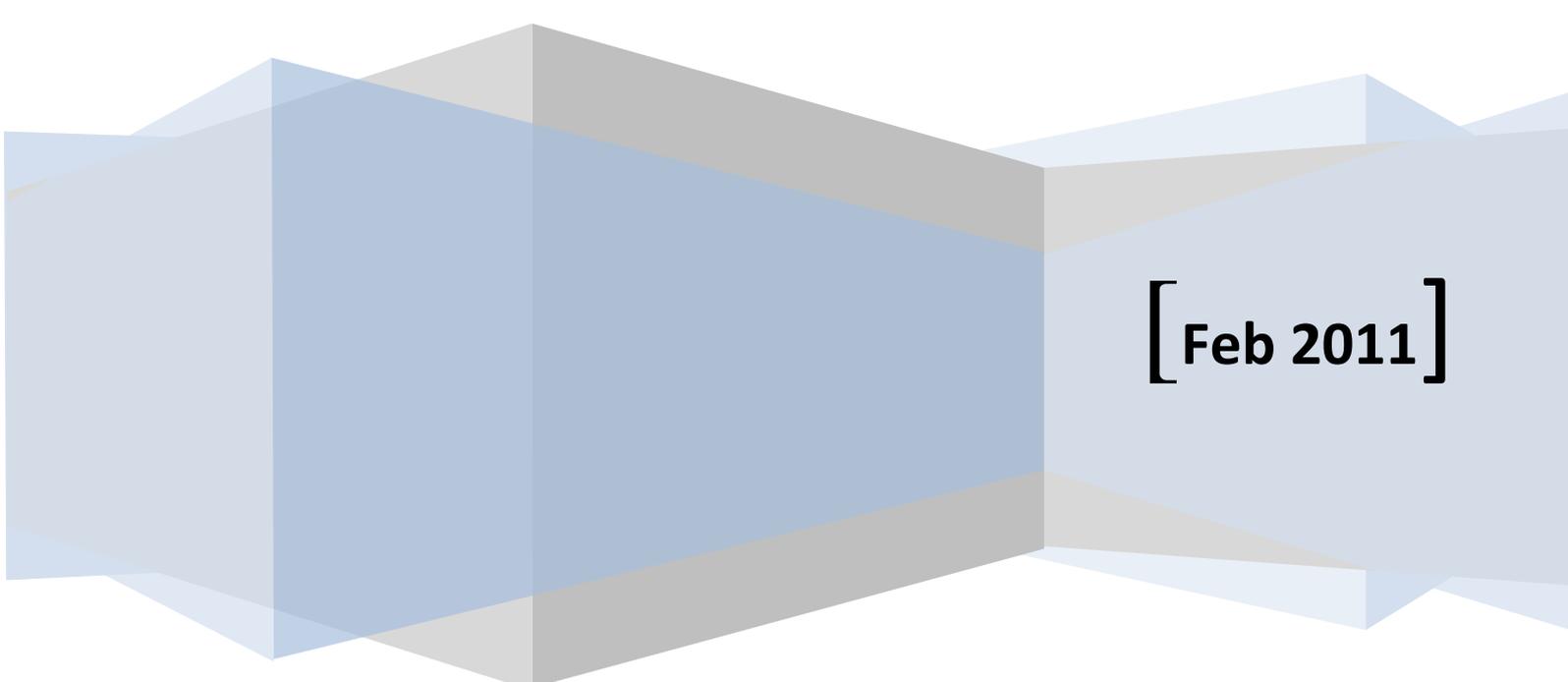


Buchan Development Partnership

Making the Most of Aden Country Park Questionnaire

[Summary of Findings]

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[Feb 2011]

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1. Executive Summary

The main themes that have been identified through the “Making the Most of Aden Country Park” questionnaire are as follows:

- **Popular Areas**

The areas of Aden Country Park which most respondents identified as being the areas visited most frequently were the Wooded Areas, Restaurant, and Open Spaces.

- **Improvement to Current Facilities**

The current provision of facilities and services within the park are in need of improvement. The most popular facilities identified are: the Restaurant/café, Aberdeenshire Farming Museum, Children’s Play Area, Craft Shop, and Lake.

- **Introduction of New Facilities**

The respondents identified that the introduction of new facilities would make the Park a more enjoyable place to visit. The most popular suggestions were: the introduction of Gift/Souvenir/Farm Shop, Community Gardens/Allotments, Path Improvements, Sculpture Trail, Introduction of Animals, and an Indoor Children’s Play Area.

- **Calendar of Events**

The questionnaire has helped to identify that the respondents would like to see more events at Aden Country Park and that they should be promoted better. The most popular events identified are: Craft Fairs, Music Events and Food Fairs.

- **Marketing & Promotion**

Through-out the questionnaire it has been identified that there is a lack of marketing and promotion of the Park, the facilities and services, and any events or activities. The most popular methods of promotion identified are the local newspapers and electronically through various websites.



1.1 Introduction

The “Making the Most of Aden Country Park” project’s main aim is to look at developing the asset of Aden Country Park, Mintlaw, making full use of its rich cultural and environmental resources to improve and sustain the Park for future generations.

As part of the community consultation process carried out by the Aden Development Worker, a paper based and online (Survey Monkey) questionnaire was made available throughout Aden Country Park and at several local events such as the Mintlaw Gala, Pipe Band Competition, Teddy Bears Picnic, and Vintage Tractor Day.

The main aims of the consultation process were to encourage the local community, visitors, non-visitors, users, and volunteers from across the Buchan area to:

- become partners in the decision making process
- help identify what areas of Aden Country Park are both successful and in need of improvement
- ascertain what the needs and gaps are
- gather opinions as to how Aden Country Park can be regenerated
- demonstrate that there is a need for Aden to be improved

In total 466 people, predominantly from the Buchan area completed the “Making the Most of Aden Country Park” paper based or online questionnaire.

The questionnaire was split up into five main topics, these were:

- Attendance – how often respondents visited Aden Country Park
- Facilities – what facilities respondents were aware of/used/needed improvement
- Activities & Events – what events/activities they had attended/would attend
- Marketing & Promotion – current & preferred methods of promotion
- About You – demographics about the respondents

