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# Country Parks Visitor Satisfaction Report

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## Background

In 2009 Warwickshire County Council Country Parks Service carried out a survey of visitors to five of the Country Parks in the county – Kingsbury Water Park, Hartshill Hayes Country Park, Ryton Pools Country Park, Burton Dassett Hills Country Park and Pooley Country Park. Survey questionnaires were handed out to visitors during the month of August and were also made available on-line.

The questionnaire endeavoured to find out how satisfied visitors are with the services provided at the park and what could be improved at the sites.

In total, the County Council received 659 completed questionnaires; 230 from Kingsbury Water Park, 47 from Hartshill Hayes, 147 from Ryton Pools, 22 from Burton Dassett and 213 from Pooley. Overall 41% of the responses were from males and 59% from females but the results varied more significantly at some of the parks. The majority of respondents were over 30 years old with most people at Burton Dassett, Hartshill Hayes and Kingsbury being over 45.

**Figure 1: Responses from males and females**

	Burton Dassett	Hartshill Hayes	Kingsbury	Pooley	Ryton Pools
	%	%	%	%	%
Males	53	54	37	32	28
Females	47	46	63	68	72

## RESULTS

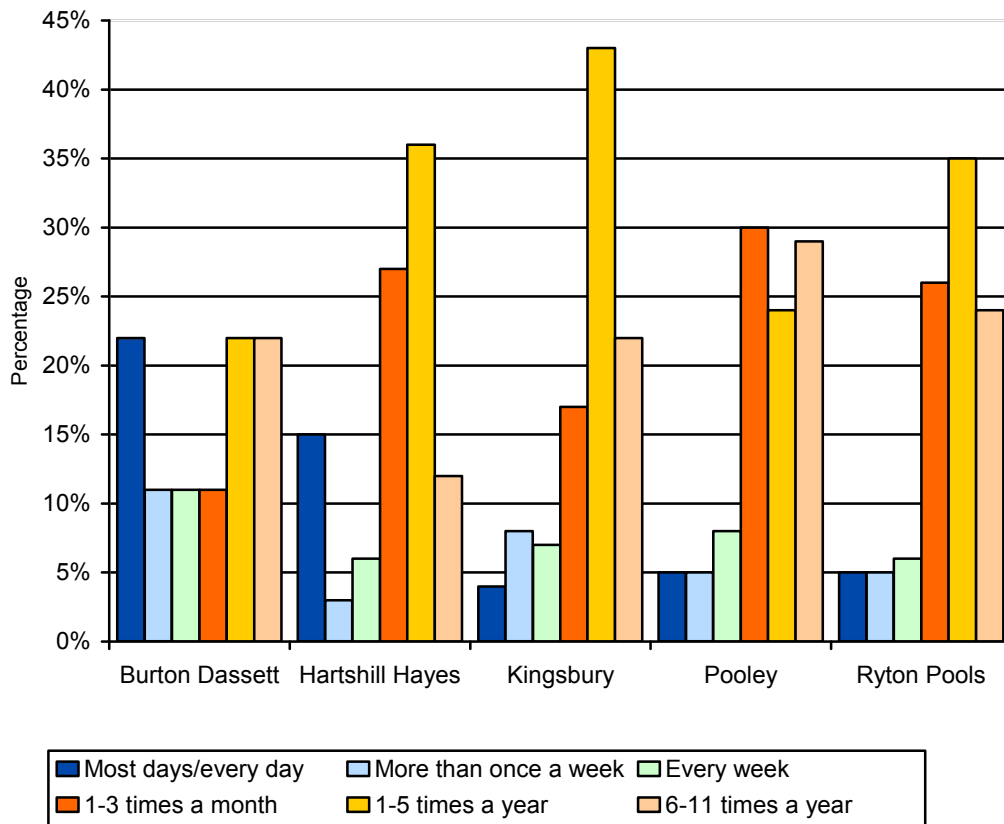
Just over a third of the total number of respondents (34.9%) were visitors to Kingsbury Water Park. The lowest number of responses (3.3%) were from visitors to Burton Dassett. Pooley had the highest number of repeat visitors at 51% with the percentage dropping to 30% for Kingsbury. The majority had visited the park before and, of those who were visiting for the first time, the majority also said that they would visit again. Only four reasons were given why people would not visit again – the cost of parking and food, proximity to home (visiting as tourists) and one respondent thought there was a coal mine they could visit.

