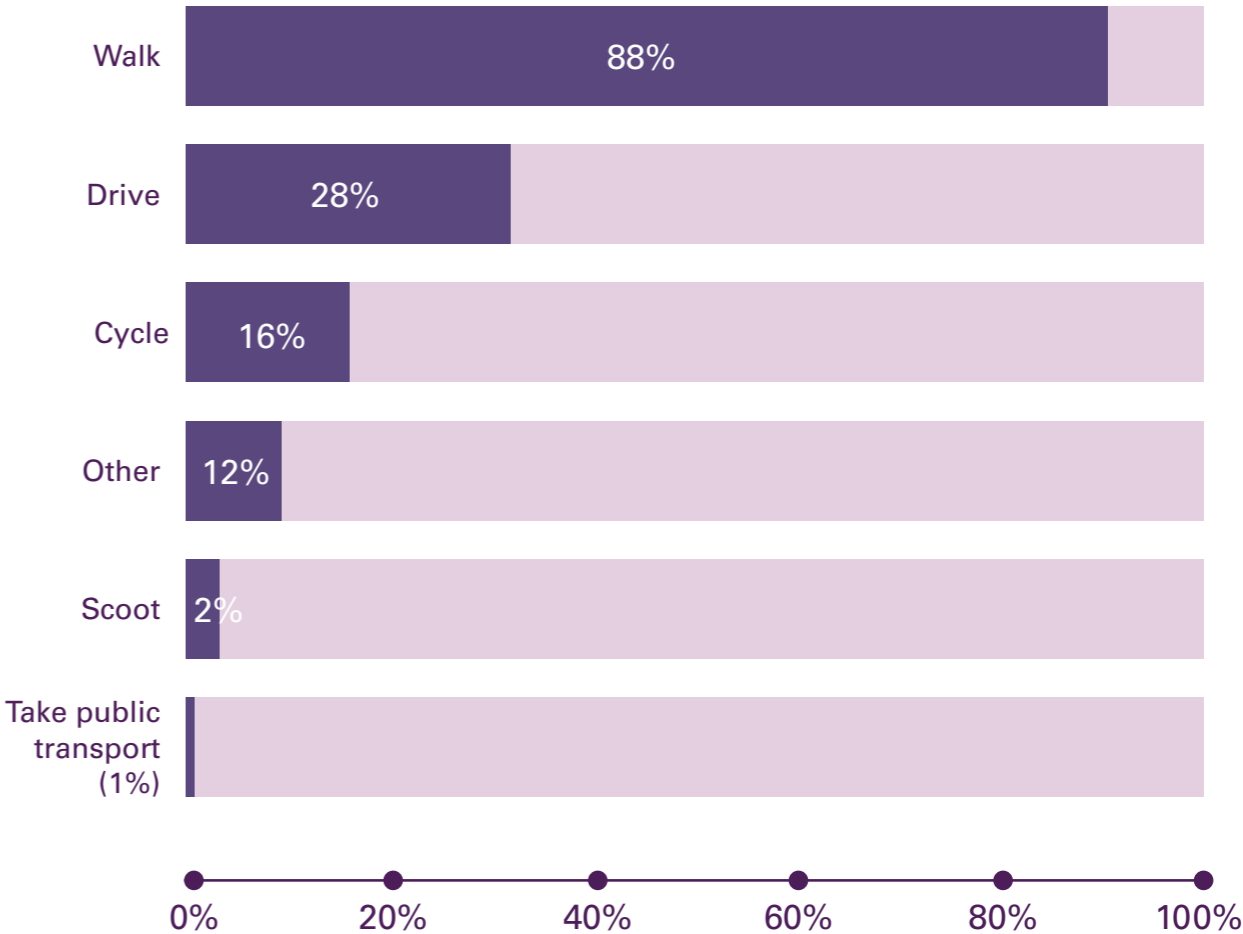
Adult Survey Results

For what reason(s) do the participants visit Ward River Regional Park?*



- Other Reasons include:**
- Bringing children to the park for sports activities or play
 - Participate as a coach for sports
 - Foraging
 - Organising walks through the Valley and Park
 - Cleaning the Park (litter picking)
 - Walking dogs
 - Nature observations and photography
 - Bringing school children/ classes to the park

How do the participants get to Ward River Regional Park?*



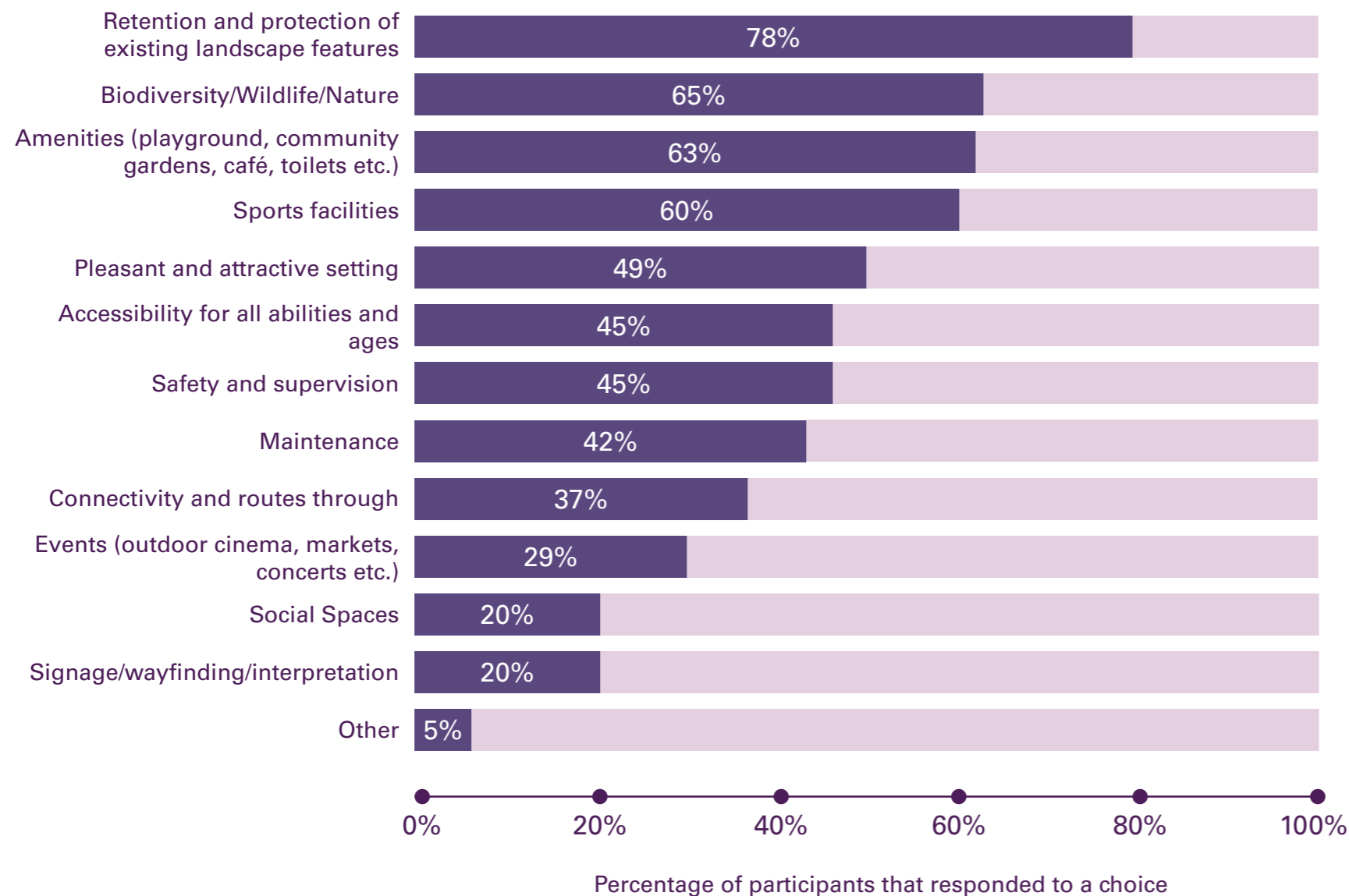
- Other Reasons include:**
- Running / jogging
 - Motor bike

*This was a multiple choice question

A Community Survey

Adult Survey Results

What key aspects should be considered as part of the Ward River Regional Park Project?*



*This was a multiple choice question

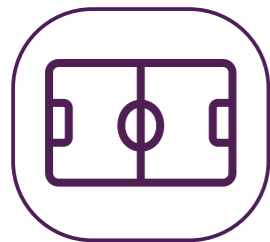
Other Responses

- A good playground
- Untarmaced trails
- Better access from the northern side eg. from Brackenstown Road
- Seating and bins
- Extending the park to allow connection to Knocksedan
 - Adequate lighting and space for dog parks
- Greenway from Knocksedan to Swords Main Street
 - Guided walks
 - Well lit key walkways through the park
 - Picnic Area
- The need for Park Rangers and litter wardens
- Support five orchid species in the small old quarry
 - Open space for barbecues
 - Space for frisbees

A Community Survey

Adult Survey Results

Sports Facilities that the participants would like to see within the park



37%

of the participants endorse facilities related to **sports pitches**

Responses and suggestions included:

- AstroTurf /all weather pitch
- Sports pitch (soccer/GAA/rugby/hockey/other ball sports etc)
- Floodlit pitches
- Adequate pitch drainage
- Cricket pitch
- Hard court football court
- Informal ball games pitch for non sports club members
- Shelter/spaces pitch side for supporters/guardians
- Wider path access around pitches
- Net to stop balls going into the valley
- Maintenance of existing facilities



23%

of the participants endorse facilities related to **running, walking and cycling routes**

Responses and suggestions included:

- Running and athletics track
- Mountain bike/"off path" trails
- Accessibility to wheelchair users
- Markers for distance/level of walking difficulty
- Adequately lit for safety
- For all ages
- Separate cycling route
- Informal paths for hiking
- Markers for orienteering
- Permanent start/end sign for park runs
- Cycle park for children to learn to cycle



16%

of the participants suggested that there are **too many sports facilities**, that they would prefer **no new facilities** or they prefer to **prioritise biodiversity and greenery retention**



12%

of participants suggested an **accessible and adequate communal facility that can accommodate sports**

Responses and suggestions included:

- Changing facilities
- Toilets
- Gym and exercise equipment facilities
- Youth club
- Facilities for existing sports clubs
- Supporting recreational activities
- Coffee making facility
- Rubbish facilities

Other Responses

(Less than 10% of respondents to this survey question)



9% of participants suggested **basketball** facilities



7% of participants suggested **tennis** facilities



6% of participants suggested an **outdoor exercise equipment** area improvements/additions (suitable for all ages and alternative location in the park)



4% of participants suggested a **skate park**



2% of participants suggested a **Ball Wall**



2% would like an **improvement of existing sports facilities** in the park



2% of participants suggested a **bowling green**

Other facilities mentioned (less than 1% of the participants):

- Swimming Pool / Swimming Area of the lake
- Water Stations/fountains
- Place for yoga/pilates
- Table tennis
- Fishing and angling
- Parking for sports facilities
- Secure bike parking
- Wall climbing
- Bridle path
- Zip line
- Signage for sports schedule
- Parkour
- Pitch and Putt
- Signage for distance in terms of running routes
- Badminton Court
- Activities for people with mobility issues

A Community Survey

Adult Survey Results

Do you have any ideas for the name of the park?

A word cloud was generated from the selection of names and suggestions in the survey.