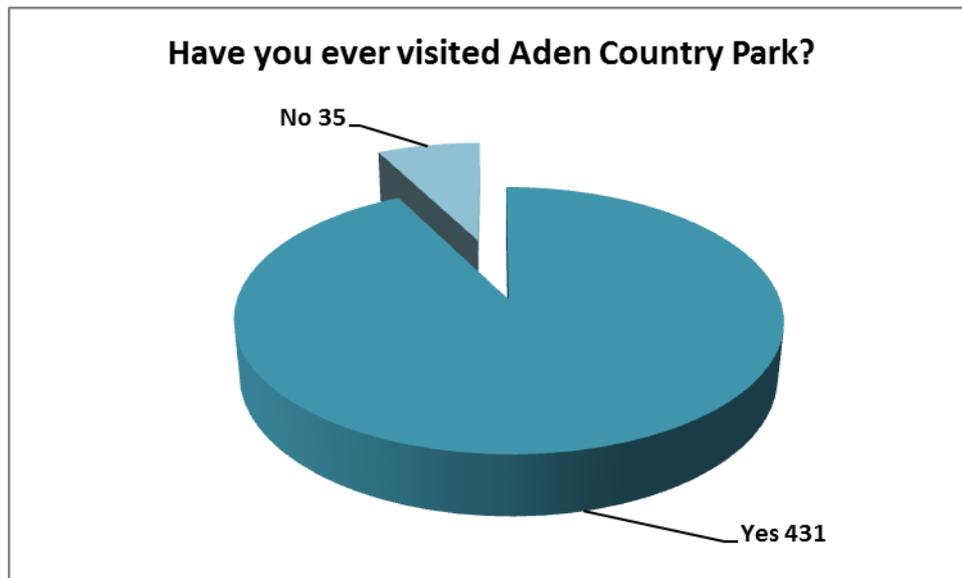
The results from the questionnaire are enclosed.



1.2 Attendance

Q1a. Have you ever visited Aden Country Park?

Firstly, to establish the popularity of Aden Country Park respondents were asked whether they had ever visited the Park.



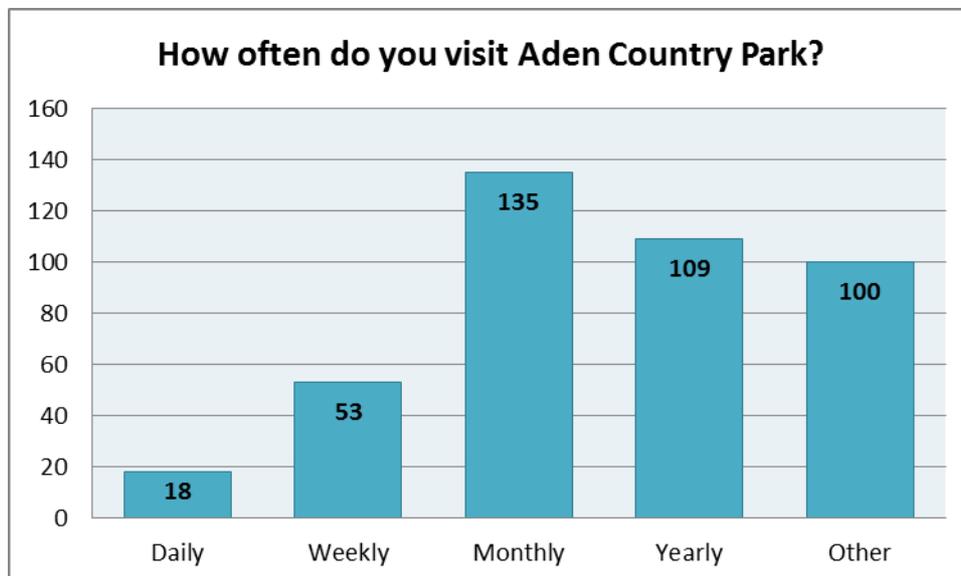
The majority (431) of respondents had visited Aden Country Park. In fact only 35 of respondents had never visited.

Some reasons for not visiting Aden Country Park included:

- *"Didn't know it existed"*
- *"Too far to travel"*
- *"Never heard of it"*
- *"I have never been in the area"*
- *"Knew about it - just never tempted to visit"*
- *"If I knew more about the facilities and events I would visit"*

Q1b. How often do you visit Aden Country Park?

Out of the high percentage of people who had visited Aden Country Park it was then important to establish the frequency of their visits. Respondents were therefore asked how often they visited - a choice of Daily, Weekly, Monthly, and yearly was provided.



The majority of respondents visited Aden monthly, yearly and other. 135 people went Monthly, 109 on a yearly basis and 100 people said other. Only 53 people visited weekly and a very small amount of people, 18, went daily.

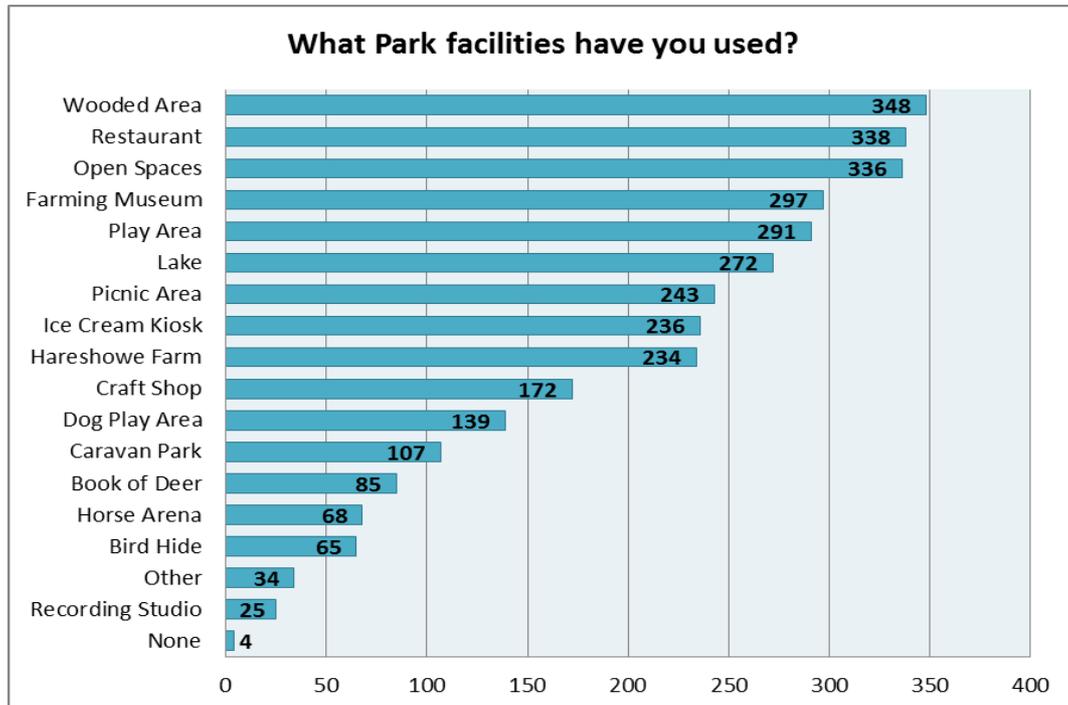
For those 100 people that didn't feel they fitted into these categories, and responded other, their responses included:

- *"Once in 20 years"*
- *"Visit every time I'm in the area"*
- *"Only when there are events on"*
- *"About 6 times a year"*
- *"Once in a blue moon"*
- *"On holiday"*
- *"Couple of times a year"*
- *"I have only visited once"*
- *"Regularly in summer, occasionally the rest of the year"*

1.3 Facilities

Q2. What Park facilities have you used?

