

# St Thomas' Long Burial Ground: Consultation report on proposals to put in a new pedestrian gate on Well Street

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## **Introduction**

The report presents a summary of the responses received from the consultation on St Thomas' Long Burial Ground and the proposal to install a new pedestrian entrance gate on Well Street.

The consultation was live for 6 weeks from 13 March to 30 April 2023. However there was also pre-engagement with local young people in December 2022.

## **Background**

St Thomas' Long Burial Ground is a small rectangular green space/park on the edge of the Frampton Park Estate and borders St Thomas' Place, which is a slim alleyway containing a row of terraced housing down one side facing the park railings. The houses are a combination of private ownership and Council homes. There are currently three entrances halfway down St Thomas' place, but they are not always all open each day. So anyone entering the park has to walk down the alleyway past the private housing, which although there is street lighting, can be dark in the evenings. The other entrance is at the rear and opens out onto St Thomas's Square and Loddiges Road.

The park has around five old graves inside the grounds, a handful of wooden benches and some mature unpollarded trees. There is an old pathway that leads from the rear entrance and stops halfway in the middle. Part of the proposal is to create a pathway leading from the new entrance on Well Street to join up with the existing path and create a route through the space that links the two gates together.

In autumn 2022, the Consultation Team was asked to consult with the local community including residents, businesses, and park users on the proposal to install the new pedestrian gate.

The aims and objectives of the consultation were:

- to seek people's views on whether they supported this work
- to understand any concerns they may have to the proposal if they oppose them
- to find out if there are any issues around the park that we should be aware of and take into consideration that could inform the work.
- to gather any general feedback on the park and how local people used it.

It should be noted that due to the size of the park, project funding and limited scope to the work that can be undertaken, we did not ask questions around what improvements people would like to see in the space, other than basic things like planting and minor landscaping improvements, in order to manage expectations.

## **Consultation & Engagement Approach**

A summary explaining the purpose of the consultation and the online questionnaire were placed on the Council's online consultation platform, Citizen Space:

<https://consultation.hackney.gov.uk/chief-executives/st-thomas-long-burial-ground>

Consultees were also able to request a paper copy of the questionnaire to be posted to them by contacting the Consultation Team email address or by calling and a member would post them a copy.

Due to the size of this small green space, its usage and proximity to other green spaces including St Thomas' Square Gardens, the hidden green space around the corner, London Fields and Victoria Park, it was decided to keep the consultation hyper-local to the community directly surrounding the space rather than borough-wide. There is no park user group, gardening group or nearby stakeholder such as a local school who used the space on any regular basis. So the communications channels that were used were kept to an appropriate level that also took into consideration the feeling that as a local green space the main focus should be on hearing from the local community.

Therefore the following communication channels were used to gather people's feedback on the proposals:

- Weatherproof posters were tied to the railings at all the existing entrances to the green space as well as on the Well Street side:
  - ☐ St Thomas Long Burial Ground survey 2 A3 poster
- A4 and A3 posters were given to the Chair of the Frampton Park Estate TRA to place in noticeboards across the estate encouraging residents to take part.
- A poster was placed in the window of the nearby cafe on Well Street. Other local businesses along Well Street were also approached about putting up posters. Most of them did not have space to put them up inside or outside the shops.
- Attendance by the Consultation Lead at the Frampton Park Estate TRA meeting on 15 March 2023 to present the proposals to the TRA and residents,

answer any questions, take note of any concerns and also promote the consultation via any internal communications networks that they had.

- Promotion of the consultation was included in the Frampton Park Estate printed newsletter, produced by The Council's Regeneration Communications Officer, that was circulated after the TRA meeting to over 1000 properties.
- Attendance by the Consultation Lead at the Hackney Quest youth club in the nearby Frampton Park Baptist Church on 9 December 2022. A poster was also put up in the Church which acts as a community hub with a cafe.
- Two pop-up engagement stalls on Well Street in front of the space were held on 29 March from 2pm - 6pm and 12 April from 8.30am - 12pm, giving people the opportunity to complete the surveys online or on paper, as well as to speak with residents to gather their views.
- Targeted door knocking with residents on St Thomas' Place, was carried out as part of the above face to face engagement opportunities to speak with the residents most impacted by the proposals.
- Ward councillors, Cllr Wrout and Cllr Joseph were briefed about the consultation and asked to promote it. Cllr Nicholson, Cabinet Member for delivery, inclusive economy & regeneration was also made aware of the consultation.

## **Response rate**

There were 130 responses to the online and paper copies of the survey. This total also includes the focus group session with young people from the Hackney Quest youth club at the Frampton Park Baptist Church on 9 December 2022. The young people who attended were asked the same questions as the survey so their responses were added to the data set in order to make analysis and feedback easier.

# **Executive summary**

The executive summary provides a synopsis of the **130 responses** to the consultation. The raw data of all the responses and comments can be found [here](#).

## **Resident profile:**

- *The majority of respondents, 75 people (57.7%), lived locally within walking distance to the green space.*
  - This was followed by 27 respondents (20.8%) who lived in St Thomas' Place, the street most impacted by any changes to the space.
  - 17 respondents (13.1%), said they lived on the Frampton Park Estate, which is the large Council estate that borders the burial ground.
- This shows that we had a good response rate from the local community to what was a hyper-local piece of engagement.

