



Wednesday 30th November 2022

Dear Community of Addlestone,

Thanks to many of you for completing the recent Victory Park questionnaire. I promised you an email with the results and news of the £50 draw winner. Also find below some major breaking news about historic Victory Park, the largest dedicated war memorial in the UK.

In all, an amazing 402 local people gave their views on the existing management of our park and its future development. The results are summarised in the attached pdf file. You reserved your more passionate opinions for the written comments, these are available in full upon request. The most frequent gripes were: a) the state of the park toilets, b) the paddling pool / lido being out of action, and c) the irregular upkeep of the flowerbeds d) criminality and vandalism.

All the survey results and written comments have been copied to Runnymede Borough Council Officers and interested Councillors, even Ben Spencer our local MP who attended the Party in the Park last June. Facilitated by technology, you are being heard. Let's hope you are now being listened to.

**Headline Summary:**

- A majority of respondents (50.8 per cent) use Victory Park once a week or more.
- 92 per cent were "Satisfied" (47.4 per cent) or "Extremely Satisfied" (43.6 per cent) with the "Management and Maintenance" of the park. Only 8 per cent were "Somewhat Satisfied" and not one respondent replied: "Not Satisfied". These numbers reflect well on the outgoing park-keepers Rob and Kevin, and R.B.C.

- A majority of respondents have used the Clubhouse Café within the revitalised Bowls Club. Of that group 18 per cent were “Satisfied” and 80.9 per cent were “Extremely Satisfied” with the “Café service and product”. The Bowls Club scored 4.2 / 5 for “Accessibility and “Inclusivity”, much higher than the national average. It would however be the first to admit it hasn’t drawn new people into the park in any number except for the Jubilee Party in the Park last June.

The sad truth is Victory Park footfall is low and declining. Unless something is done, this is going to continue. The Council are rationalising park-keeping so Victory Park no longer has dedicated park-keepers; potted plants will no longer be planted in the beds, instead perennials will be used with an emphasis on re-wilding. There is an intention to close the Lido / paddling pool altogether. There are also plans to leave the park unlocked at night. Apparently the police have requested this, so they can chase criminals into park if they jump over the fence. Surely however this cost-cutting measure is likely to lead to more criminality and vandalism, not less.

- Thankfully 83.3 per cent of respondents supported the setting up of a Community Interest Organisation to “develop and maintain new facilities in Victory Park”. Only two respondents didn’t support the idea, the rest were “Not Sure” (16.2 per cent). 83.3 per cent of you will be pleased to know this is happening. Read on.
- Thinking about new park facilities, respondents were given 11 ideas from which they were to choose a first choice. The overwhelming preference was for “a crazy golf course with café bar” (50.9 per cent or 204 respondents). The second most popular choice was “an operational Lido / paddling pool” (11.2 per cent). In third was “a new children’s play area” (6.2 per cent), fourth “a skatepark” (5.2 per cent), in fifth “new toilets” (4.2 per cent) and sixth, “a miniature railway around the park” with 3.7 per cent. Around 2.3 per cent (or 7 respondents in total) wanted improved tennis courts. Ironically, given the low demand, this is the one improvement that is definitely happening. The Council are resurfacing our courts next Summer, having received a grant from the Lawn Tennis Association. But you will have to pay to play Tennis after that.

### **Putting your choices into action:**

So, what about your favourite choice: “a crazy golf course with café bar”? How likely is this to happen? Well, it’s still down to us. The good news is that a new Community Interest Company (C.I.C. Addlestone) is going ahead to develop this idea and raise public funds. A funding application of £500,000 for new park facilities is moving into its final stage with Surrey County Council’s “Your Fund Surrey” Community Development Programme. Our area has the second highest level of household deprivation in Surrey. It deserves to get a slice of the £100m Your Fund Surrey pot of cash available to the County over the next five years.

Note: A “C.I.C.” is a social enterprise half way between a charity and a limited company. It’s regulated to work solely in the interest of the local community as per its guiding ‘Community Interest Statement’ or constitution. It will have an “Asset Lock” so what’s built can never be sold off to private interests. The Council Officers know about this, as well as local Councillors, and are initially supportive.

**A New What's App group for those interested in being part of the C.I.C. with great benefits!**

This group is for local people interested in the development of Victory Park. You will also hear all about the latest developments of the C.I.C. and have an opportunity to be part of it – perhaps as an officer, even a shareholder - but you must join the What'sApp group first! Please Join...

When joining, give your name in the chat so we all get to know each other, click here:


<https://chat.whatsapp.com/CPAxDN9gCtV1MMn0pK6LmX>

**£50 Winner:**

Finally, congratulations to Ms. Tamsin Knight who was selected by a random number generator as the winner from the 345 respondents who gave their email address.

To the 344 unlucky losers, you have all won a consolation prize: a free cup of tea, coffee or hot chocolate in the Park's Clubhouse Café, valid until the end of December. Just show a copy of this email to claim. The café's winter hours are 9-4pm at weekends. It also serves highly-rated hot bacon and sausage baps and fresh cakes from the Bowls Club's sponsor, the local Ginger Bread Man Bakery.

Best wishes and thank you again. Please join the What'sApp group. Together we are stronger.



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