Respondents were then asked to select which Park facilities they had actually used.



The results showed that the respondents had used a wide variety of the facilities available. The most popular facilities used were the:

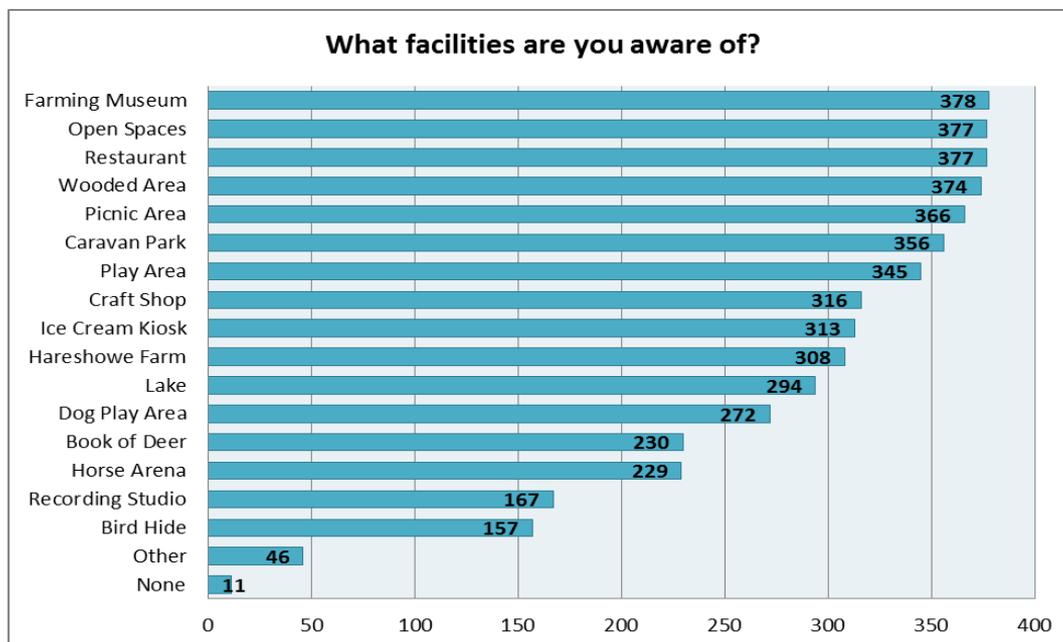
- Wooded Area with 348 votes
- Restaurant with 338 votes
- Open Spaces with 336 votes
- Farming Museum with 297 votes
- Children's Play Area with 291 votes
- Lake with 272 votes
- Picnic Area with 243 votes
- Ice Cream Kiosk with 236 votes &
- Hareshowe Farm with 234 votes

The facilities used the least were:

- Horse Arena with 68 votes
- Bird Hide with 65 votes &
- The Recording Studio with 25 votes

Q3. What facilities are you aware of?

Respondents may well have used a range of different Park facilities, but it was essential to discover if they knew about all resources available to them



The majority of respondents were aware of the key landmarks in the park i.e. 378 people were aware of the Aberdeenshire Farming Museum, 377 people aware of the Open Spaces, 377 aware of the Restaurant, 374 of the Wooded Area, 366 Picnic Area, 356 Caravan Park, and 345 people were aware of the Children's Play Area.

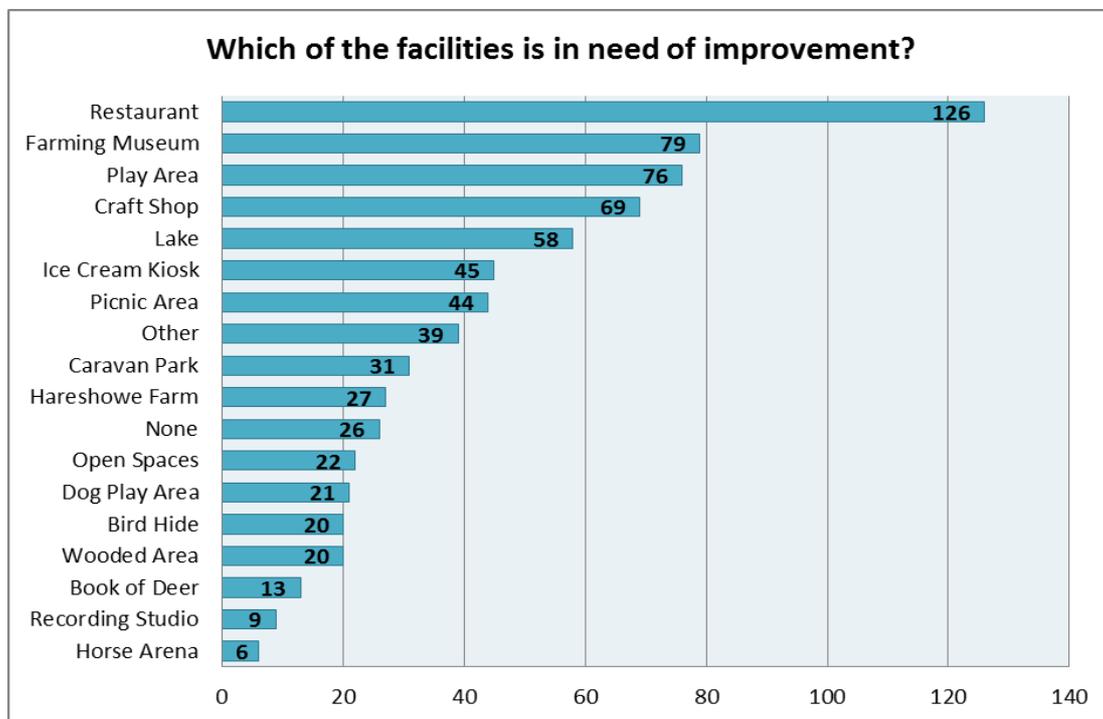
The Facilities which respondents were most unaware of were the Recording Studio with 167 votes, and the Bird Hide with 157 votes.

Some additional popular facilities that respondents were aware of that were absent from the list provided included:

- "Bike trails"
- "Sensory/Carers Garden"
- "Aden Theatre"
- "Balance Crystals"
- "Arboretum" and the
- "Mansion House"

Q4. Which of the existing facilities do you think need to be improved?

The next vitally important question was to establish which of the current facilities the respondents felt needed improvement.



With a high majority, the park Restaurant/café with 126 votes was identified as the facility most in need of improvement. Second to the Restaurant was the Aberdeenshire Farming Museum with 79 people identifying it in need of improvement. Close behind are the Children’s Play Area with 76 votes, Craft Shop with 69 votes, and Lake with 58 votes.

Facilities identified in need of improvement also included:

- *“All paths need improving”*
- *“Better signage throughout park”*
- *“Toilet blocks need updating”*
- *“More advertising of facilities”*
- *“Museum & café buildings are dark and unwelcoming”*
- *“More toddler swings”*
- *“The Aden Theatre is attractive but has become very expensive”*
- *“Longer opening times for all facilities”*

Q5. What additional facilities would you like to see at Aden Country Park?