## **Summary feedback:**

### **Please tell us how you use this green space?**

- *The largest response was from 28 respondents (20.7%), who said they don't currently use the green space.*
  - This was followed by 22 people (16.3%), who said that they use the space as a cut through to get to another location. This is borne out by the comments people gave.
  - Of those who did use the space, there was an equal number, 21 people (15.6%), who said they went there to walk their dog as well as those who said they went to just sit and spend time in the park.

### **We are looking to create a new entrance to St Thomas' Long Burial Ground, to make it easier to walk through the green space. Would you support this?**

- *The majority of respondents, 90 people (69.2%), supported the proposal to put in a new gate on Well Street.*
  - 34 respondents opposed the work. Of those 14 respondents live in St Thomas' Place, 13 respondents said they lived locally within walking distance and 5 live on Frampton Park Estate.
  - 6 were undecided.
- Of the 27 respondents who live in St Thomas' Place, who potentially would be most impacted by the proposals, 14 people, (51.9%), opposed the proposal while 11 people, (40.7%) supported it. 2 people were undecided.

- **The top three comments from people who support the proposals were::**

- It would make the park more accessible and encourage people to use it if it felt open, welcoming and less like a private park. It would also make people feel safer.
- It would be easier for people in wheelchairs and mobility scooters to go into the park rather than use the alleyway, so it's less of a squeeze.
- It would be greatly improved with more flower beds, seating, more regular ground maintenance and general monitoring to keep an eye on ASB and drug use.

- **The top three comments from people who oppose the proposals were:**

- That it would exacerbate the existing ASB and drug issues in the park, especially with the homeless hostel nearby. Increased disturbance in the park would also impact residents in St Thomas' Place the most. The Consultation Officer spoke with two local Police Officers who wanted to be informed if a new entrance was installed so they can monitor it more regularly if needed.
- That the space would become a cut-through for people, making it too busy and therefore lose its quiet and calmness which is one of the most important and attractive characteristics of the space. Some people used the space as a place to reflect and help with their mental health. A few people also mentioned that as a burial ground it should be respected.
- That there were enough existing entrances to the park and that it would be better to increase people's awareness of those. Therefore it was not the best use of public money.

### **Recommendation:**

It should also be noted that a small number of people are strongly opposed to the new entrance, and a handful of residents in St Thomas' Place feel that they should have been consulted before the Council went out to public consultation.

It may be a good idea to invite all residents living in St Thomas' Place to a separate meeting to listen to their concerns as potentially the most impacted community, so they feel heard and any mitigations considered.

Or perhaps send a letter to the residents acknowledging their concerns, informing them of the next steps after the consultation, and opening up a dialogue to help get their buy-in to prevent any further opposition.

### **Equalities summary:**

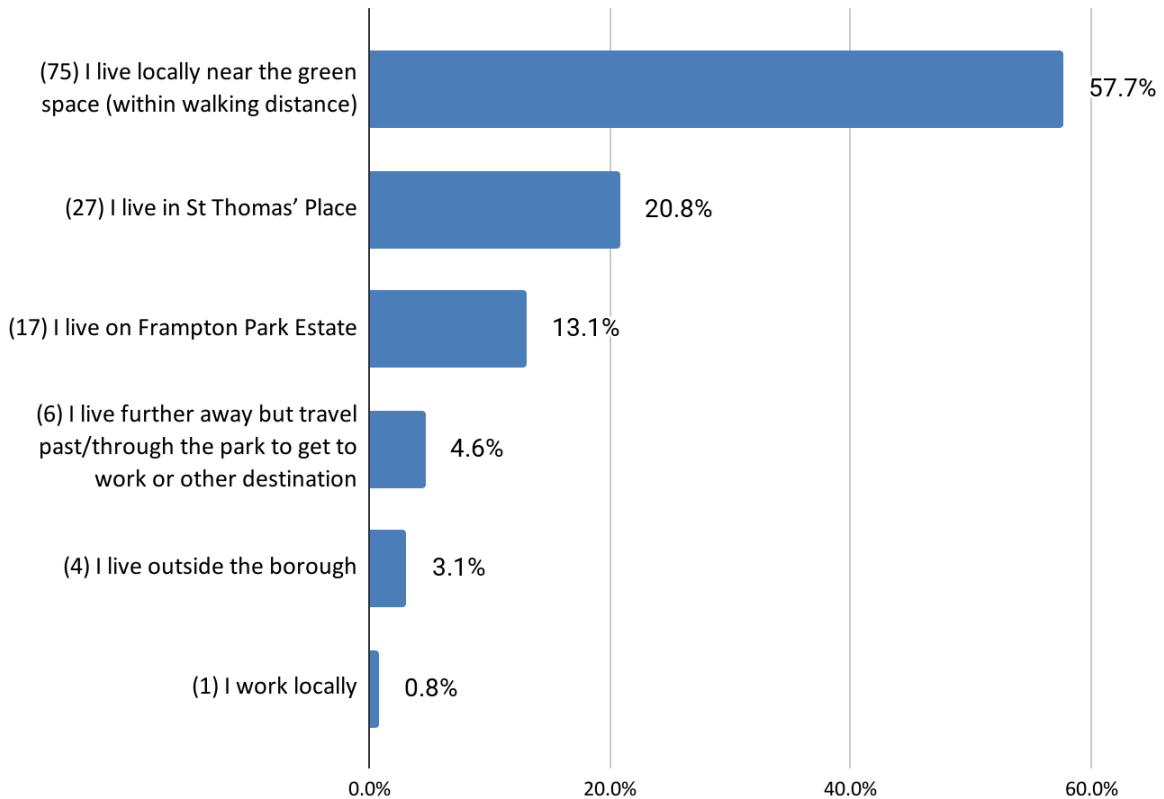
- The number of male to female responses was very close with 57 respondents stating they were male and 53 female. 3 preferred not to say.
- The group with the highest number of respondents was, 25-34 (27 people), closely followed by 45-54 (23 people), 55-64 (17 people), 35-44 (13 people) There were also 13 young people between 14-24.
- The majority of respondents stated they were White or White British (65), followed by Black or Black British (16), other ethnic group (12), mixed background (9) and Asian or Asian British (5).
- The majority of respondents stated that they were atheist or had no religious beliefs (54), followed by Christian (25), Muslim (6), Hindu and Secular beliefs (1 each).
- The majority of respondents stated they were heterosexual (65 people), followed in much smaller numbers by bisexual (6 people), and gay man (5 people)
- The tenure with the highest number of respondents was those who have a home being bought on a mortgage (29), followed by rented privately (22), rented from the Council (16), owned outright (10), rented from a Housing Association (7), don't know (6), shared ownership (4) and leaseholder from the Council (2).