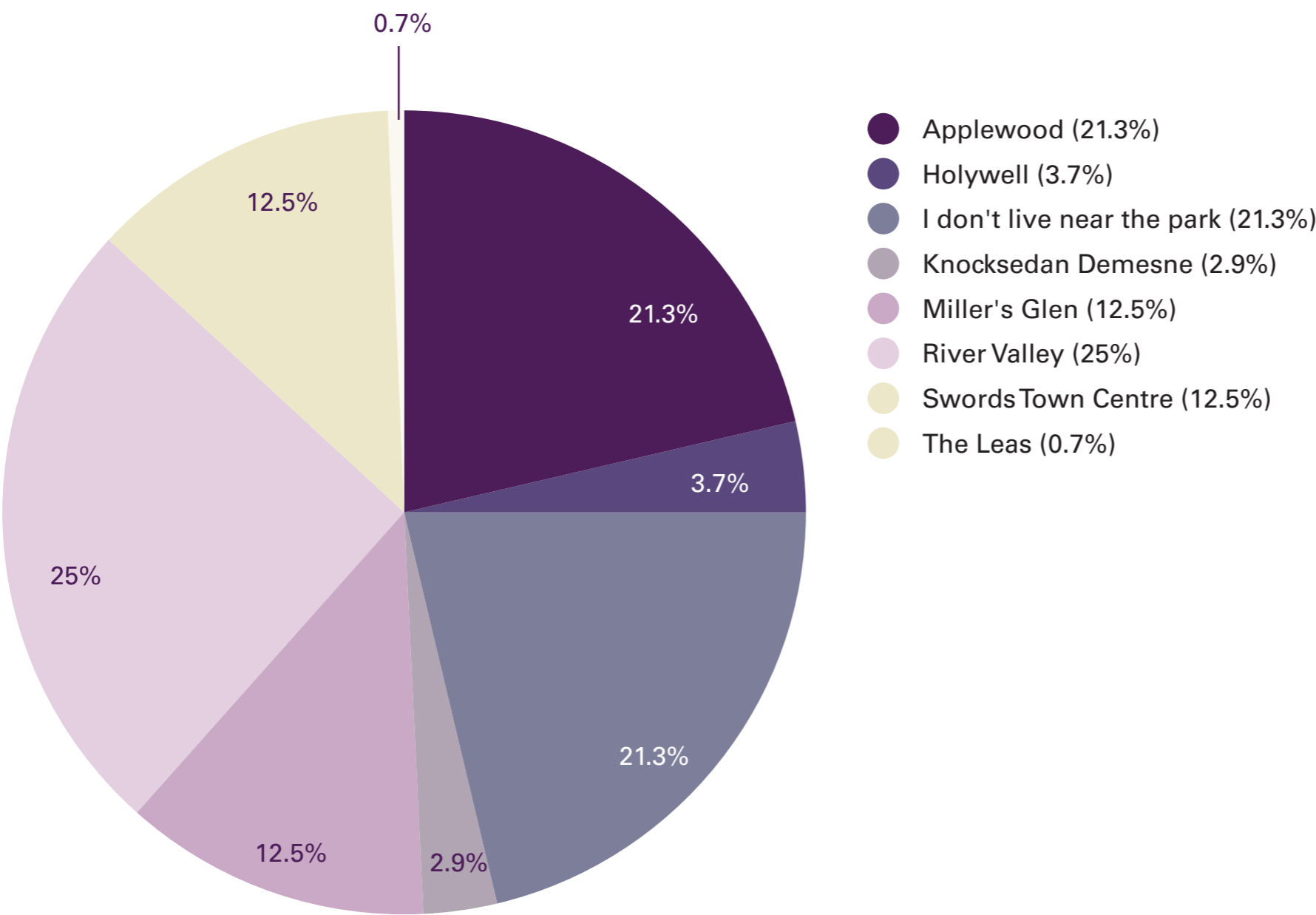


Community workshop event

A Community Survey

Youth Survey Results

Where do participants of the youth survey live?



Quotes from Survey Participants

'[Provide] facilities for teens where they don't look like they are being anti social'

-

'I think that adding a stage of some sort would be a fantastic idea, as it would draw more attention to the park and provide a sense of community for those attending these events.'

-

'It would be nice to see a place where you would learn about the tiny creatures that help around in the trees and bushes and maybe even a place where people can have their picnics'

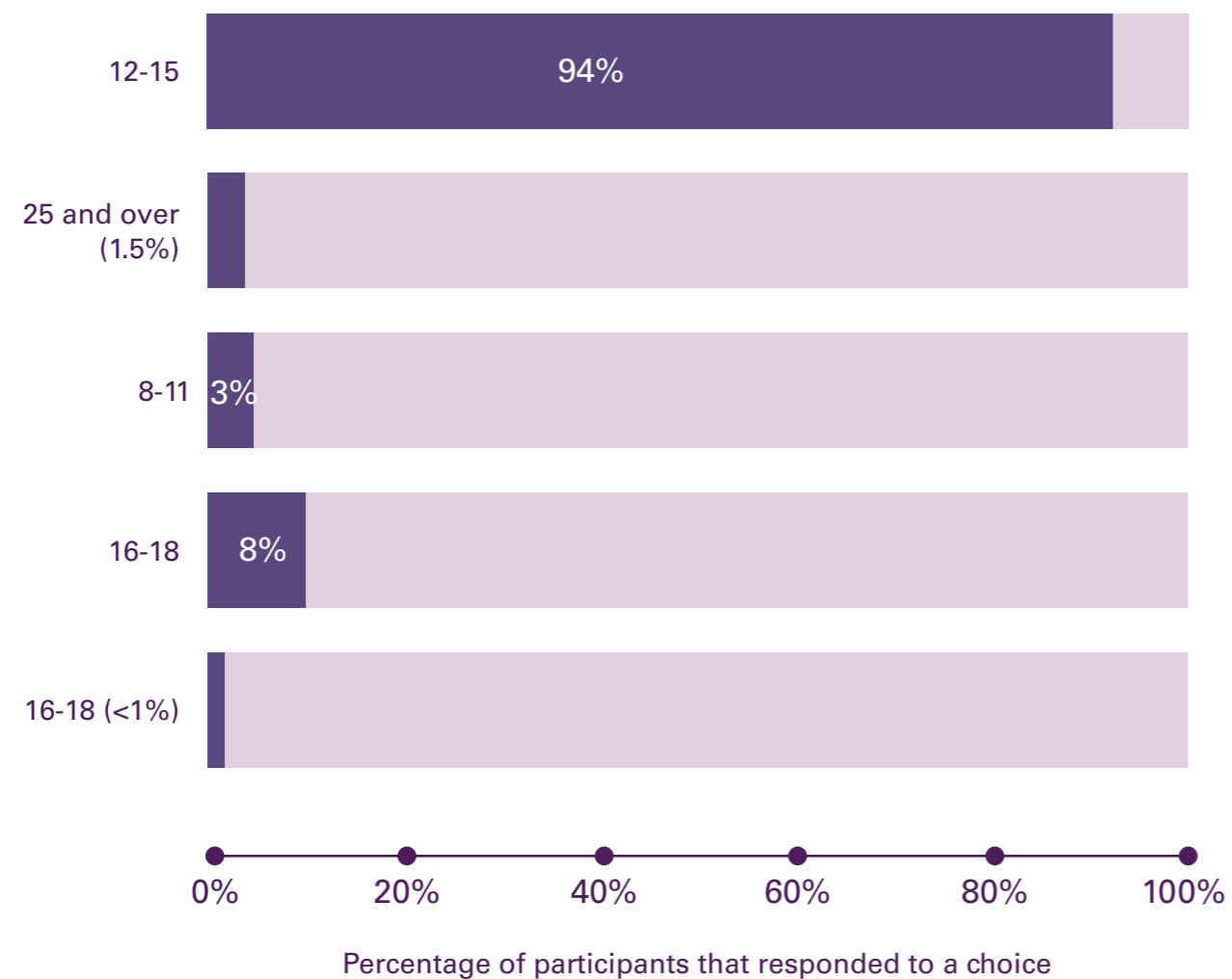
-

'[Use of] some devices that keep the air clean'

A Community Survey

Youth Survey Results

What ages are the participants of the youth survey?



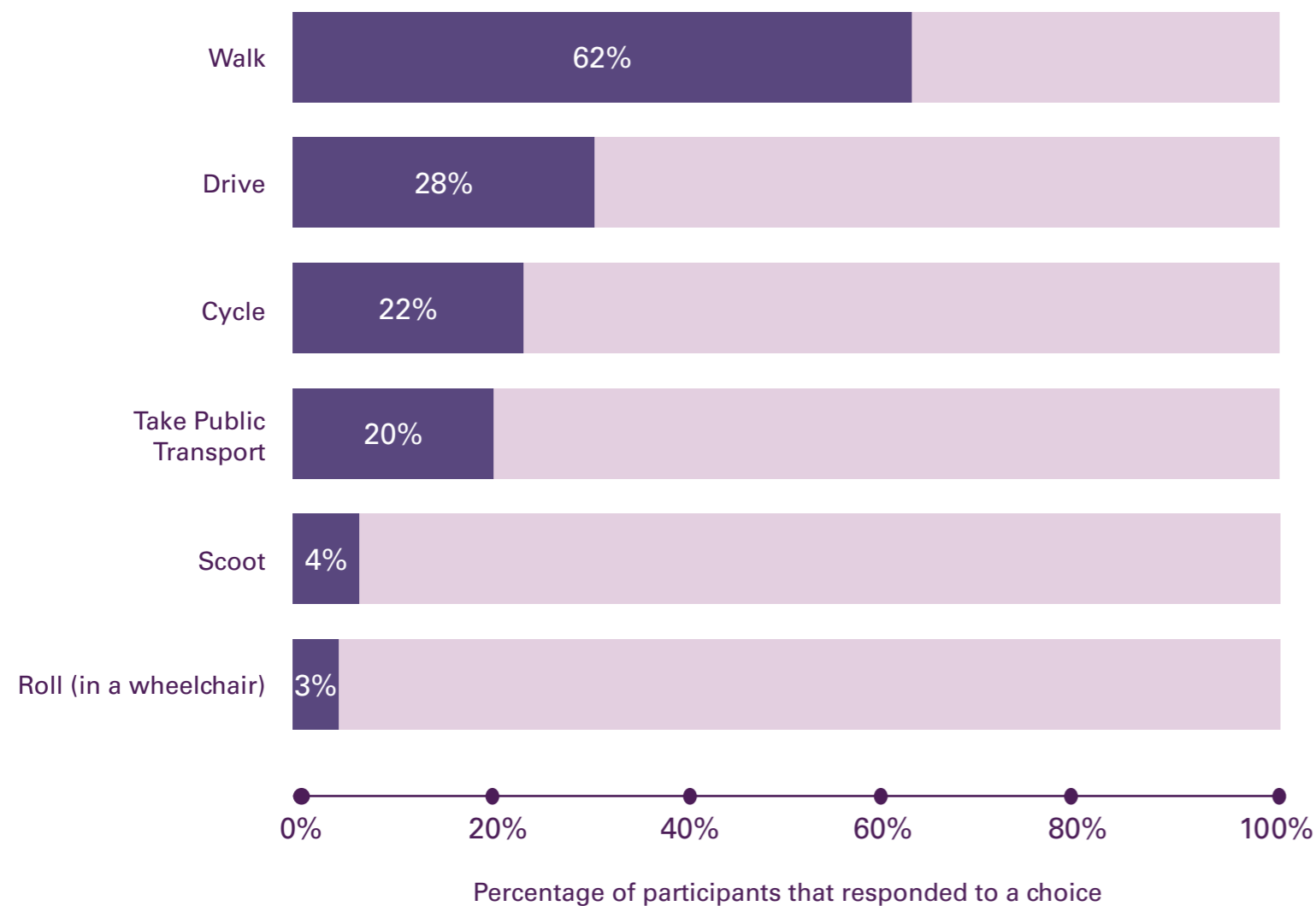
Schools represented in the survey

- Swords Community College
- Holy Family Senior National School
- Fingal Community College
- Loreto College Swords
- Hartstown Community School
- St. Colmcille's Girls National School