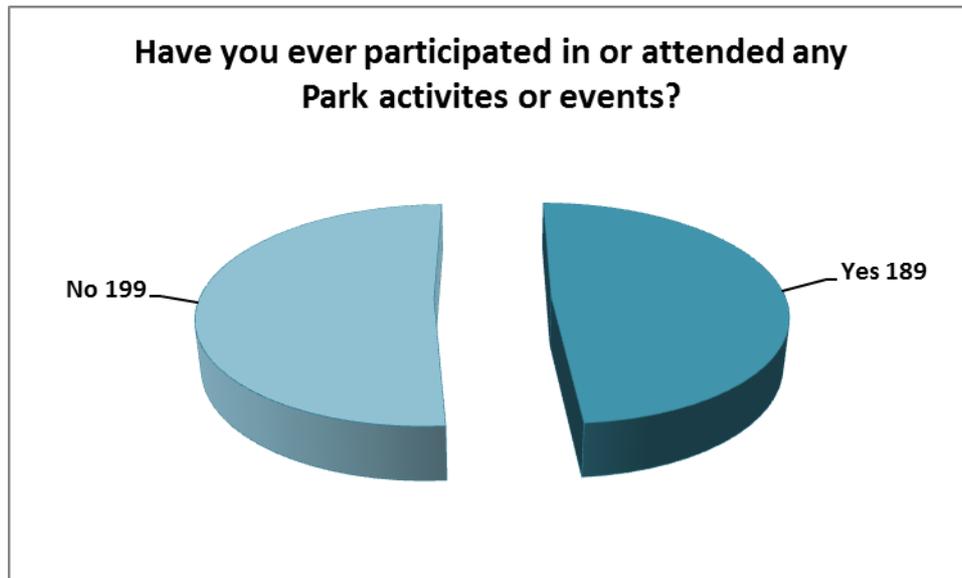
Some of the most common responses as to what additional facilities people would like to see at Aden Country Park included:

- *“Paths need to be better signposted, mapped & promoted”*
- *“Indoor soft play area for babies & toddlers”*
- *“Gift shop selling local produce”*
- *“Farm animals/small zoo/children’s farm”*
- *“Corporate Facilities - conferences, weddings, quad bikes, clay pigeon shooting”*
- *“Horse/tractor drawn cart tours around park”*
- *“Sculpture park/trail”*
- *“Proper arts/crafts shop with local products & demonstrations”*
- *“More facilities for young people - Activity Park / skateboarding ramp”*
- *“Covered area for picnics/concerts”*
- *“Gift shop for children”*
- *“Dedicated BBQ area(s)”*
- *“More outdoor seating / toilets / bins”*
- *“Boating pond / putting green / paddling pool / Maze”*
- *“Plant & shrub sales, nursery, gardening advice”*
- *“Souvenirs for coach trips or holiday makers”*
- *“Cinema or drive in movie theatre”*
- *“Bouncy Pillows/trampolines”*
- *“Pitch n Putt/crazy golf”*
- *“Some interpretation of local estates i.e. Aden (Russell); Pitfour (Ferguson); Stuartfield (Burnett Stuart)”*
- *“Open the walled garden”*
- *“Working farm horses”*
- *“Better choice for kids in Café”*

1.4 Activities & Events

Q6. Have you ever participated or attended any Park activities or events?

Question six establishes if any of the respondents have ever participated or attended any Park activities or events.



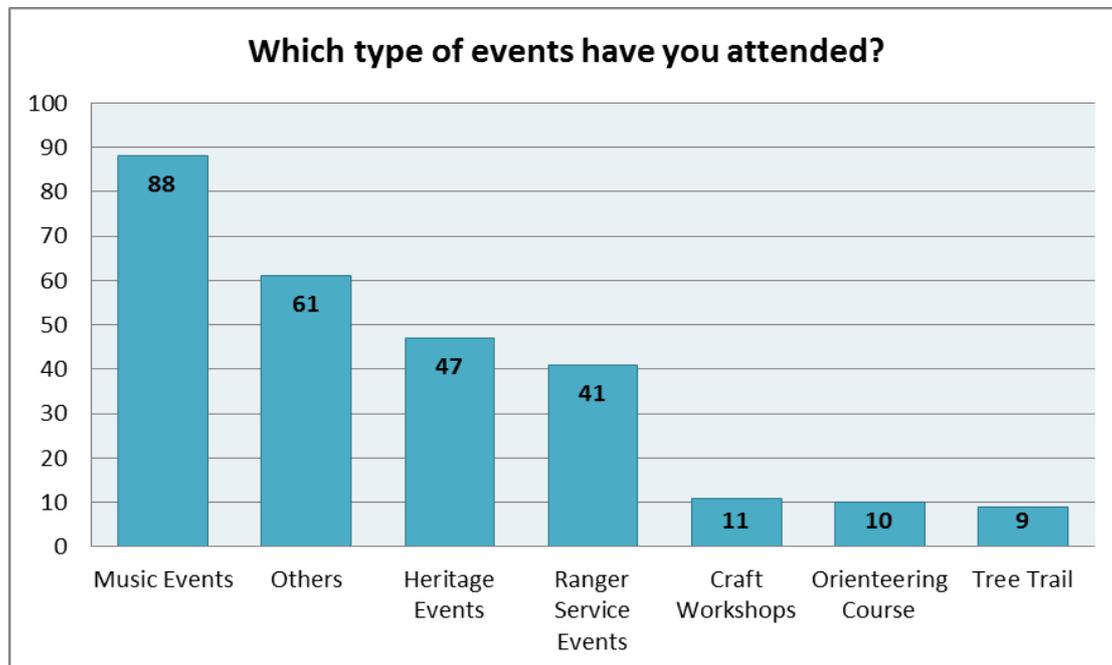
With a narrow majority, 199 of respondents said no that they had not attended or participated in any Park activities or events. However 189 of respondents said yes they had participated or attended Park activities or events.

Comments about the current provision of events and activities included:

- *“More events with interest to local people”*
- *“I'd have participated in existing activities had I known they were on offer”*
- *“I wasn't aware of what exists but happily travel to Dundee and St Andrews parks with good events”*
- *“Better publicity of events needed”*

Q7. Which type of events have you attended or participated in?

The respondents that had participated or attended Park activities were then asked which types of activities they had participated in.



From the event types offered, most majority of respondents, 88, had attended Music related events. A close second, third, and fourth were Other events with 61 votes, Heritage Events with 47 votes, and Ranger Service Events with 41 votes.