Just over 40% of the respondents lived in Warwickshire, the majority of which (17%) came from North Warwickshire. This correlates with the fact that 3 out of the 5 five parks are in North Warwickshire Borough. The largest number of visitors from outside the county live in Staffordshire – again this ties in with the fact that both Kingsbury Water Park and Pooley are close to the Staffordshire/Warwickshire border near the town of Tamworth. Figure 2 shows the breakdown of home addresses for the districts/boroughs within Warwickshire and the surrounding areas.

**Figure 2: Home address of respondents**

Respondents Local Authority	% of respondents
Warwickshire	42%
<i>North Warwickshire</i>	17%
<i>Nuneaton &amp; Bedworth</i>	9%
<i>Rugby</i>	5%
<i>Stratford</i>	4%
<i>Warwick</i>	6%
Staffordshire	23%
Coventry	12%
Leicestershire	4%
Birmingham	11%
Other	7%

**Figure 3: Number of visits to Country Parks in the past 12 months**



Repeat visits to the Country Parks were highest at Kingsbury Water Park, Pooley and Ryton Pools with the highest percentage being at Kingsbury where 43% said they visited 1 to 5 times a year.

As may be expected most visits to all of the parks were made on Saturdays, Sundays or Bank Holidays. One exception was Pooley with 66% of the respondents saying they normally visited in the school holidays. The results for the lowest and highest numbers of visits is show in Figure 4.

**Figure 4: When visits are normally made to the Country Parks**

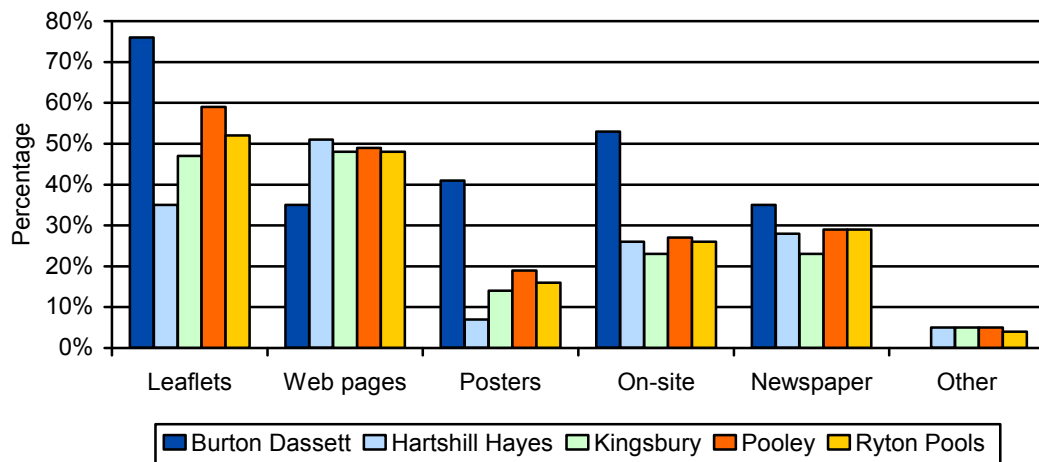
	Burton Dassett		Hartshill Hayes		Kingsbury		Pooley		Ryton Pools	
	Most	Least	Most	Least	Most	Least	Most	Least	Most	Least
Weekday am				✓				✓		
Weekday pm		✓								
School holidays							✓			
Saturday						✓				
Sunday	✓		✓						✓	
Bank Holidays					✓			✓		✓

The most used method of travelling to all the Parks was by car. The largest number of those accessing a park on foot went to Pooley (16%). Only two of the respondents to this question had arrived by bus, coach or minibus – one was at Kingsbury and one was at Pooley.

At each park the visit was mainly prompted either by a previous visit or local knowledge on the days the surveys were conducted. Of the 640 responses to this question 50% said their visit was prompted by a previous visit and 30% said it was by local knowledge. Adverts and newspapers had only prompted a total of 5 people to visit. A few other options were given and included:

- 1) canal guide/passing by on the canal
- 2) camping and caravan club/site
- 3) cycling book
- 4) staying at adjacent B & B
- 5) Leamington Pump Rooms visitor centre

**Figure 5: How people like to find out information about the Parks and events**



Leaflets were chosen as the preferred method of finding information at Burton Dassett (76%), Pooley (59%) and Ryton Pools (52%). The web was preferred by respondents at Hartshill Hayes (51%) and Kingsbury Water Park (48%) although it should be noted that 47% of people at Kingsbury also chose leaflets. The least preferred method for all parks except Burton Dassett was posters.