A Community Survey

Youth Survey Results

How do the participants of the youth survey get to Ward River Regional Park?*



*This was a multiple choice question

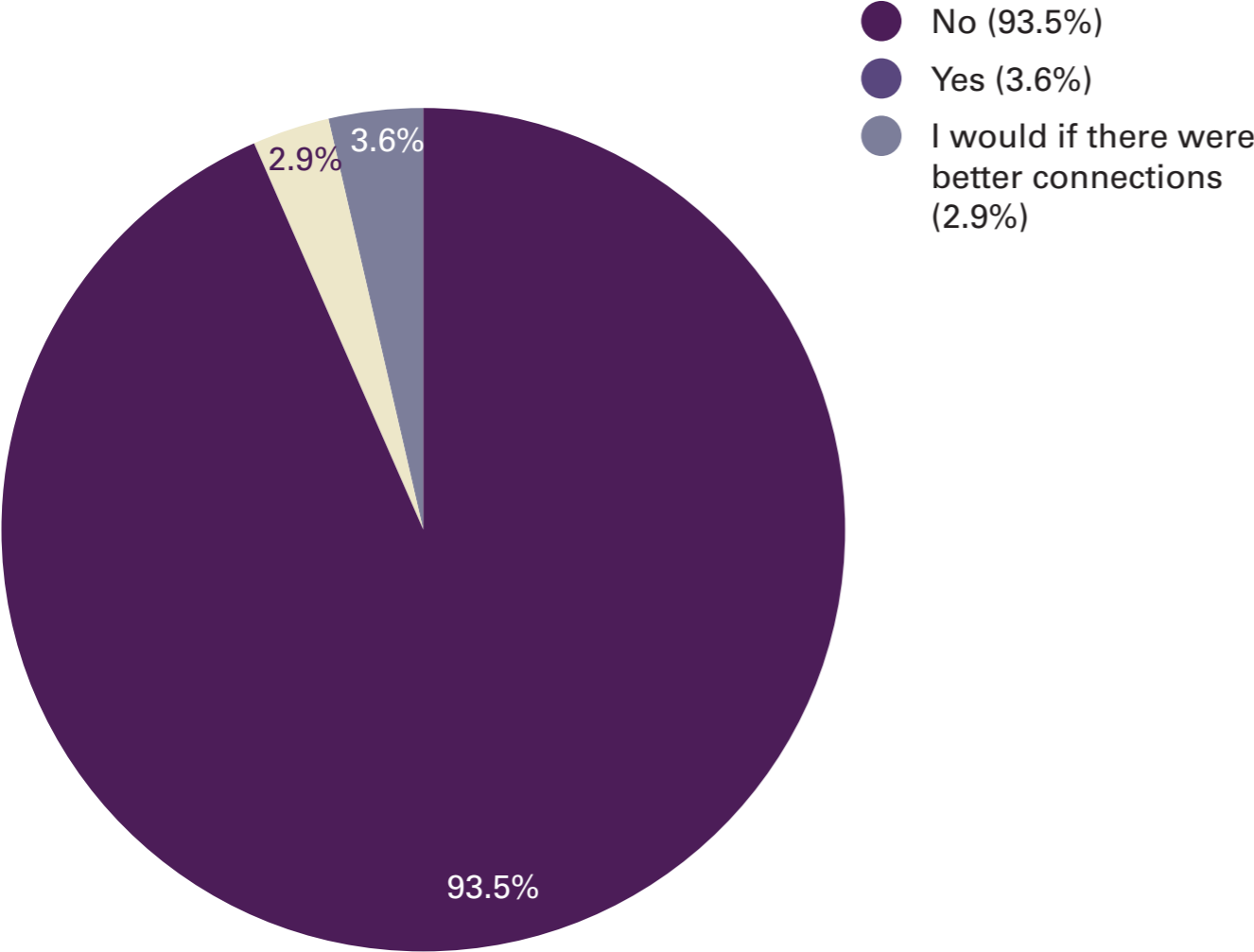


Community workshop event

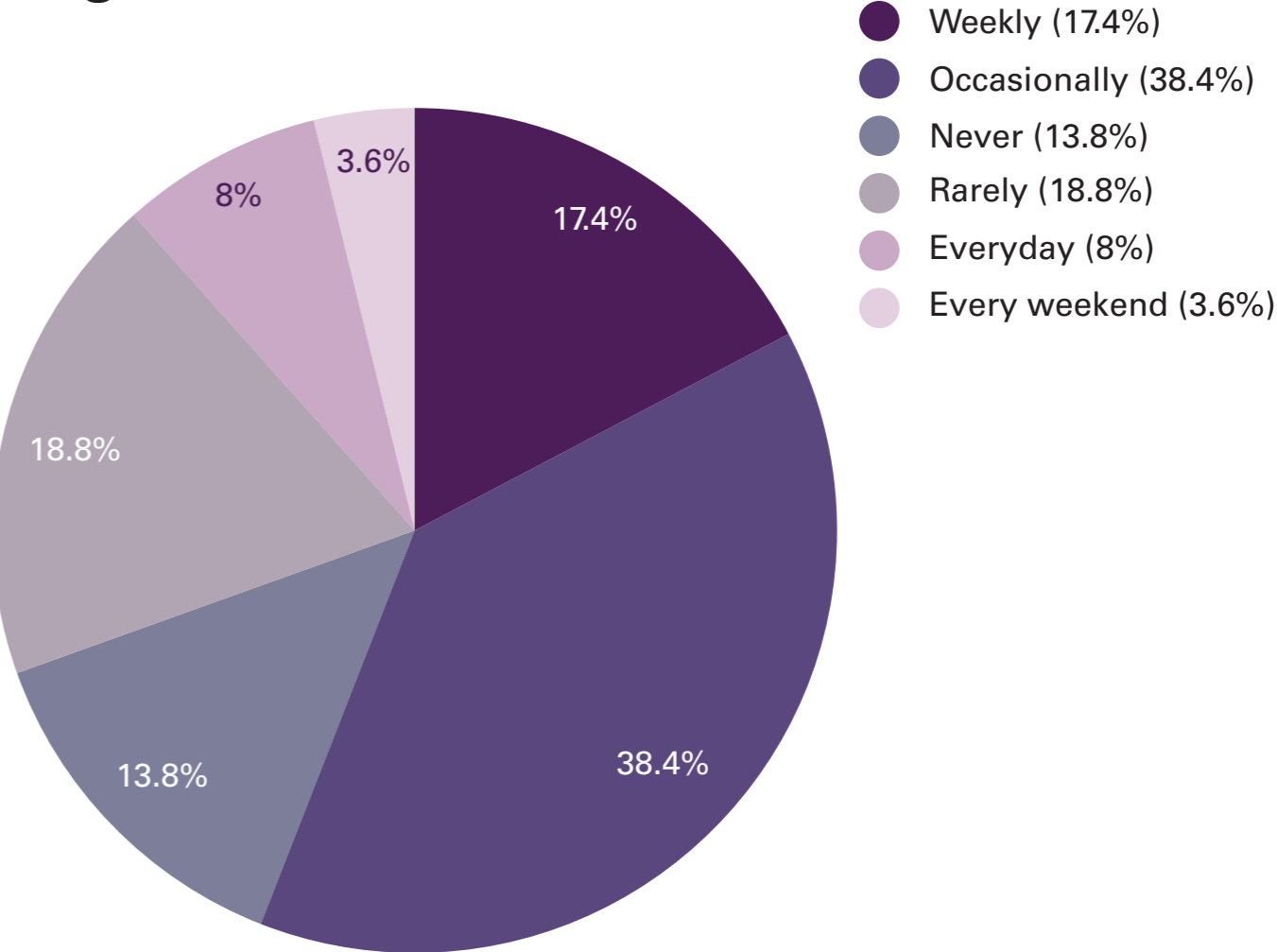
A Community Survey

Youth Survey Results

Do the participants of the youth survey travel through the park to get to school?



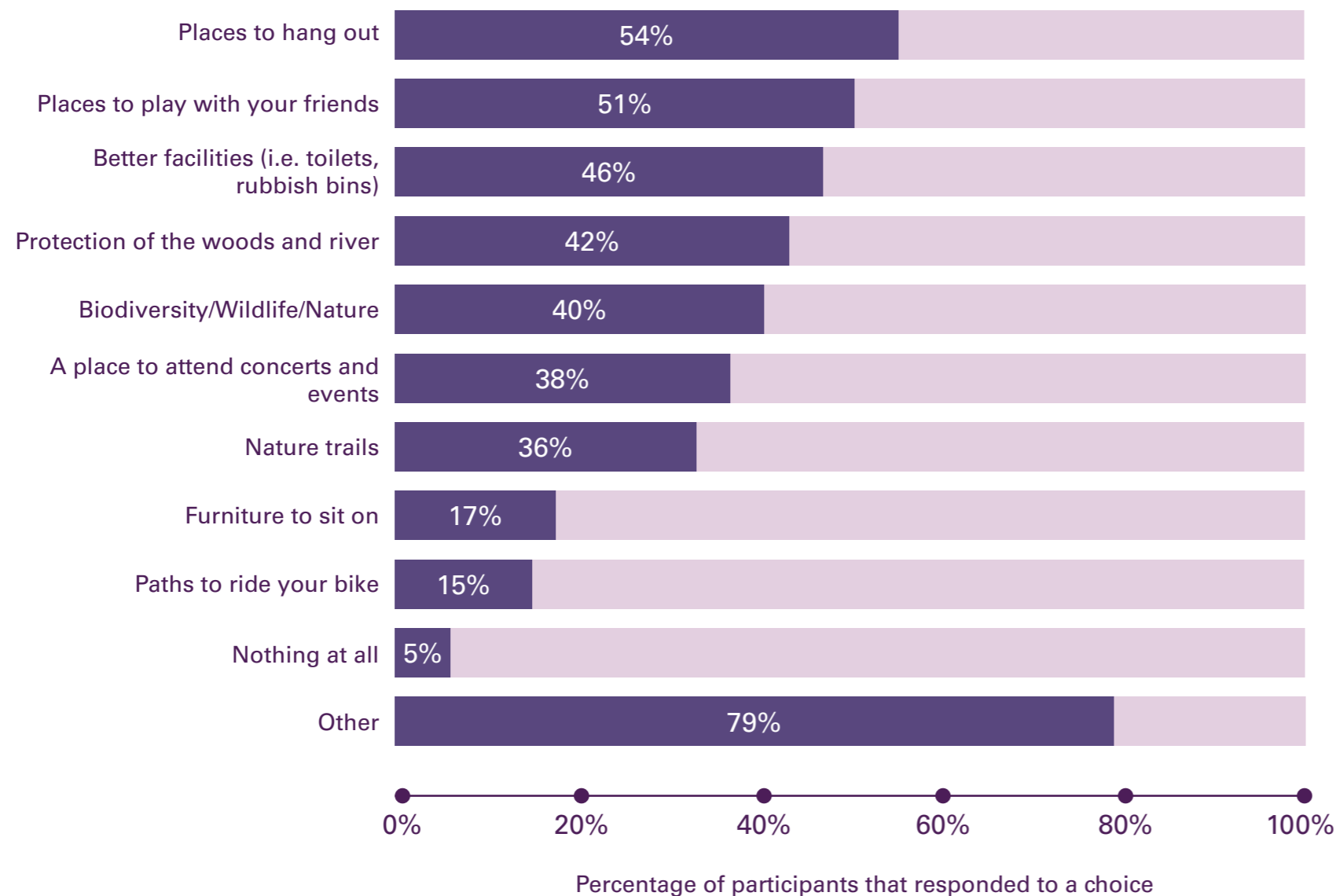
How often do the participants of the youth survey currently visit Ward River Regional Park?



A Community Survey

Youth Survey Results

What would the participants of the youth survey like to see in the park?*



*This was a multiple choice question

'Other' Responses

- Playing Area with ziplines and swings
 - Water Area
- Upgraded dog areas
- Sports Pitches / Basketball courts
 - Skate Park
- Trails with maps
- Improved paths to schools
 - Bird / Bug houses
 - A shop
- More bridge connections

A Community Survey

Youth Survey Results

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being unhappy, 5 being happy and 3 being unsure, how do the participants of the youth survey feel about an improved park?