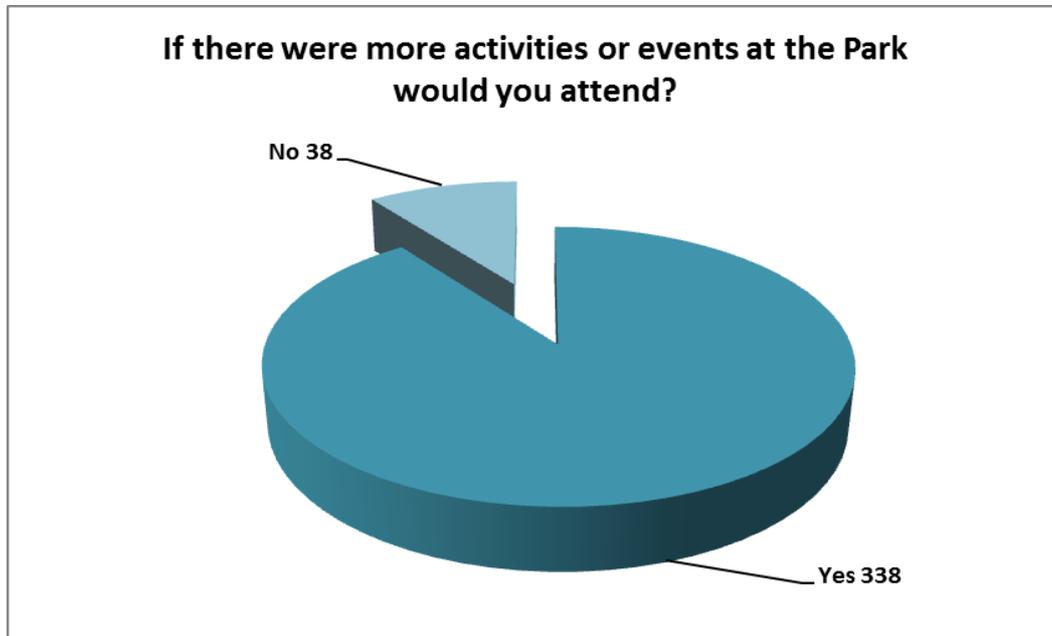
Less people attended or participated in the Craft Workshops (11 votes), Orienteering Course (10 votes), and Tree Trail (9 votes). However this could be because of lack of information and promotion of these events.

The "Other" types of events identified included:

- "Book of Deer events"
- "Horse show events"
- "Pipe Band Competition"
- "Art exhibitions"
- "Treasure Hunt"
- "Kids in the Park event" and the
- "Vintage Tractor Day"

Q8. If there were more activities or events at the Park would you attend?

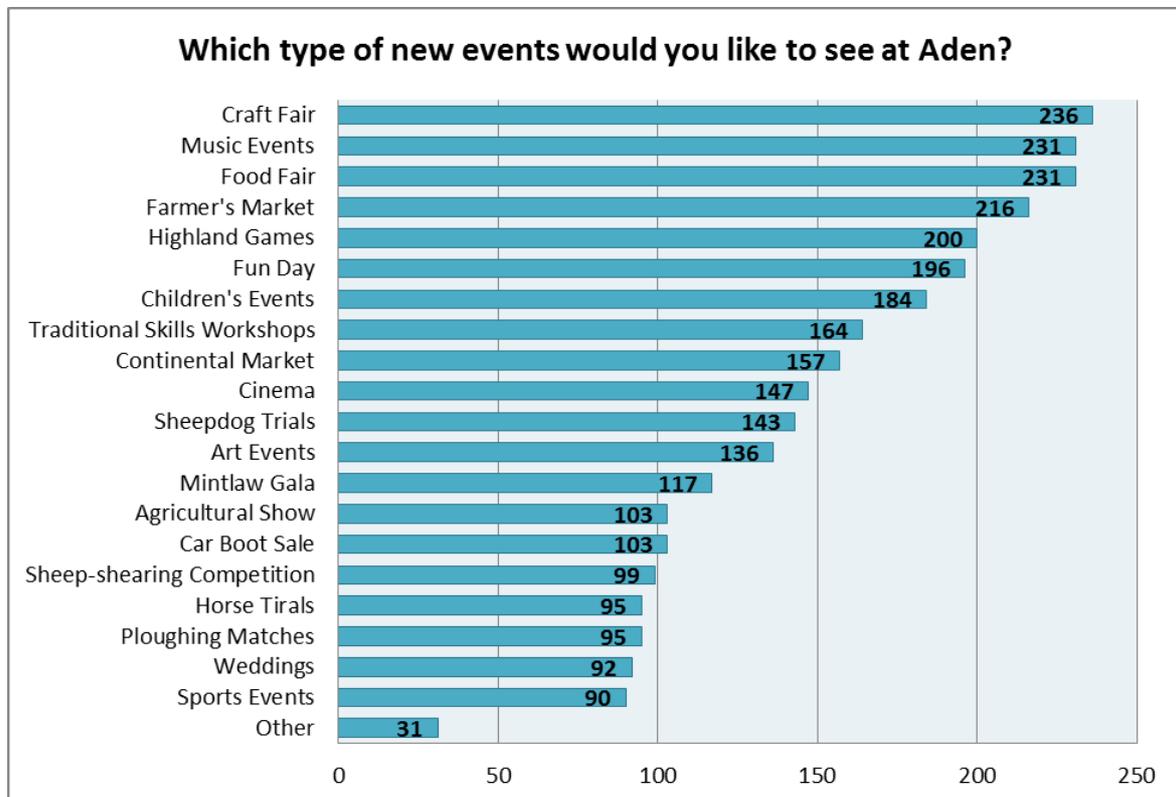
The respondents were then asked if they would actually attend activities or events if more were put on.



The vast majority of respondents, 338, said that if there was more activities or events at the Park then, yes, they would attend. Only a small proportion, 38 respondents, said no, they would not attend any events or activities.

Q9. What type of new events/activities would you like to see at Aden?

It was then important to establish which types of new events and activities the respondents would like to see.



Most events seemed to be popular, however the events which the majority of people wanted to see and attend were:

Craft Fairs with 236 votes, Music Events with 231 votes, Food Fairs with 231 votes, Farmers Market with 216 votes, Highland Games with 200 votes, Fun Days with 196 votes, Children's Events with 184 votes. Other popular events included Traditional Skills Workshops, Continental Markets, Cinema, Sheepdog Trials, and Art Events.