# Overview of results

**Base rate:** There were 130 responses to the consultation survey. The results by question are as follows:

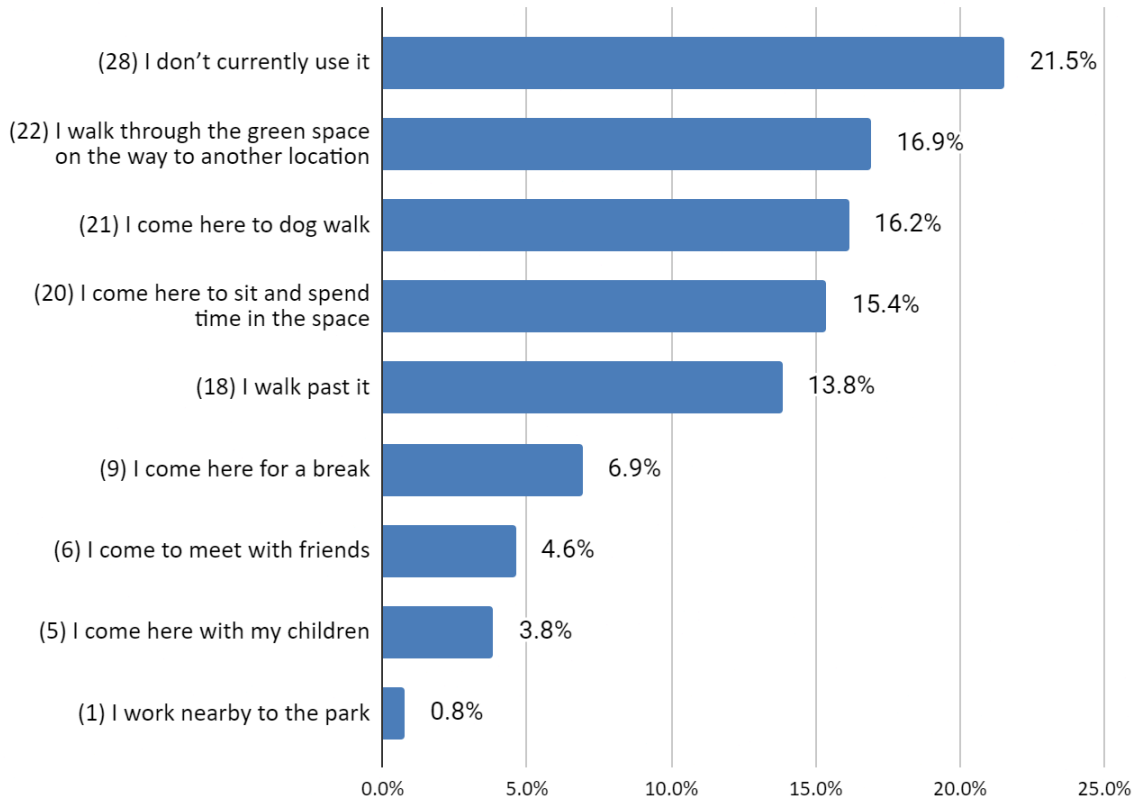
## Where do you live in relation to the green space?



The majority of respondents, 57.7%, lived locally within walking distance to the green Space. This was followed by 20.8% of respondents who lived in St Thomas' Place, the street most impacted by any changes to the space.

This shows that we had a good response rate from the local community to what was a hyper-local piece of engagement.