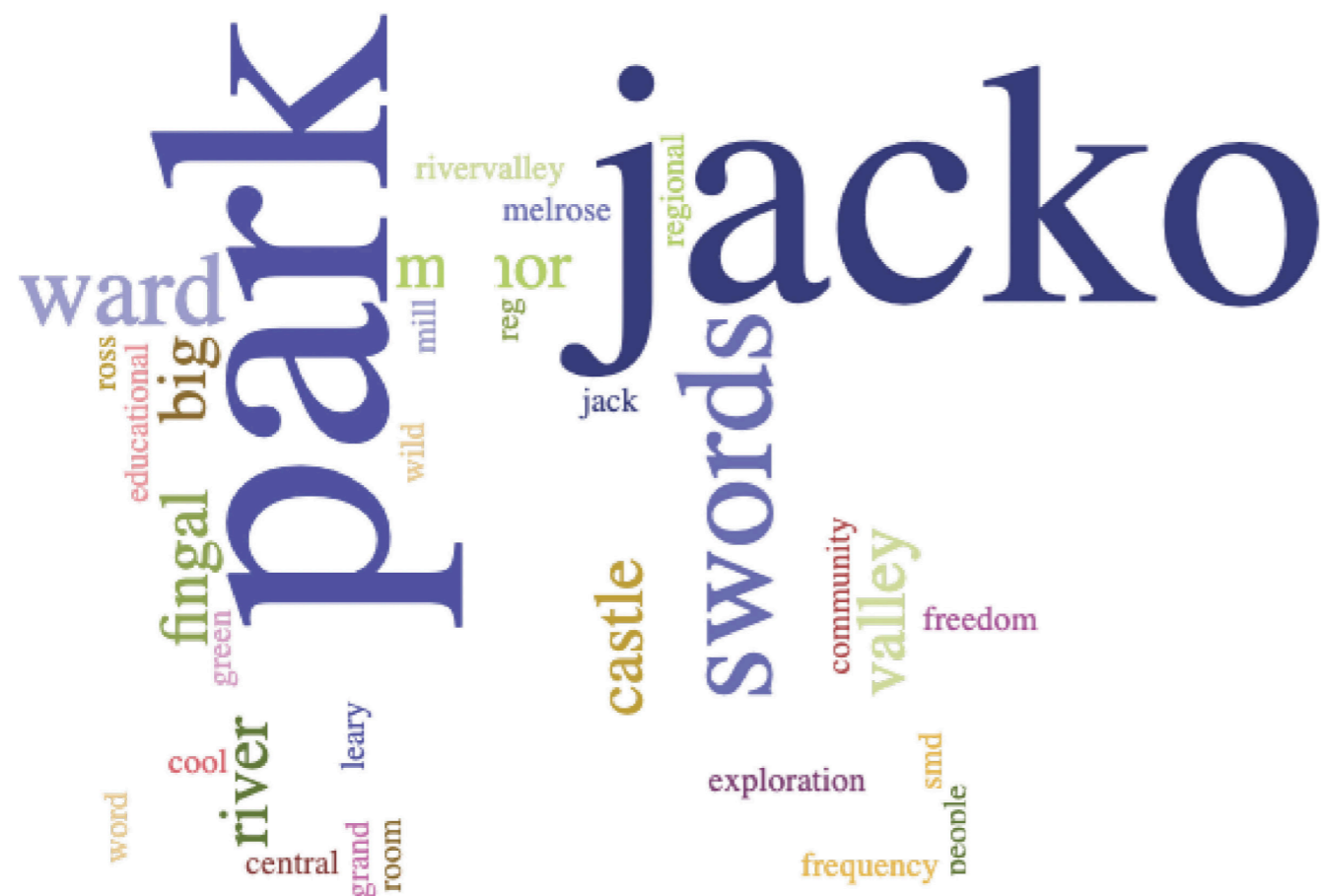
A Community Survey

Youth Survey Results

Do you have any ideas for the name of the park?

A word cloud was generated from the selection of names and suggestions in the survey.

The larger the word is, the more this word has been suggested



Is there *anything*
else that you
would like to add?

- Provide a better connection to Sword Community College
 - A connection to and from Knocksedan
 - A welcome sign to the park
 - More bridge connections
- Better cleaning and maintenance of the park
 - Playground
 - A place for events
 - Lights to increase safety
 - Sport facilities
 - Basketball courts
 - Fitness equipment
 - Tennis Courts
 - Cycle lanes
 - Skate Park

Section 2

In Person Community Workshop

What was Displayed?

Workshop Activity - Park Life and Activities

Workshop Activity - Park Routes, Entrances and Favourite Areas

Workshop Activity - Children

Workshop Activity - Children's Favourite Activities



In-Person Community Workshop

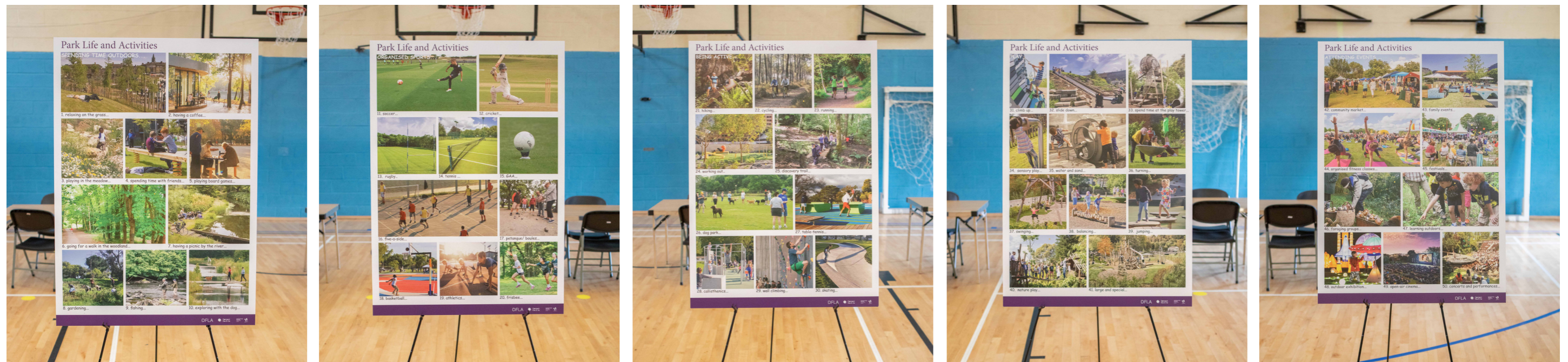
What was displayed?

An in-person workshop was developed by Connect the Dots and DFLA to workshop with the community on the future of Ward River Regional Park:

1. Large format boards displayed the existing context and features of the Park to help give a better understanding of the opportunities and constraints of the area;
2. A pictorial display of park life and activities helped to give prompts to the community for how the park can be envisioned;
3. A large scaled map of the Park and scaled cut out landscape elements (sport pitches, play areas, etc.) was used as a dialogue tool to better understand where these elements could go in the Park
4. A display board of the next steps of public consultation
5. A display board of park life and activities for children to sticker vote for their favourite park activities.



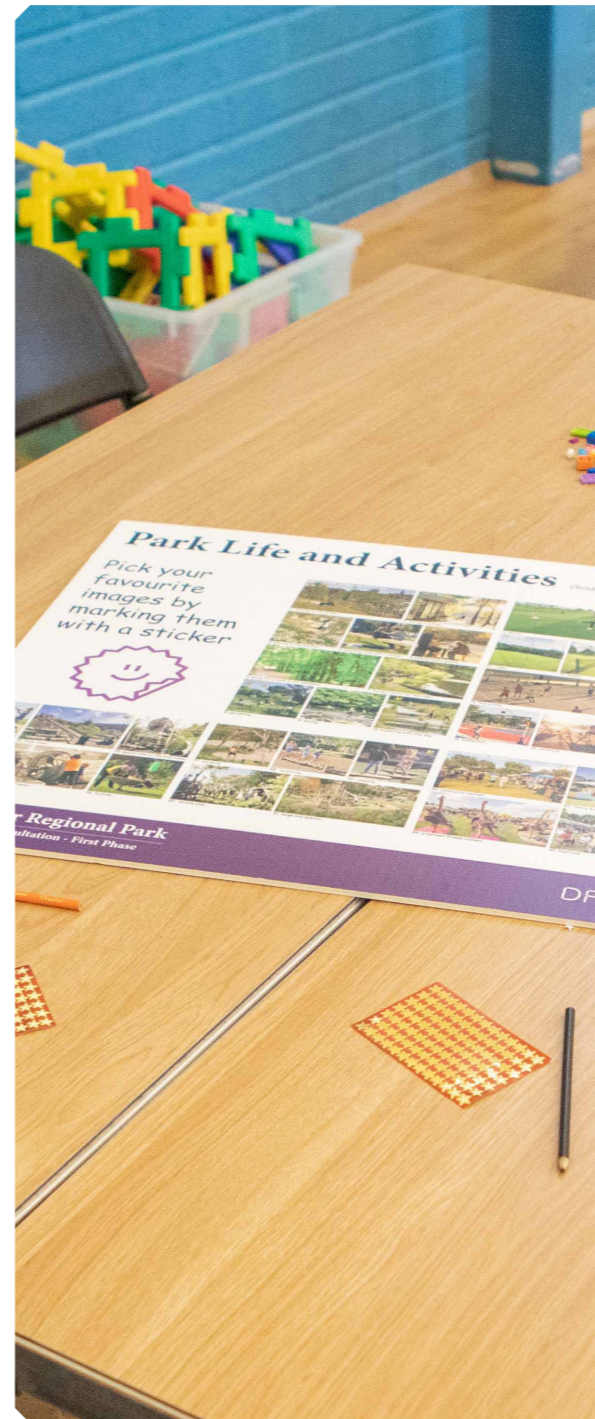
Display boards of existing context and features of the Park



Display boards of park life and activities

In-Person Community Workshop

What was displayed?



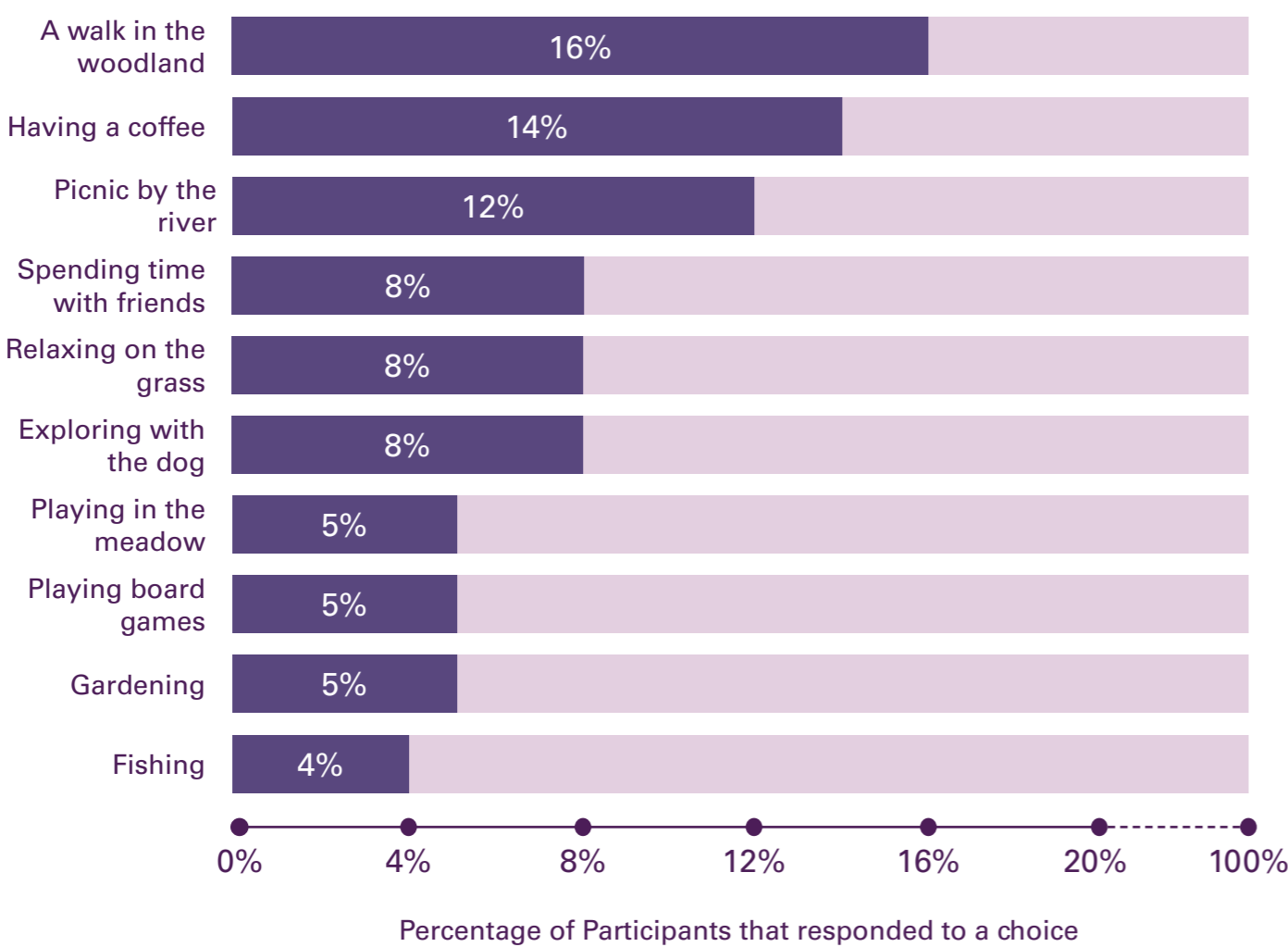
Display boards of next steps of consultation, large scaled map with cut out elements and children's sticker voting