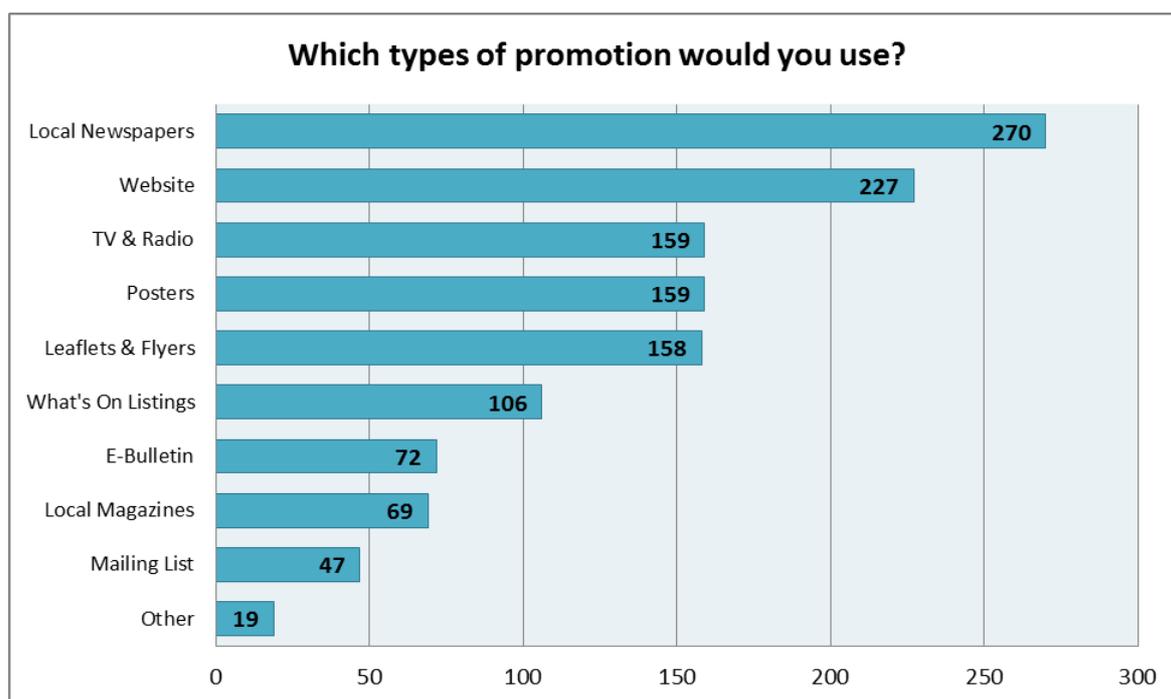
Additional events that the respondents would like to see included:

- *"Vintage Car & Bike Shows"*
- *"10K race & 1K children's race"*
- *"Open-air theatre"*
- *"Demonstration of trades e.g. a blacksmith in place dressed up and doing the work"*
- *"Historical Exhibition"*
- *"Children's Workshops"*
- *"A Circus / fun fair / family fun day"*
- *"Night Walks / Stargazing"*
- *"Country skills i.e. dry steen dyking; sheep shearing; cloutie rug making etc"*

1.5 Marketing & Promotion

Q10. Which types of promotion would you use to find out about Aden?

It was then important to determine how individuals would like to find out about Aden Country Park and any associated events and activities.



The most popular methods of promotion identified were Local Newspapers with 270 votes, closely followed by Websites with 227 votes.

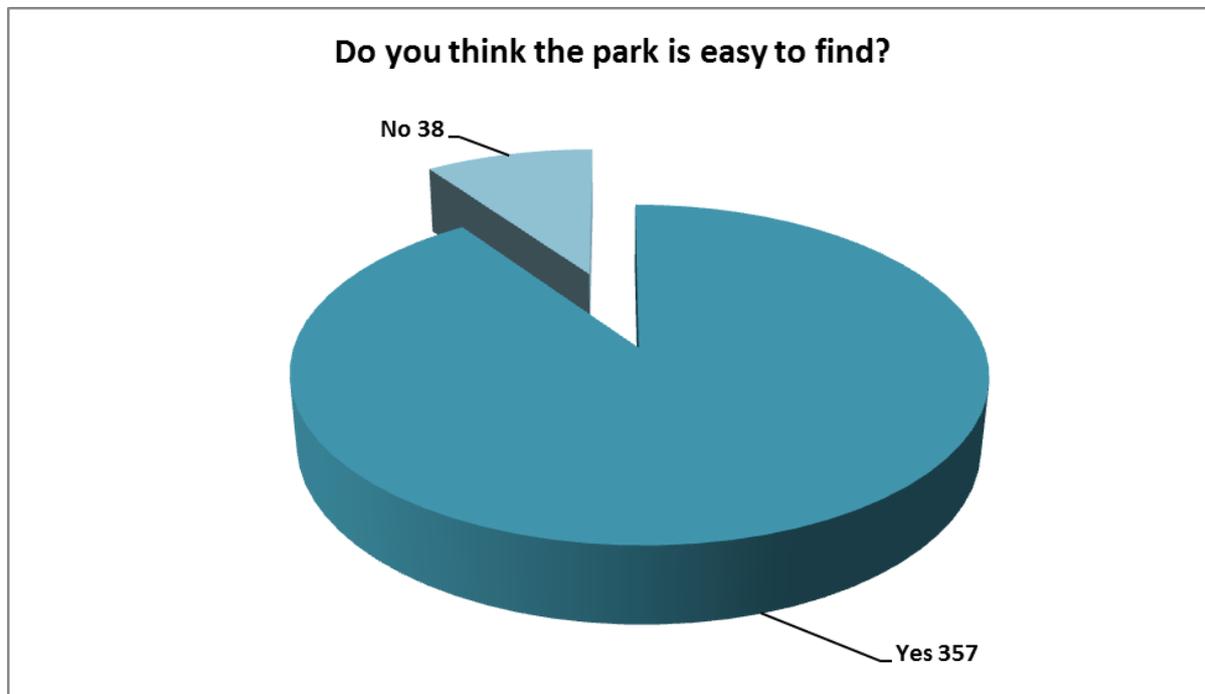
TV & Radio, Posters, Leaflets & Flyers, and What's On Listings were also popular ways to promote Aden Country Park and any associated events and activities.

Specific examples of promotion identified included:

- Newspapers – *"Buchan Observer"* & *"Press & Journal"*
- Magazines - *"Raring 2 Go"* & *"BDP Magazine"*
- Websites – *"Aden Country Park website"*, *"Netmums"* & *"Facebook"*
- Radio - *"Waves"* *"Original 106"* & *"Northsound 1"*
- Other - *"Friends of Aden Country Park"*

Q11. Do you think Aden Country Park is easy to find?

The next important promotional tool respondents were asked about was whether the external roadsigns were adequate at directing people to Aden Country Park.



The majority of respondents, with 357 votes, said yes Aden Country Park is easy to find. Only 38 respondents said the Park wasn't easy to find by following the roadsigns.