Respondents were then asked to rate the facilities and staff at the parks. Overall the responses were very positive with 51 out of the 67 areas receiving a combined score of over 80% for very good or good. At individual parks Pooley received the highest ratings with the minimum combined score for very good or good being 82%. The lowest combined rating was for facilities for children at Burton Dassett (47%). Pooley also rated quite poorly for its Visitor Centre/Gift Shop with a combined total of 54%.

The number of toilets at Kingsbury was highlighted as an issue with comments about them including such aspects as a general lack of toilets for the size of the park, cleanliness and the need for refurbishment.

Figure 6 shows the combined totals for very good and good responses.

**Figure 6: Satisfaction with facilities, maintenance and staff**

	BD	HH	KWP	PF	RP
	Very good or good	Very good or good	Very good or good	Very good or good	Very good or good
	%	%	%	%	%
Signposts on the road	91	69	89	89	86
Signposts at the entrance	95	86	93	88	90
Information about things to do	68	79	81	84	83
Information to help you find your way around	74	71	75	82	84
Cleanliness of the site	82	88	91	97	94
Cleanliness of the toilets	100	77	79	94	69
Number of toilets	89	73	56	86	60
Facilities for children	47	95	84	92	88
General site maintenance	82	98	91	95	94
Service from site staff	84	93	93	98	91
Staffing levels	63	85	82	94	84
Information Centre/Gift Shop	X	54	86	89	86
Café	X	X	82	98	69
Overall enjoyment	86	100	97	96	97

There are Visitor/Information Centres at four of the country parks where the survey was conducted with the exception being Burton Dassett. Respondents were asked how often they visited - the results are shown in Figure 7. The majority at Hartshill Hayes, Kingsbury and Ryton Pools indicated that they visit occasionally whilst the majority at Pooley said they go every visit. This correlates with the results for the purpose of visiting the Visitor Centre at Pooley, i.e. a large number said it was to use the tea room.

**Figure 7: How often visitors go to the Visitor/Information Centres**

	Hartshill Hayes	Kingsbury	Pooley	Ryton Pools
	%	%	%	%
Every visit	21	29	62	40
Occasionally	63	60	36	52
Never	16	11	2	8

Respondents were also asked why they went into the Centres and these results are shown in Figure 8. At Kingsbury and Ryton Pools the café is located in a separate building hence this question was not included on the survey. The main reasons for visits to the Visitor/Information Centres varied between the four parks – obtaining information ranked highest at Kingsbury and Ryton Pools whilst for refreshments/tea ranked highest at Hartshill Hayes and Pooley. At the latter two parks obtaining information ranked second highest as the reason for the visit.

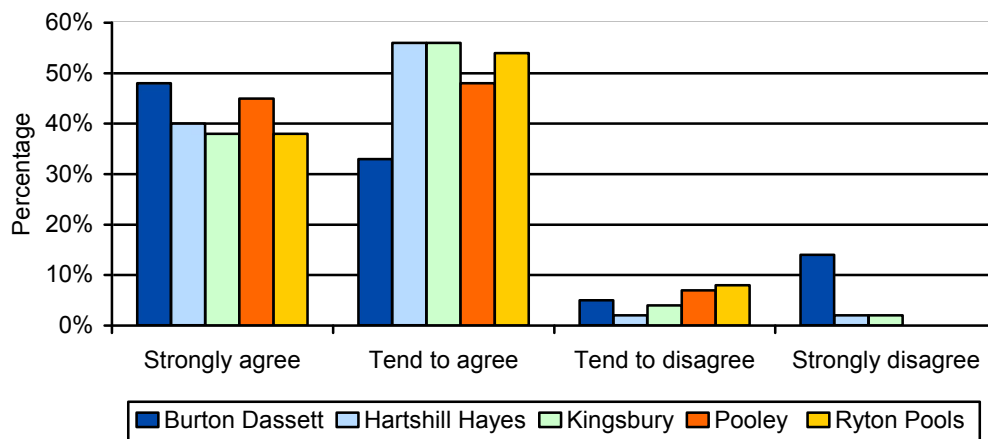
Visits to the centres were highest at Pooley with 98% saying they either went every visit or occasionally. Most respondents however stated they went occasionally.