In-Person Community Workshop

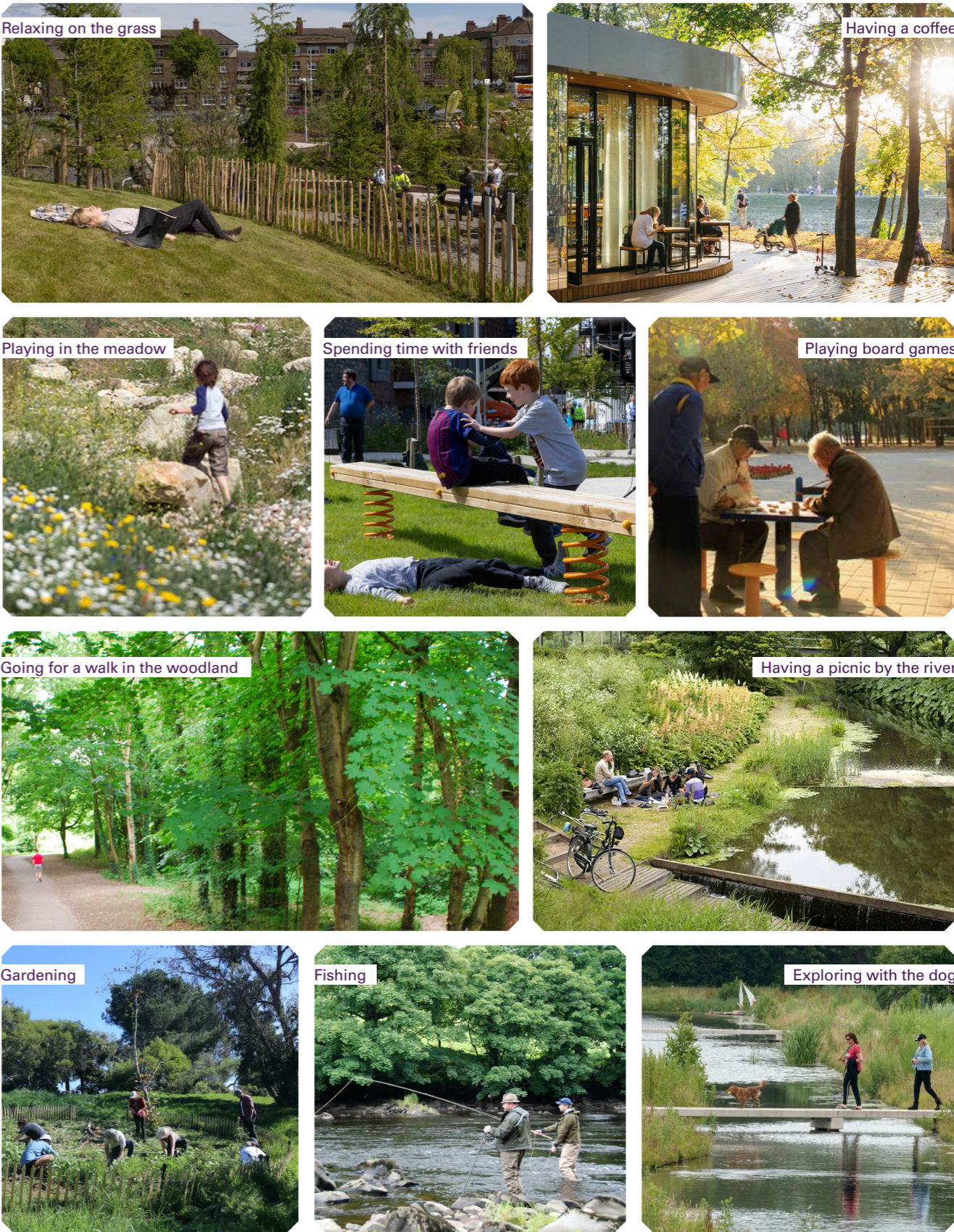
Workshop Activity - Park Life and Activities

There were 48 respondents to this worksheet

When I spend time outdoors I like...



- Other activities mentioned:**
- General walking in and through the park
 - Play sports or exercise
 - Socialising with friends/family
 - Taking time to think and relax
 - Reading



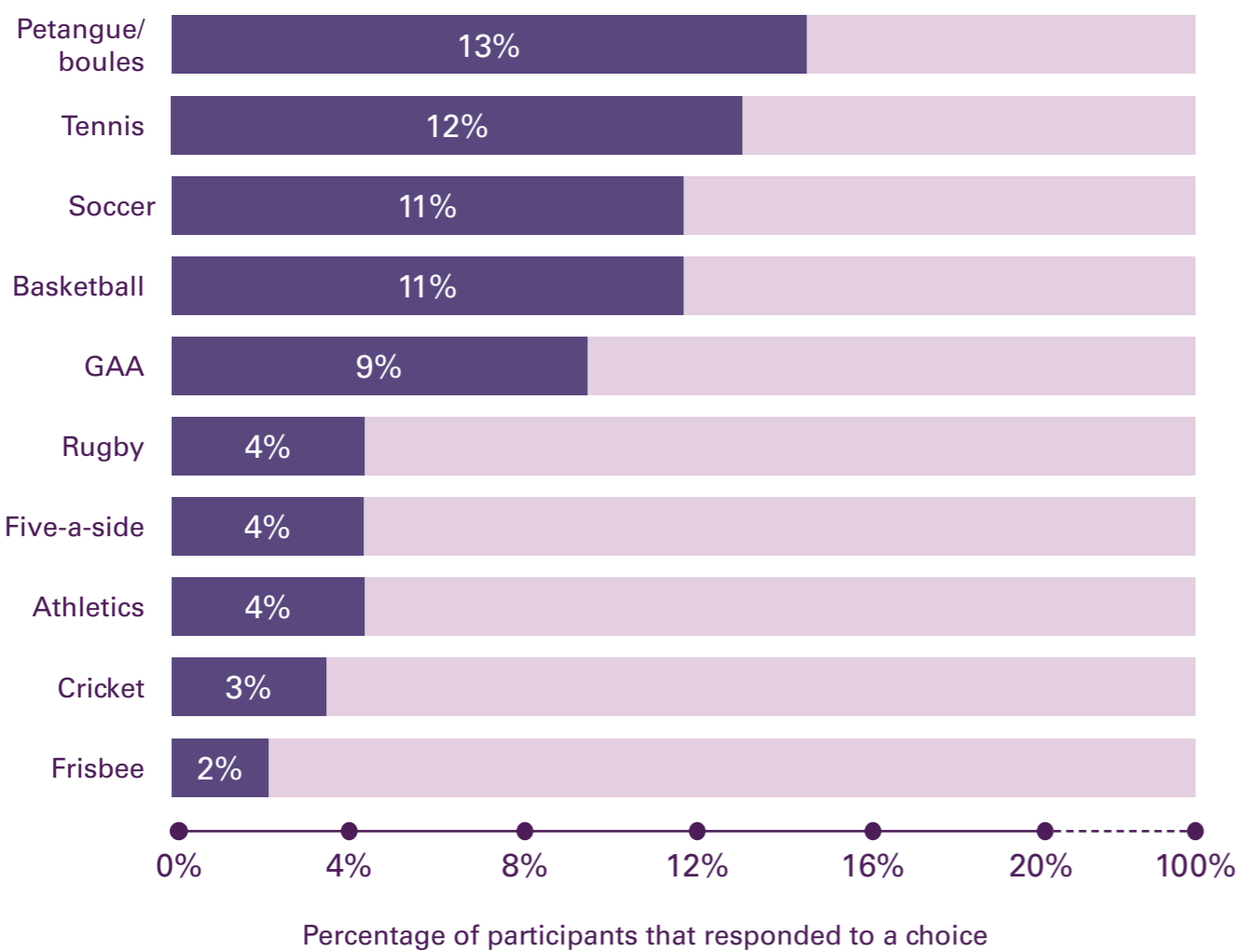
Activities shown at the in person workshop

In-Person Community Workshop

Workshop Activity - Park Life and Activities

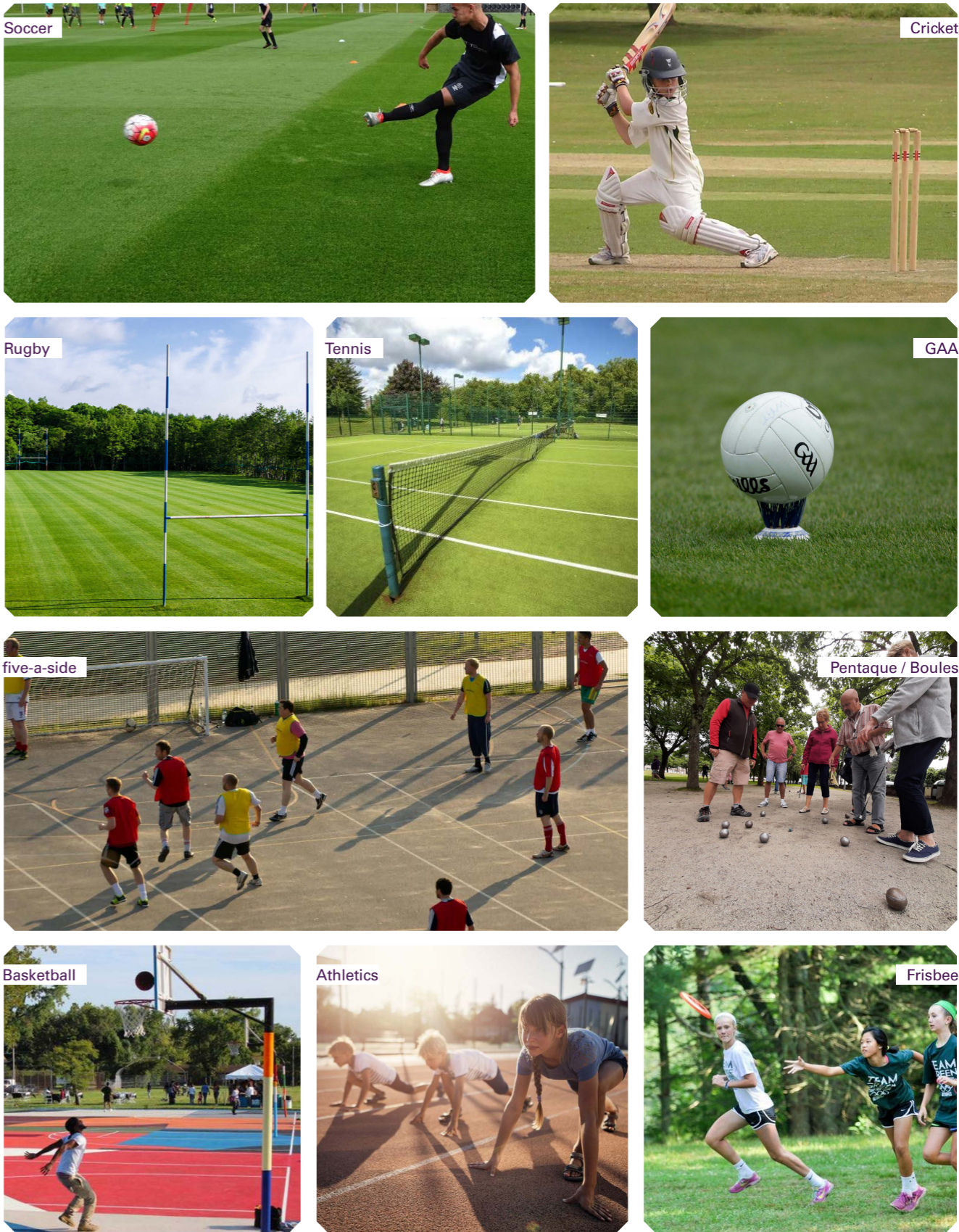
There were 48 respondents to this worksheet

The organised sports I would like to play are...