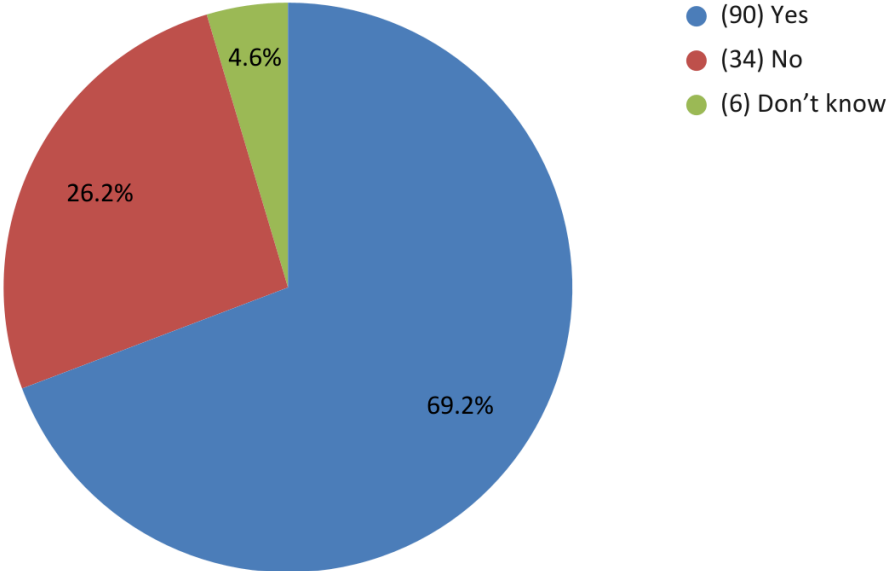
## Please tell us how you use this green space?



The largest response was from people who don't really use the space. 21.5% of respondents said they don't currently use the green space. This was followed by 16.9%, who said that they use the space as a cut through to get to another location. This is borne out by the comments people gave.

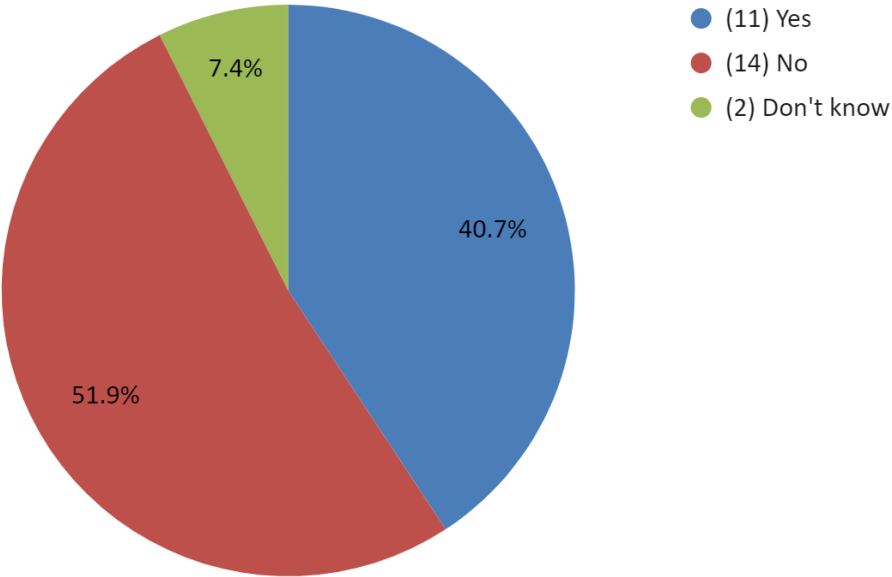
Of those who did use the space, 16.2% said they went there to walk their dog, and 15.4% said they went to just sit and spend time in the park.

**We are looking to create a new entrance to St Thomas' Long Burial Ground, to make it easier to walk through the green space. Would you support this?**



The majority of respondents, 69.2% supported the proposal to put in a new gate on Well Street, with 26.2% who were opposed and only 4.6%, who were undecided.

**Response from residents who live in St Thomas' Place, to the question on whether they support the proposals was:**



Out of the 27 respondents who live in St Thomas' Place, 14 people (51.9%), opposed the proposal while 11 people (40.7%) supported it.

## **Please tell us why you gave this answer to the above question?**

People gave a variety of reasons as to why they supported, opposed or were unsure about the proposals. The counts below are based on the number of times the below comments were mentioned.. Some respondents gave more than one reason..

- The main reason given for supporting the proposal was that it would make the space more accessible, coupled with encouraging more people to use it.

***“I hadn’t noticed this green space before as I always thought it was closed. An entrance would encourage more people to enjoy it and bring life to the area”***

- Some people also felt it would make the space feel safer if there was another entrance on the main road. While there were a few concerns about the safety of small children and dogs that could run out onto the main road if there was an entrance there.

***“I think an entrance on Well Street would make the park much more accessible. I always end up walking down the footpath between the adjacent housing and the black fencing, to the western boundary of the park. It would make for better access and make my journey home feel safer.”***

***“I have safety concerns regarding a gate onto a busy road for children and pets.”***

- Of those who opposed the proposals, the main reason given was that there were enough entrances already and that it would make more sense to increase people’s awareness of the existing entrances:

***“There are currently 3 gates to the park already. 4 if you include the existing utility gate. I don't understand the rationale for spending money on another gate. An alternative would be to create public awareness that the park is open to all and bring attention to the other entrances.”***

- A handful of respondents suggested that a gate to the side of Well Street would be a better place to have a gate rather than in the middle of the railings.