**Figure 8: Why visitors went to the Visitor/Information Centre**

	Hartshill Hayes (37 responses)	Kingsbury (189 responses)	Pooley (198 responses)	Ryton Pools (129 responses)
	Number	Number	Number	Number
To buy a gift	3	95	23	57
To look at the displays	11	26	66	30
To obtain information	18	138	95	91
To book an event	0	9	10	17
For refreshments/tea	22	0	188	0

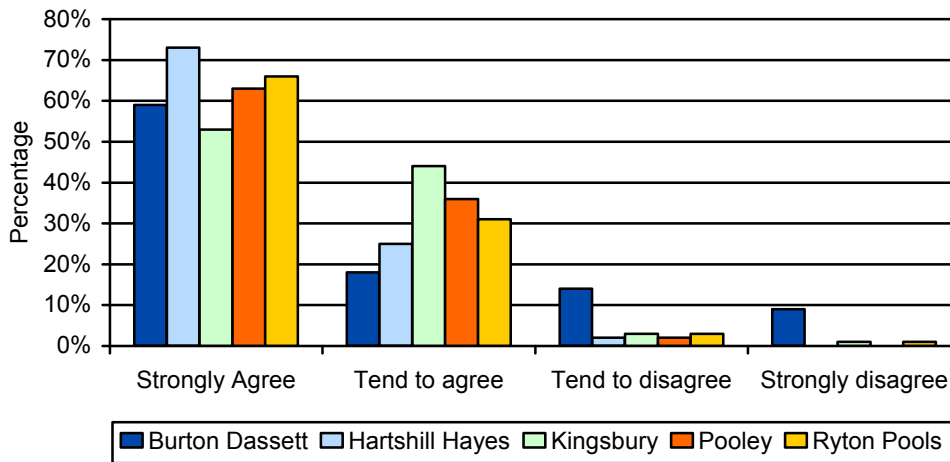
The questionnaire also asked if people thought the park should stay exactly as it is and whether they agreed or disagreed that it was value for money. Burton Dassett was the only park where the majority of respondents strongly agreed that it should stay exactly as it is. At the other 4 parks the majority tended to agree with responses ranging from 56% at Hartshill Hayes and Kingsbury to 48% at Pooley. The highest percentage (14%) who strongly disagreed were those at Burton Dassett.

**Figure 9: Should the Park stay as it is**

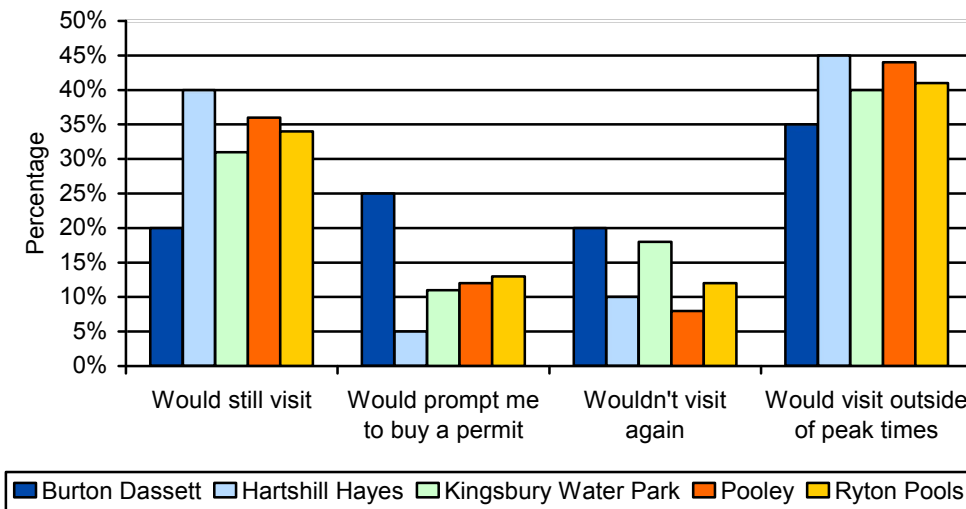


The vast majority (a minimum of 96%) either strongly agreed or tended to agree that Hartshill Hayes, Kingsbury, Pooley and Ryton Pools were value for money. The percentage dropped to just over three quarters at Burton Dassett. The survey went on to ask how people felt about charges increasing at peak times – at each park the majority stated that they would then visit out of peak hours.

**Figure 10: Is the Park value for money**



**Figure 11: How would respondents feel about charges increasing at peak times**



At Kingsbury the survey asked if people supported the suggestion that the road to Far Leys was closed to vehicles on a permanent basis. 89% of those that responded agreed. Comments made by those that disagreed focused mainly on access for the less able and suggestions were made that disabled badge holders should still be able to drive to the area. One respondent asked for benches to be installed on the route.

The reasons for visits to the parks were many and varied. Walking and picnicking with the family/friends and dog walking was popular as was use of the play areas. Use of the amenities, e.g. fishing, sailing, the train, was also mentioned as was taking part in organised activities. A general theme that appeared in many responses was enjoyment of fresh air in a safe and relaxed environment.

Many general comments were also made about the parks – these are included at Appendix A.