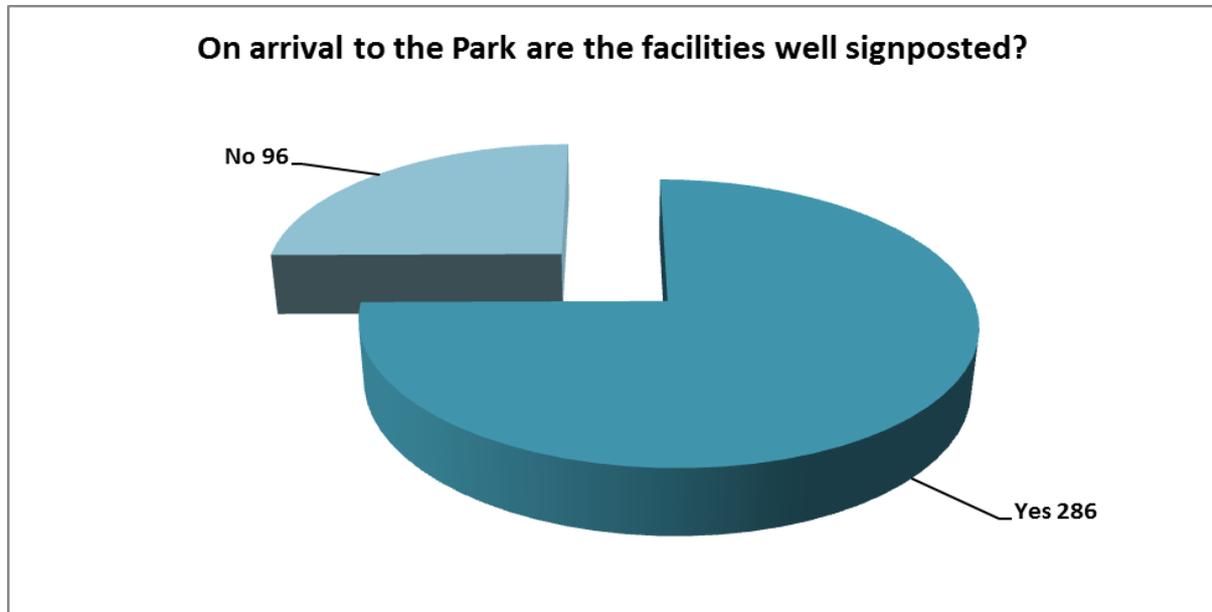
On initial glance the yes votes is surprisingly high, but when you then discover that the majority of people who answered the questionnaires were from the local area then this perhaps explains these figures.

Of the 38 respondents that said no, some comments were:

- *"Road signs need cleaning"*
- *"Better signs required at Mintlaw roundabout"*
- *"More road-signs required at Ellon, Peterhead, Fraserburgh & Toll of Birness junction"*

Q12. On arrival to the Park are the facilities and services well signposted?

The respondents were then asked to comment on the internal signage around Aden Country Park and whether the facilities and services were well signposted.



The majority of respondents, with 286 votes, said yes the facilities were well signposted. Only 96 people said that the internal Park signage was not good.

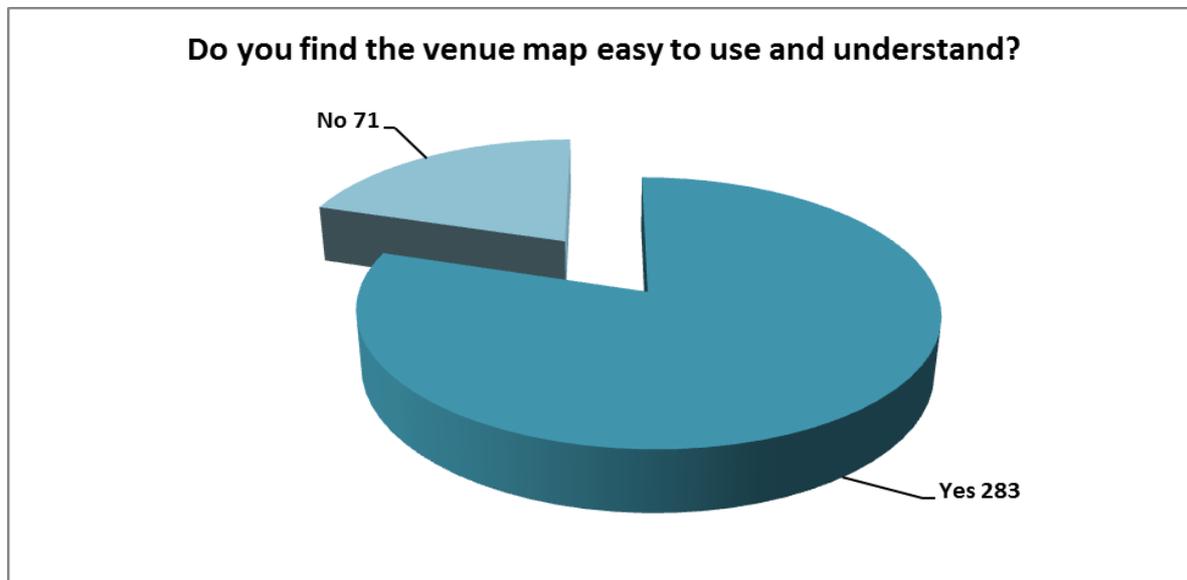
Again the fact that the majority of people questioned were from the local area may mean that they have visited the park before and already know where the facilities are situated

Of the respondents 96 respondents that didn't think the facilities were well signposted, some comments were:

- *"Signage needs improvement"*
- *"A sign for a contact person to report vandalism would be good"*
- *"Signage looks old and untidy"*
- *"Improve signs for walks within park"*
- *"Play Area signs need painting"*
- *"Couldn't find some of the tree trail signs"*

Q13. Do you find the venue map easy to use and understand?

To ascertain the ease of use of the venue map, the respondents were asked if the Aden Country Park venue map was easy to use and understand.



283 respondents voted that yes, the Aden Country Park venue map was easy to use and understand. Only 71 of respondents disagreed.

Of the respondents that disagreed that the map was easy to use and understand, the following comments were made:

- *"The map is very confusing"*
- *"Map not easy to use but the staff are very informative"*
- *"Where are they?"*
- *"Map is out of date"*
- *"Unsure about position of map for disabled folk"*
- *"Map on board not orientated to direction on ground"*

1.6 Additional Comments

Q14. Do you have any other comments about Aden Country Park which haven't been covered previously?