***“It might increase the number of people sitting here and drinking. There is a homeless shelter locally and they hang around. Maybe, if the gate was locked, it couldn't be a run through. A gate to the side might be better so it's still accessible. Plan out crime - secure by design.”***

<b>Support the proposal</b>	<b>Count</b>
It would make the park more accessible	54
Would encourage more people to use it	23
Would make it feel safer, more open and less isolated	10
Better for wheelchairs / mobility scooters / less of a squash in alleyway	7
Misc	6
Improvements like planting and seating to make it more welcoming	5
People thought it was a private park. Good to know it's open to public	4

<b>Oppose the proposal</b>	<b>Count</b>
Already enough entrances / need to increase awareness of those	16
Encourage / increase ASB and drug use	13
Lose it's quietness and calm	11
It will become a thoroughfare	10
Not good use of public money	8
Safety concerns: small children and dogs running onto the main road	5
Increased use by dogs and become more busy	4
Should be respected as a burial ground	3

### **Do you have any concerns or issues about putting a new entrance into the park?**

63 people mentioned a few concerns or raised some points about installing a new entrance. The counts below are based on the number of times the below concerns were mentioned.. Some respondents mentioned more than one.

- The majority of respondents, 45 people, didn't have any concerns
- This was followed by 18 comments about the increase in ASB and drug use that opening up the space would bring  
***“People using the park already create noise nuisance for the residents in the flats overlooking the park. Making it a cut through would exacerbate the problem.”***
- The next highest concern with 18 comments, was around making the space too busy, so it lost its appeal as a quiet space. This was echoed in the 17 comments about wanting to keep the space as it is.  
***“The park is a quiet space, well-loved and much used for dog walking and children riding their bikes. It is sufficiently accessible as it is. Creating an extra entrance on Well Street would lead to more people cutting through***

***the park to get to Mare Street which would completely alter the character of the place.”***

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Count</b>
No concerns	45
Encourage ASB	18
Make it too busy	17
Keep it as it is	15
Security of the park, especially at night time	13
Make sure that the space is well maintained	5

### **Do you have any other comments?**

The comments were mainly a repetition of all the reasons people gave for their responses and the concerns they expressed.

- The main theme was around people wanting more flowerbeds and planting to make the grounds more attractive.  
***“Can some more trees and shrubs be planted along the fence to increase biodiversity and increase greenery please. “***
- The second range of comments was about opening it up to more people:  
***“It would be nice if more could be done to attract people to use the space but understand there may be constraints due to the graves and trees.”***
- This was followed by comments about wanting to keep the space as it is and not increasing disturbance for local people:  
***“I was speechless when I saw the sign in the park about this consultation. Of all the things in Hackney that need addressing this is NOT one of them.”***

<b>Comment</b>	<b>Count</b>
More flowerbeds, increased greenery and biodiversity	11
Opening it up to more people	9
Will cause disturbance to local people / keep it as it is	6
Misc	6
More seating / tables	5
Play area for children / stepping stones	5

More grounds maintenance / keeping it tidy	5
People generally expressing support	5
Would like a separate area for dogs	4
More bins needed	3
Bring back park keepers	1
Exercise equipment	1
Would increase ASB	1
Disagreed that the alleyway is narrow	1

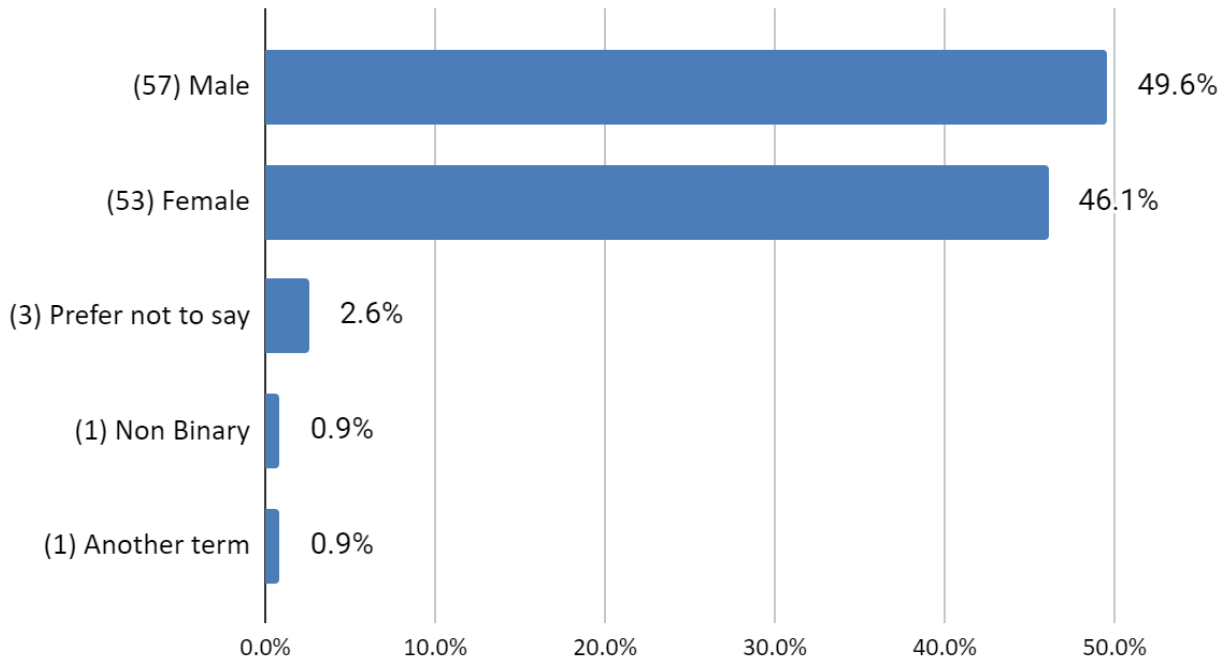
### **Communication from people who oppose the proposals**

It should be noted that a small number of people are very strongly opposed to the installation of a new gate. Their comments are included in the comments above and in the raw data.