Other activities mentioned:

- Orienteering
- Pitch and putt
- Softball

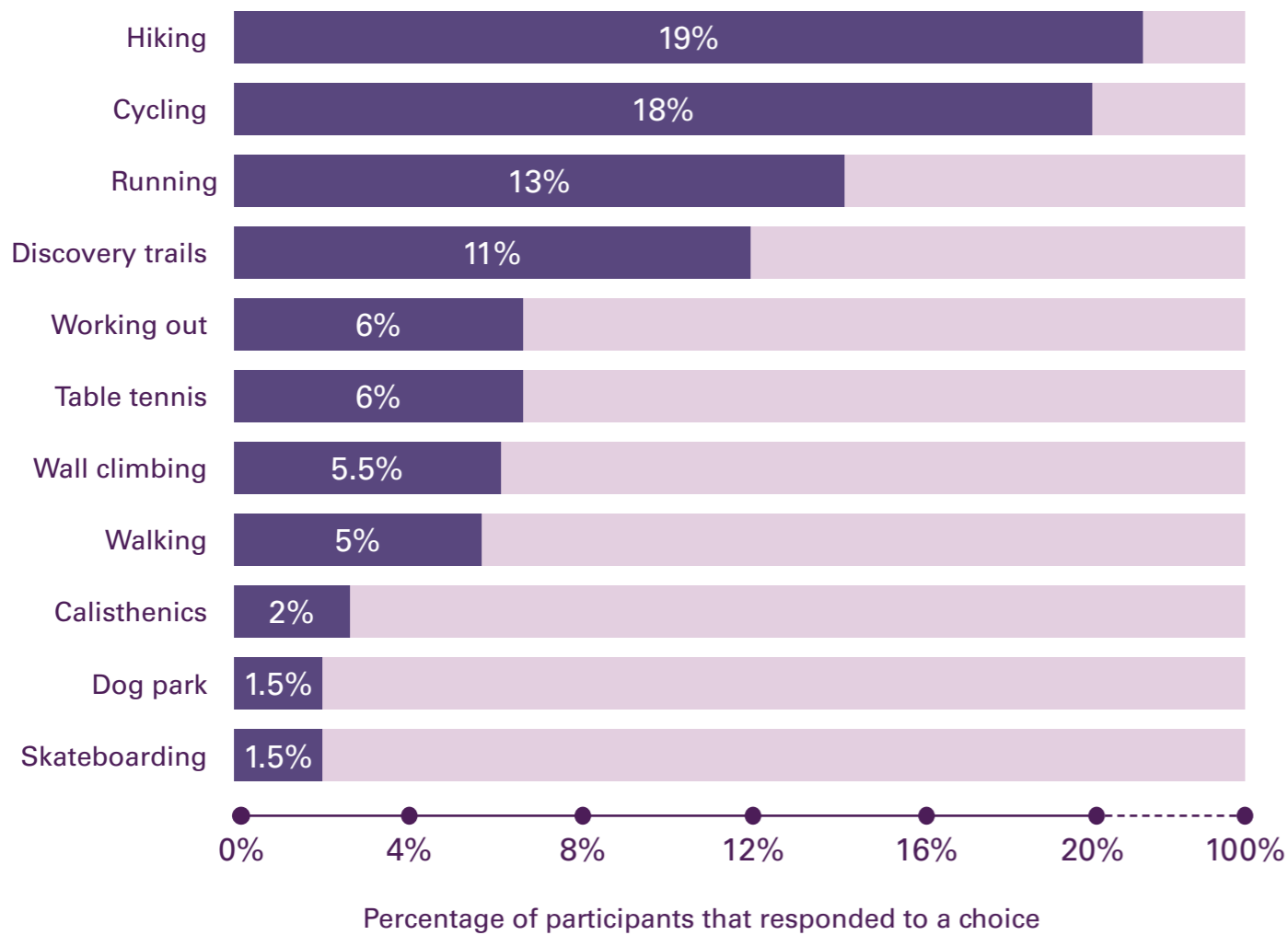


In-Person Community Workshop

Workshop Activity - Park Life and Activities

There were 48 respondents to this worksheet

When I am active I enjoy...



Other activities mentioned:

- Sleighing (in snow)
- Yoga
- Swimming



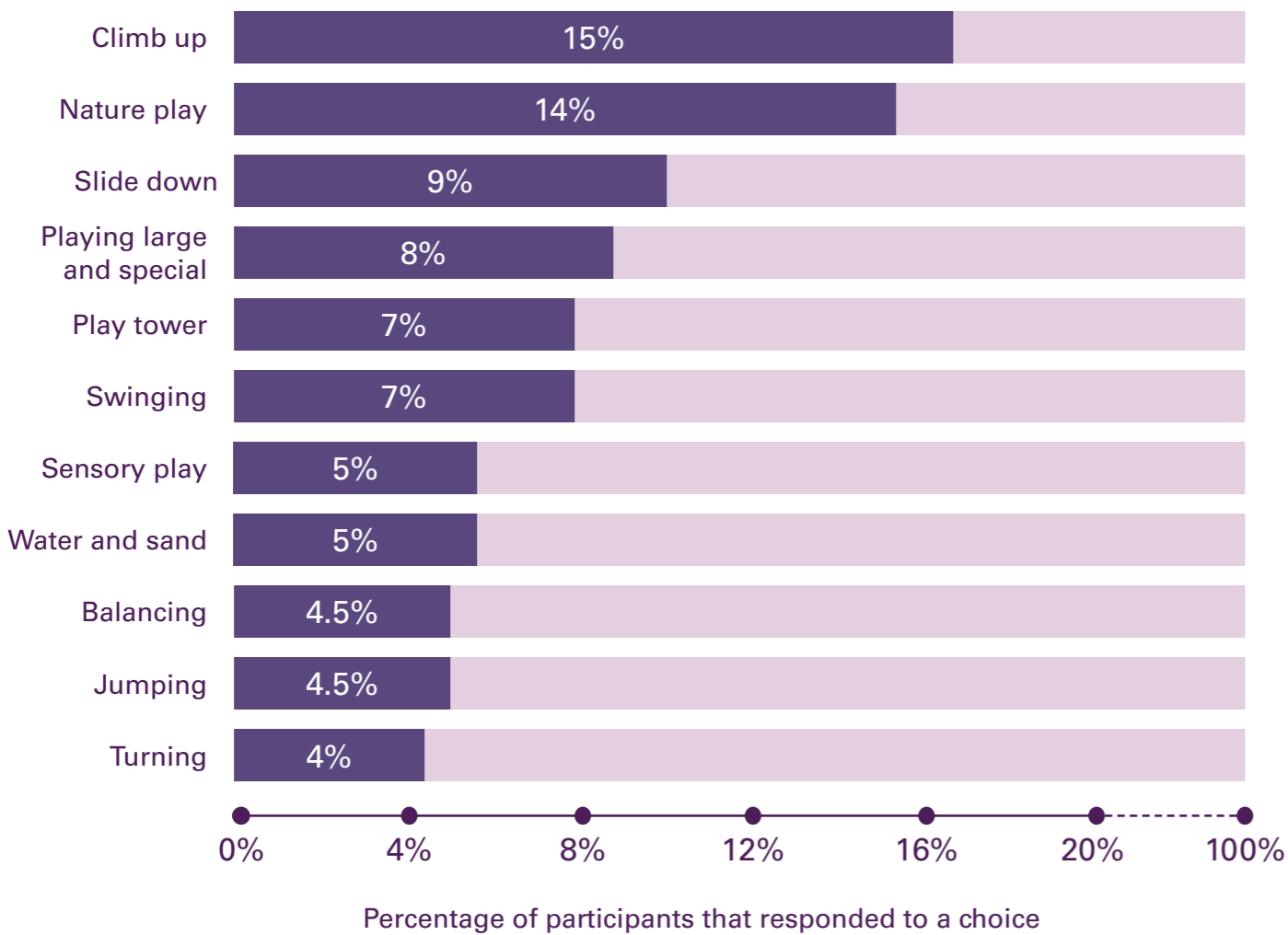
Activities shown at the in person workshop

In-Person Community Workshop

Workshop Activity - Park Life and Activities

There were 48 respondents to this worksheet

The playing I like is...



Other activities mentioned:

- Zip line
- Monkey bars
- Balance beams



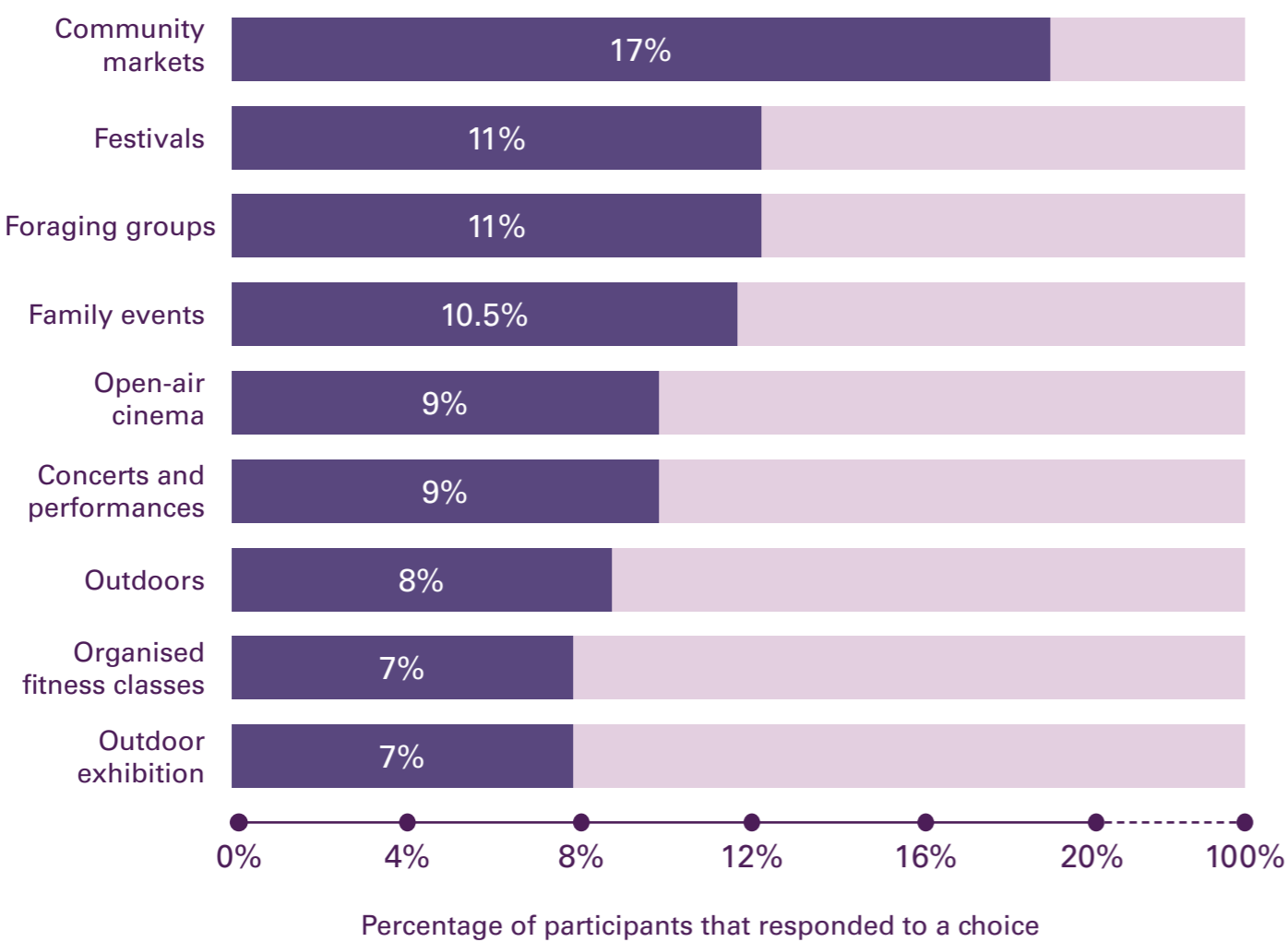
Activities shown at the in person workshop

In-Person Community Workshop

Workshop Activity - Park Life and Activities

There were 48 respondents to this worksheet

In the Park I would like to participate in...



- Other activities mentioned:
- Seasonal market area
 - Community allotments
 - Litter picking
 - Yoga classes



Activities shown at the in person workshop

In-Person Community Workshop

Workshop Activity - Park Life and Activities

What other activities would you like to see or use in a park?

Heritage and historical trails (allowing for sensory audio and visual media)

Safe equipment for when there is snow

Wildlife hospital

Seasonal events

More areas to sit

Community Gardens



Community workshop event

In-Person Community Workshop

Workshop Activity - Park Routes

Participants were asked to mark the **typical route** in the Park on a map.