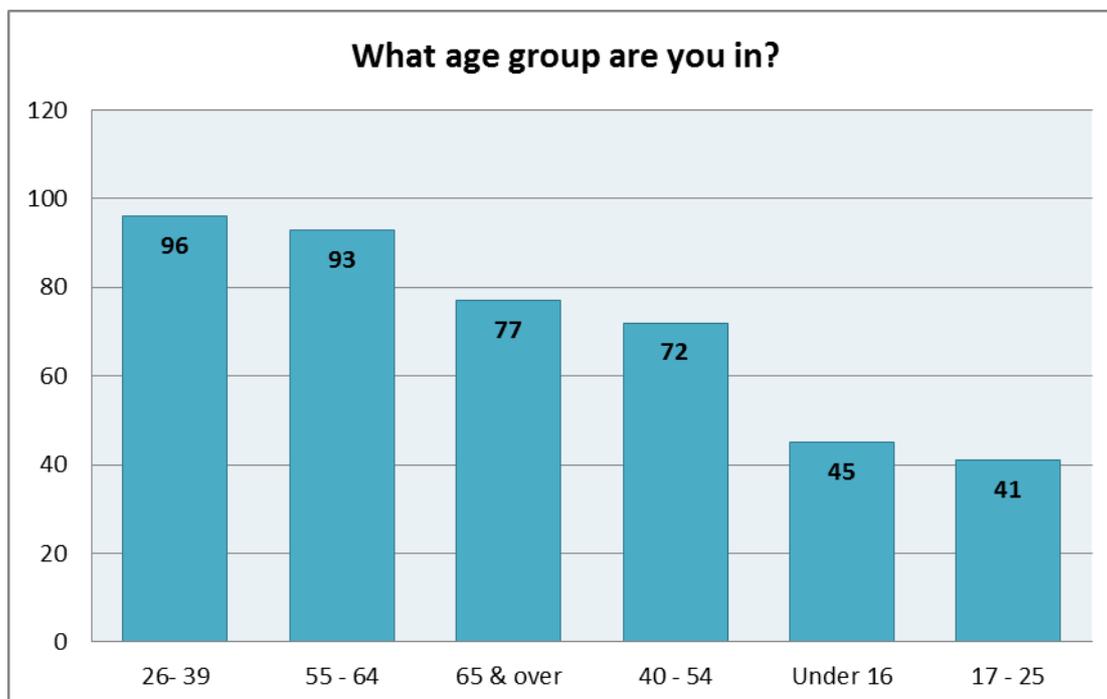
It was then essential to provide a space where the respondents could raise any points which they felt hadn't been covered in other parts of the questionnaire. Some responses included:

- *"Toilets need better management - also more throughout park i.e. near Play Area"*
- *"Needs better advertising"*
- *"It's a bit boring"*
- *"Building maintenance is a disgrace – external painting of buildings required"*
- *"Great resource that could be developed more"*
- *"Toilets close at 4.30pm - but park open till 10 pm"*
- *"Where is the wildlife centre?"*
- *"Improve signs for walks within park"*
- *"Tidy Park, well kept, safe feeling about it"*
- *"Farming Museum is out-dated, exhibits need changing, and there is no disabled access to upstairs area of museum"*
- *"Car park should be free"*
- *"Advertise further afield - Angus/Tayside"*
- *"Campsite map is b&w – useless"*
- *"Lake in a dreadful state"*
- *"Staff did not seem to know what other areas of the park where doing..."*
- *"Museum and café are focal point and should be open all year round"*
- *"Beautiful Park - but needs more colour – i.e. flower beds"*
- *"Paths to villages need better promotion"*
- *"More baby swings and items suitable for younger children"*
- *"A lovely quiet area for a walk"*
- *"There should be more ranger events"*
- *"Café is too dark; too expensive, needs decorating/enlarging and the toilets resemble an Australian Dunny!!"*
- *"Hugh potential but severely underused"*
- *"A paper map for walks would be good"*
- *"Would use more if more indoor children activities"*
- *"Kids play area very poorly maintained"*
- *"Book of Deer needs more space"*
- *"A wonderful facility that needs to be used more"*
- *"Lucky to have it on our doorstep"*

1.7 About You

Q15. What age group are you in?

To ascertain the age demographics of visitors to Aden Country Park, the respondents were asked which age category they were in.

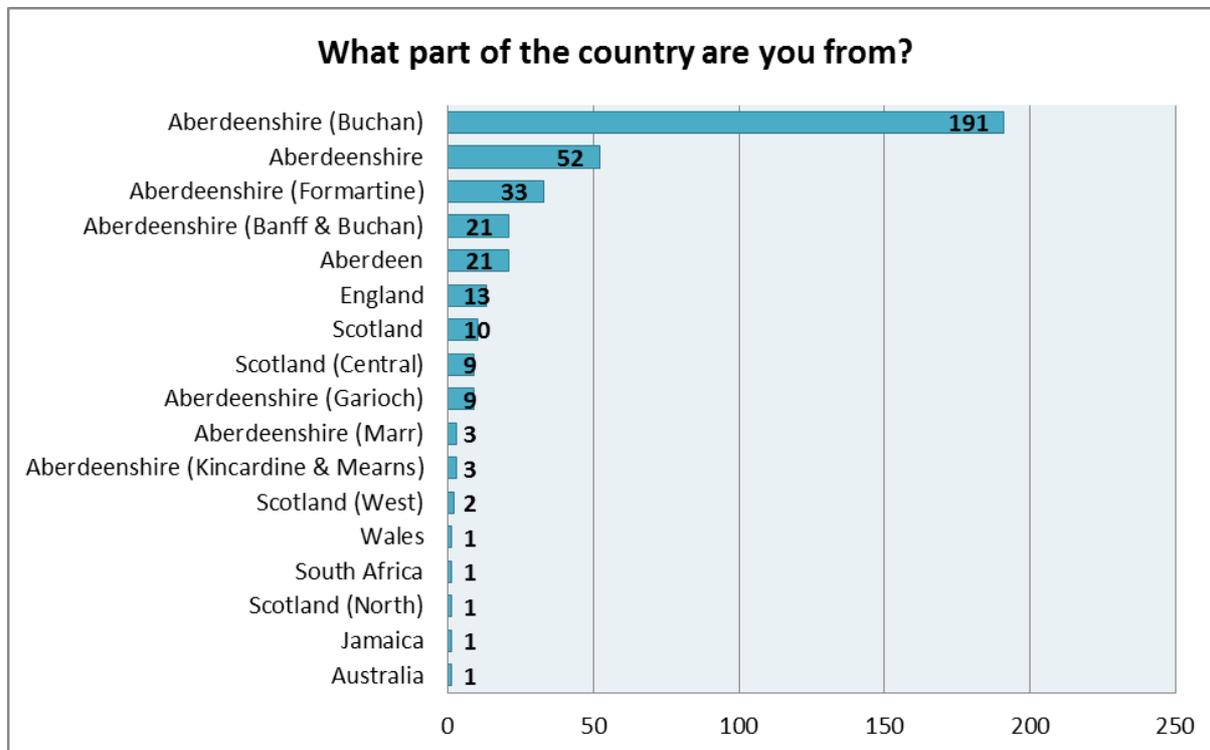


It is clear from the graph above that the respondents age ranges were quite well spread out. The majority of respondents, 96, were in the 26-39 age bracket, closely followed by 93 respondents in the 55-64 age bracket.

The 65 & Over bracket was next, with 77 respondents in that range. 72 respondents were in the 40-54 bracket, 45 in the Under 16s, and 41 respondents were in the 17-25 age range.

Q16. What part of the country are you from?

To get a further understanding of the types of visitors to Aden Country Park, the respondents were asked what part of the country they were from.



With a huge majority it is clear from the graph that a very large percentage of respondents were from the local Buchan area, in fact 191 respondents were from the local area.

It is also interesting to note that the remaining popular parts of the country are from the local geographical area. This may reflect the current marketing and promotion of Aden Country Park, its facilities, events and activities. The passing tourist market does not seem to be apparent from the figures, so perhaps any new marketing and promotion strategy should target this audience, along with providing the existing local audience with more information.