One of those respondents, who is a resident of St Thomas' Place, also sent an email to Cllr Woodley on 27 April, during the consultation period reiterating their concerns about the proposals. The email can be read [here](#). It is also in the appendix.

# About you

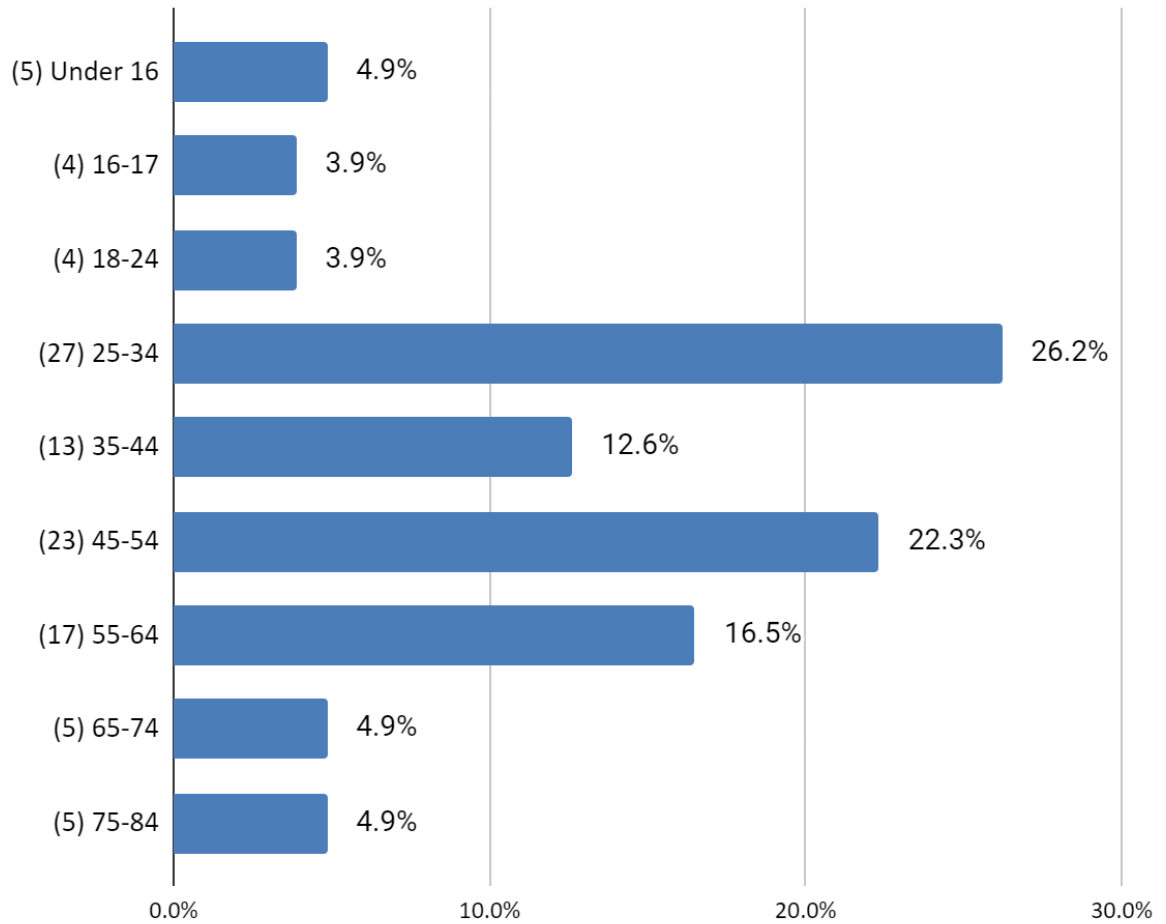
**Gender: Are you....(Base 115)**



57 respondents to this question stated they were male, followed by female (53), prefer not to say (3), Non Binary and another term (1 each).