Primary (most popular)
routes noted by participants



Secondary Routes noted
by participants



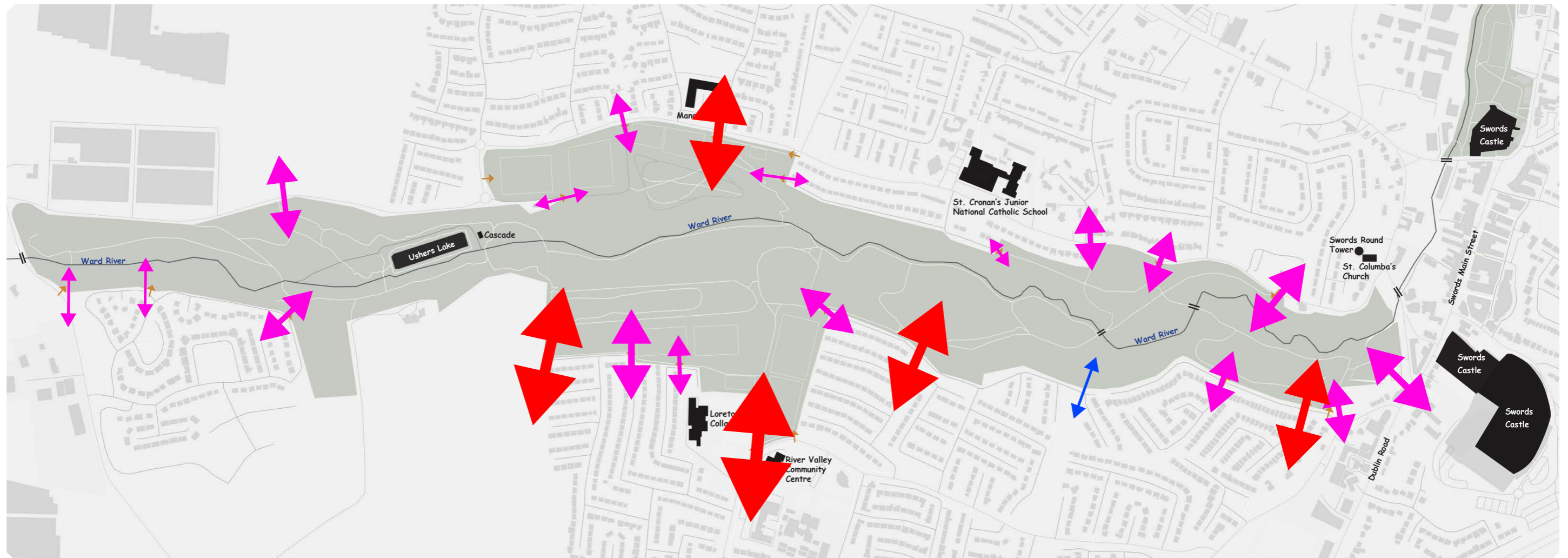
Other routes noted by
participants

In-Person Community Workshop

Workshop Activity - Park Entrances

Participants were asked to mark the **entrances** they use in the Park on a map.

Scale of arrow denotes the popularity of the entrance



Most popular entrances
noted by participants



Other entrances noted by participants

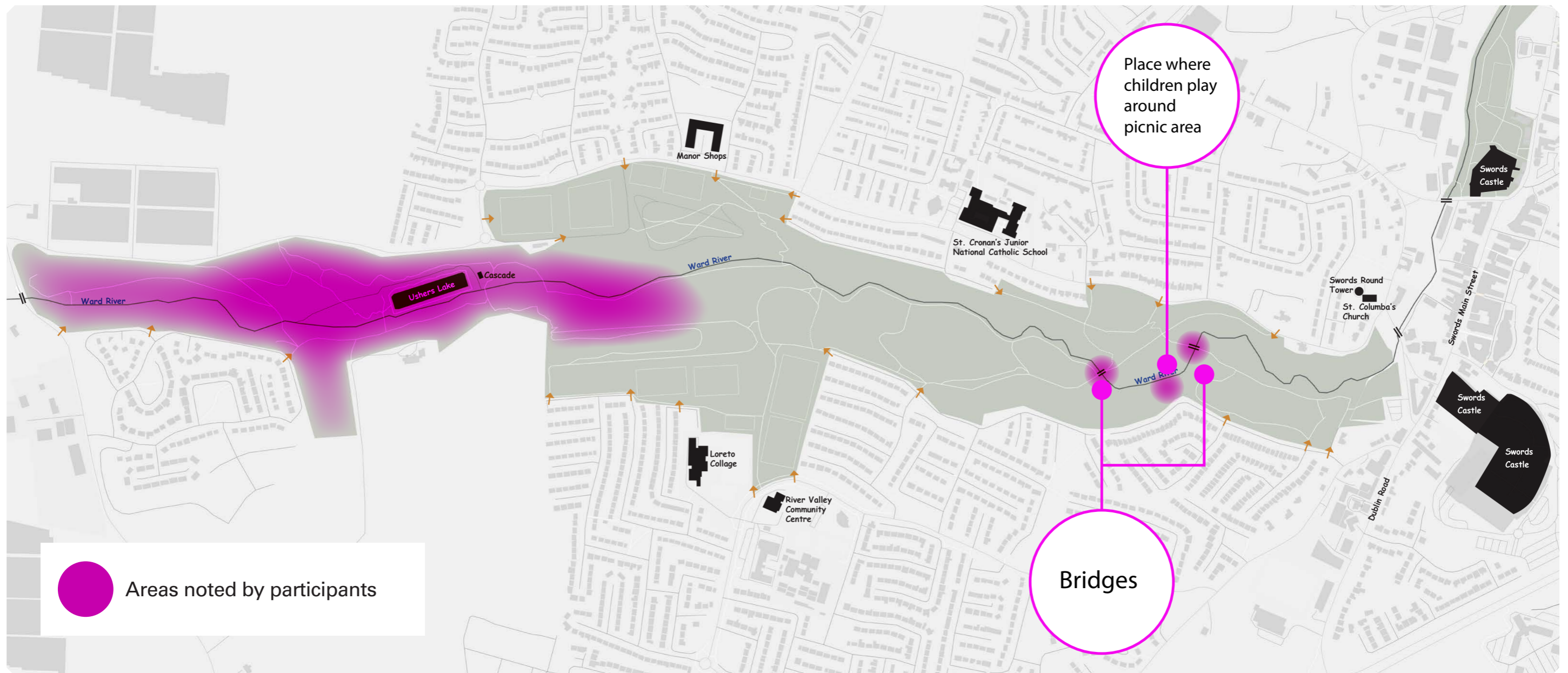


Suggested new entrance by
participants

In-Person Community Workshop

Workshop Activity - Park Entrances

Participants were asked to mark their **favourite part** in the Park on a map.

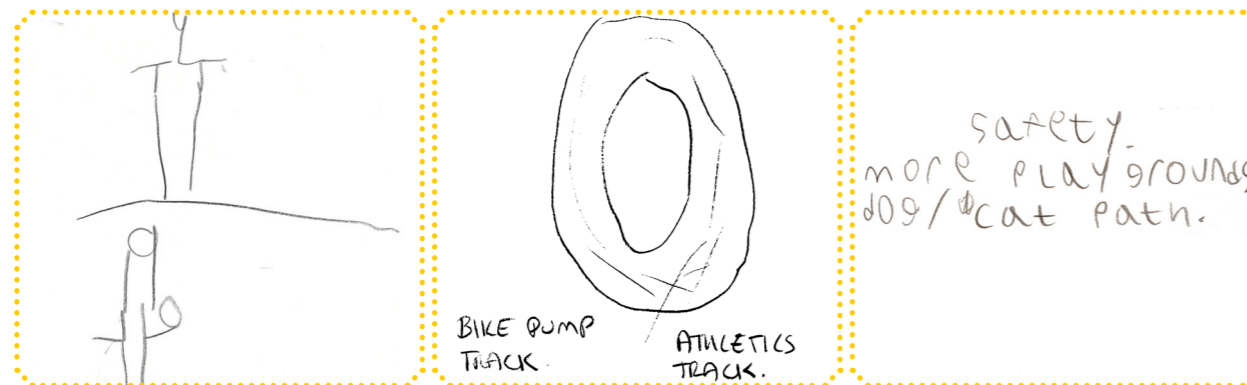
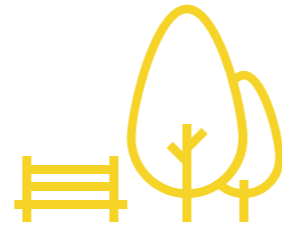


In-Person Community Workshop

Workshop Activity - Children

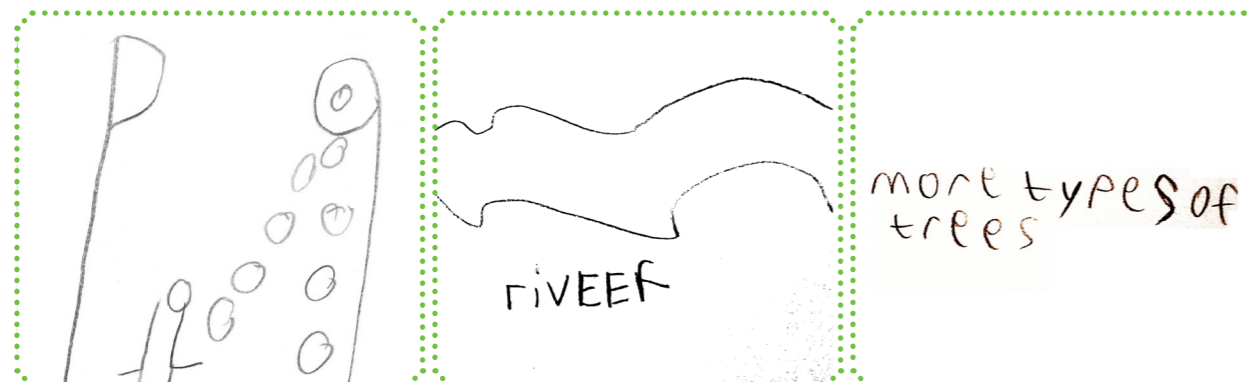
What would you like to see in the park?

Children were asked to tell us about the Park through writing words and/or drawing images



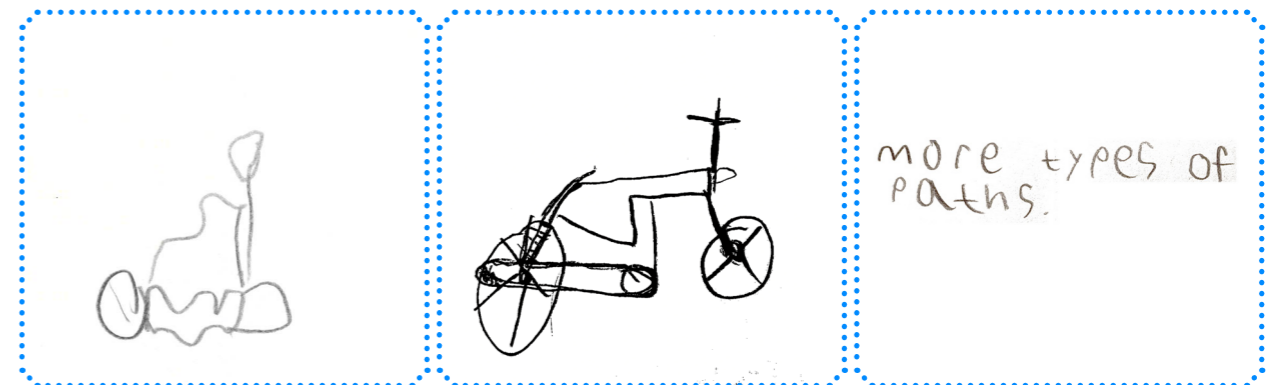
What is your favourite part of the park?

Children were asked to draw a favourite tree or a place to sit?

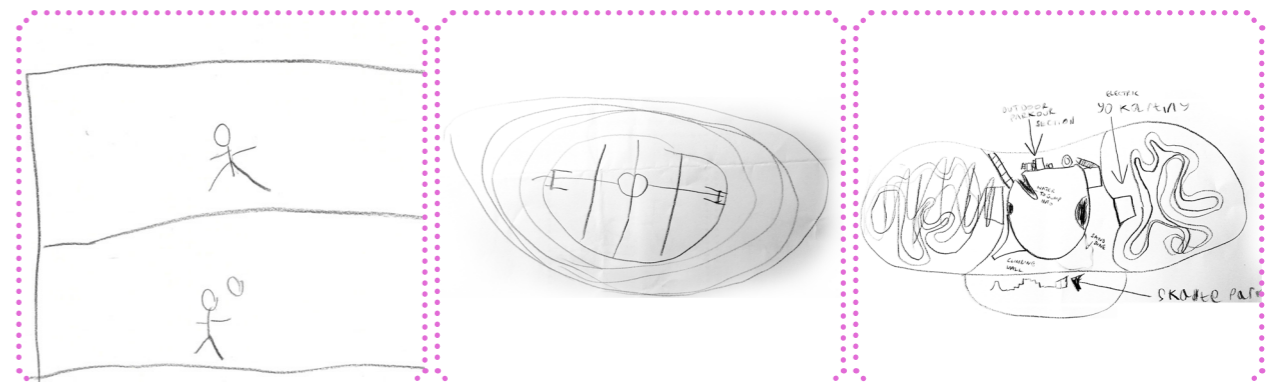


Do you use a scooter or roller skates to get around?