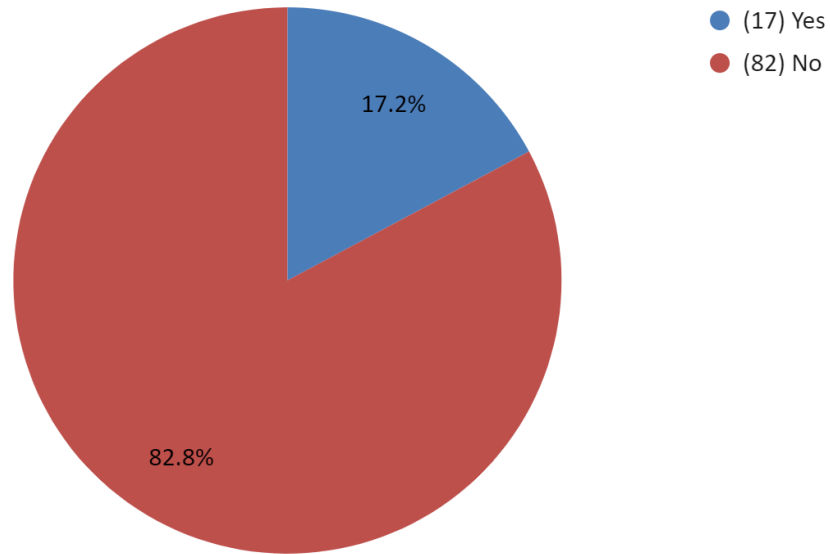


**Age group: Are you... (Base 103)**



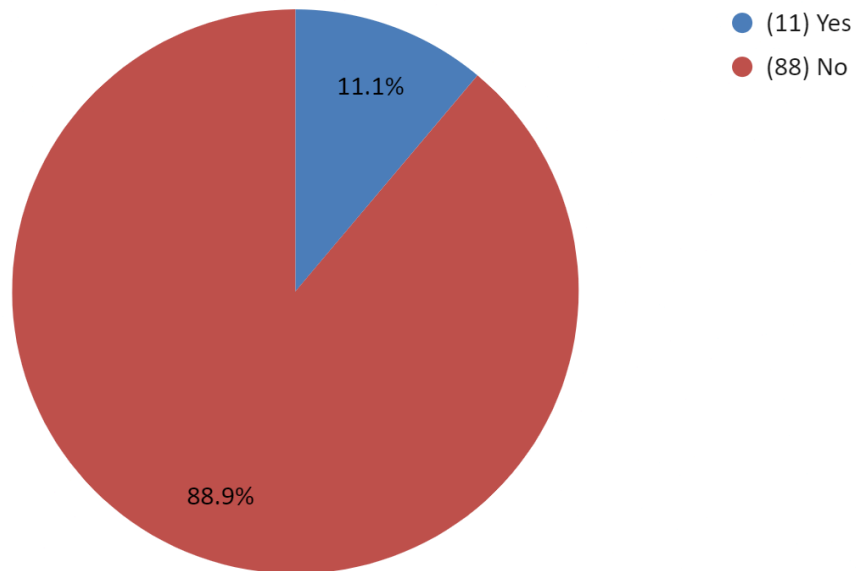
The group with the highest number of respondents was, 25-34 (27), closely followed by 45-54 (23), 55-64 (17) and 35-44 (13). There were also 13 young people between 14-24. This number was due to the targeted engagement with the youth group.

### **Disability (Base 99)**



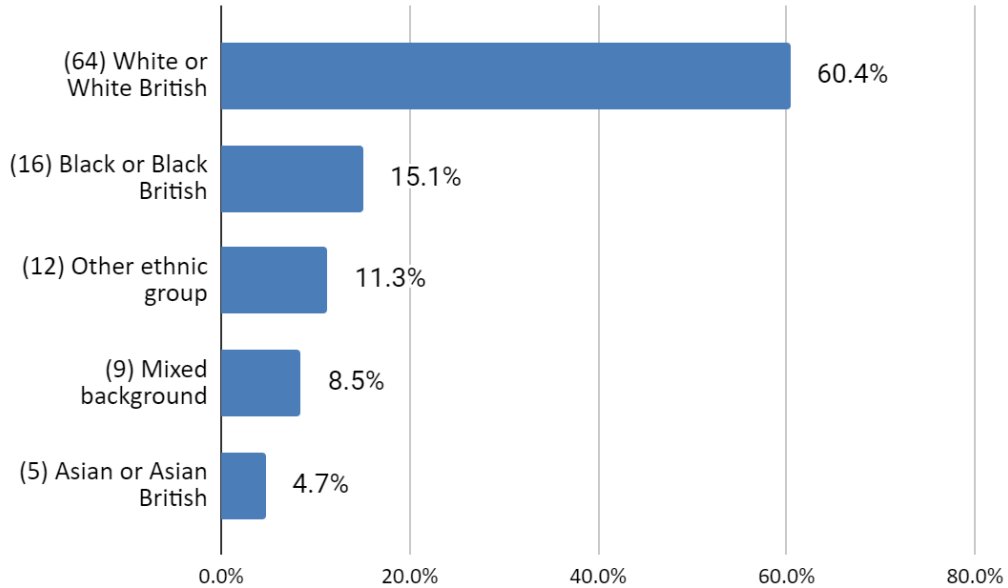
The majority of respondents stated they do not have a disability, 82 people, while 17 people said they did.

### **Caring responsibilities (Base 99)**



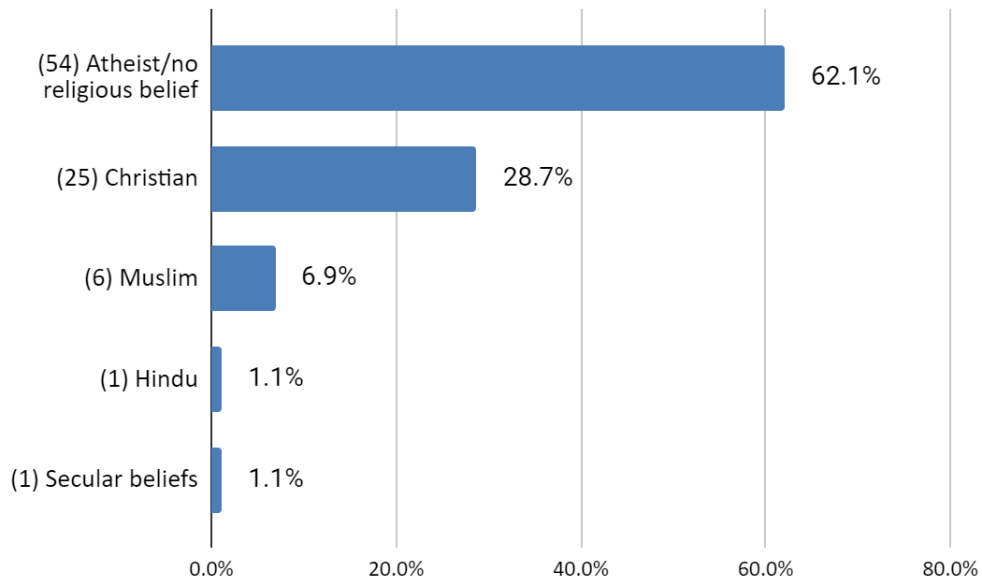
The majority of respondents stated they do not have caring responsibilities, 88 people, while 11 people said they did.