Children were asked to draw how you get from one side of the park to the other



Draw your favourite places to play and be with friends and family.



In-Person Community Workshop

Workshop Activity - Children

Children were asked to sticker vote for their favourite activities from the Park Life and Activities boards



Activities ranked from most to least

In-Person Community Workshop

Quotes from the Day

‘Good to see it developed for people to *enjoy nature*, would love to see more of these *positive actions* please. Uses park regularly for *walking, running* and *litter picking*. Swords Pickers = about 15 members with around half a dozen that would go out on a litter picking session. *More bins* would help. Especially around Brackenstown Road Swords Manor football pitches and around Rose Cottage.’

‘[Create] *access points* midway between high field and hill town road (next access point up beside the pitches)’

‘Would love to see *nature trails* with info boards on wildlife, geography, mushrooms, plants, trees, herons.’

‘Something to get the *community together* such as an outdoor cinema, [is it] possible to have one like a silent disco where people can listen to sound on their own headphones? A small musical or theatrical performance could work really well’

‘Scared because of *antisocial behaviour* that happens down in the Valley’

‘Park is an amazing natural local resource but it is *not accessible* to those with disabilities/elderly people.’

‘Audio descriptor touchpoints for those that are *visually impaired*’

‘Park needs more *maintenance* - remove the deadwood as they are an obstruction and a store of disease for healthy trees.’

‘Nice to have *natural and overgrown* but need to make *accessible*’

‘Really want to be able to explore and use the park but people with *disabilities* need to be given a seat at the table.’

‘The river needs to be *restored*, a filter/wetlands needs to be put in place where the two rivers meet.’

‘Need more public *lighting* / solar power lighting to combat this / feel safer’

Section 3

Emerging Community Themes and Suggestions



Emerging Community Themes and Suggestions

Introduction

Following from the survey and in person workshop, there was a good level of participation and conversation with the community of Swords.

Six themes and suggestions have been generated from the consultation activities which encapsulate the many voices that were heard and seen during the first phase of consultation for the future of Ward River Regional Park.

Theme 1
A local survey



Theme 2
Uses of the Park



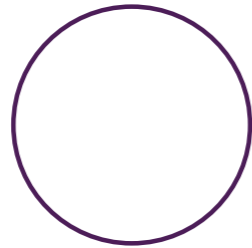
Theme 3
Retention and Biodiversity



Theme 4
Safety and Accessibility



Theme 5
Maintenance



Theme 6
Improved Routes /
Alternative Connections



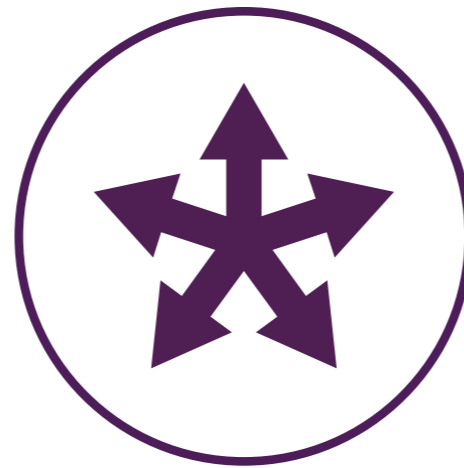
Community workshop event

Emerging Community Themes and Suggestions



A Local Consultation
Theme 1

With 88% of participants of the community survey **living nearby the Park** and nearly 50% of overall participants relating to **local groups, clubs and organisations**, the first phase of public consultation gives insights and feedback that is truly from the local community.



Uses of the Park
Theme 2

The majority of participants use the park for leisure and sporting activities. Suggestions from the community include:

- **Accessible and dedicated routes** for running walking and cycling
- **Sport pitch facilities** including for ball sports, and all weather
- Multiple **other sports activities** (please see pg. 12) were noted other than popular ball games like soccer/GAA/Rugby
- **Adequate communal facilities** for sports clubs, toilet use and other communal activities was noted as important for how the park and community can operate.
- The improvement and addition to **play facilities** for children and young people are seen as an important improvement and addition to the park.
- Safe **dog walking facilities**.



Retention and Biodiversity
Theme 3

The Park in it's current state is enjoyed by the community of Swords. Participants endorse accentuating the existing **green features** of the park as well as a want to promote **biodiversity** in the area.

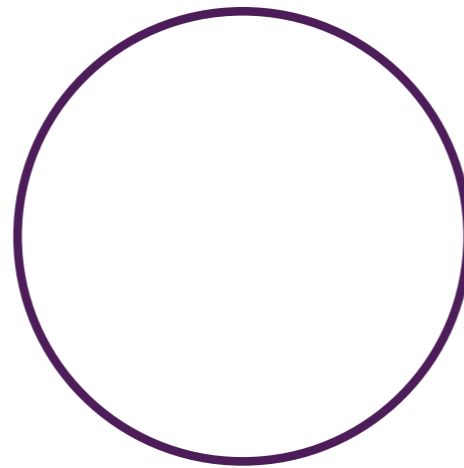
Emerging Community Themes and Suggestions



Safety and Accessibility Theme 4

In relation to using the existing park, there are key safety and accessibility notes from the community that are associated with this:

- **Adequate lighting on key routes** through the park
- **Concerns of antisocial behaviour** and how this might be dealt with
- **Accessible** paths/routes for **all abilities** and varied modes of transport
- **Safer** park entrances



Maintenance Theme 5

Long term maintenance of the park was noted by members of the community:

- **Adequate drainage** for existing and proposed pitches
- **Supervision and cleanliness:** supervising park rangers, dog waste facilities, litter bins and ongoing yearly maintenance of the park.



Improved Routes / Alternative Connections Theme 6

For all the activities of the Park mentioned, the theme of connection and routes was highlighted to be of importance.

Improved or new connections to nearby residential areas such as the Knockedan community or to local schools would help the park become more connected to its community.

Section 4

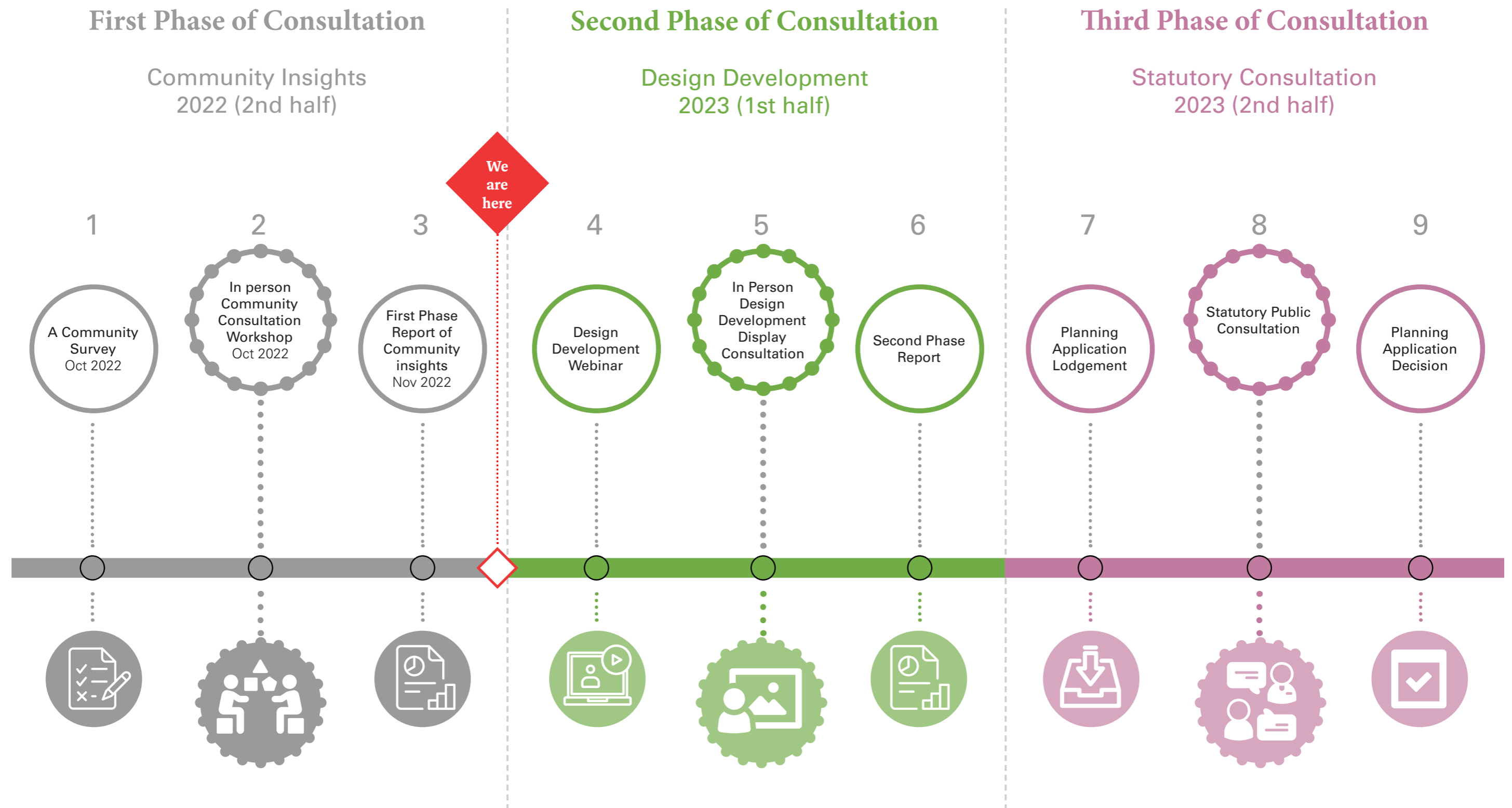
Next Steps for Further Consultation

Next Steps for Public Consultation

Contact Details



Next Steps for Public Consultation

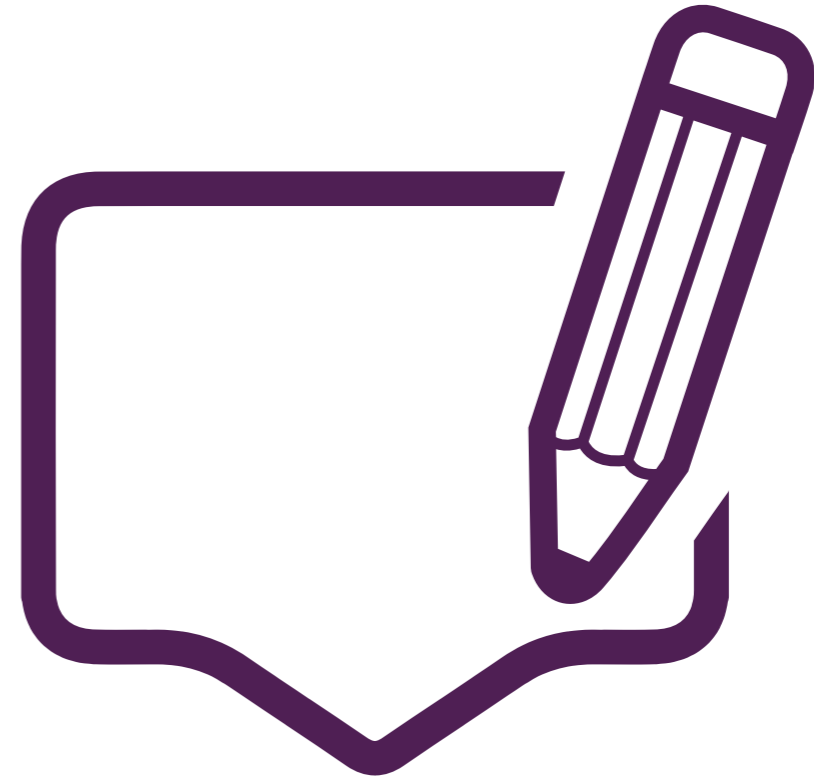


Contact Details



Please visit the project website for updates:

www.fingal.ie/WardRiverRegionalPark



If you would like to let us know of your thoughts on the first phase of consultation on the future of Ward River Regional Park please click [here](#)