**Ethnicity: Are you... (Base 106)**



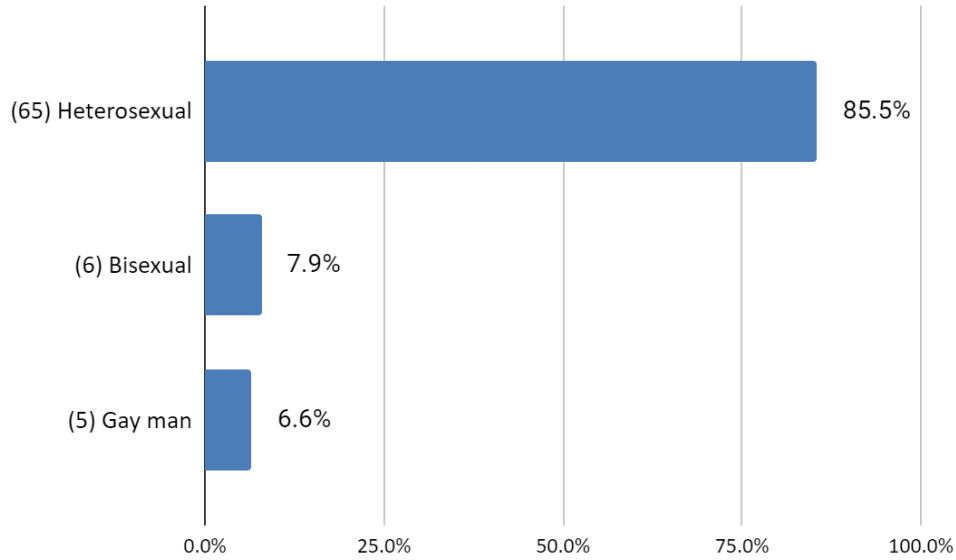
The majority of respondents stated they were White or White British (65), followed by Black or Black British (16), other ethnic group (12), mixed background (9) and Asian or Asian British (5).

**Religion: Are you... (Base 87)**



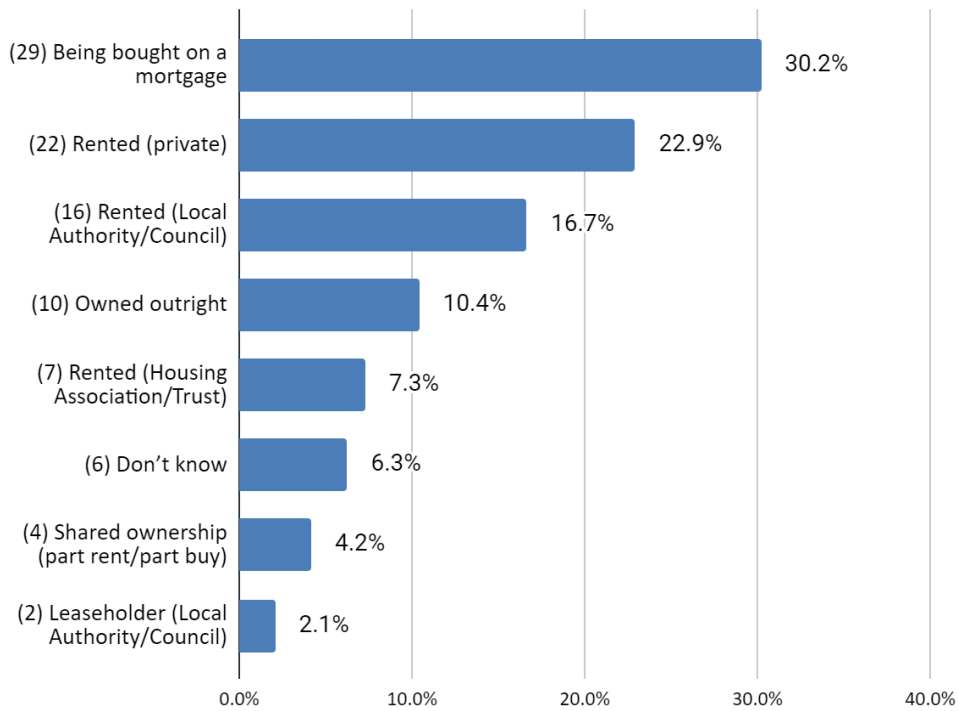
The majority of respondents stated that they were atheist or had no religious beliefs (54), followed by Christian (25), Muslim (6), Hindu and Secular beliefs (1 each).

**Sexual orientation: Are you... (Base 76)**



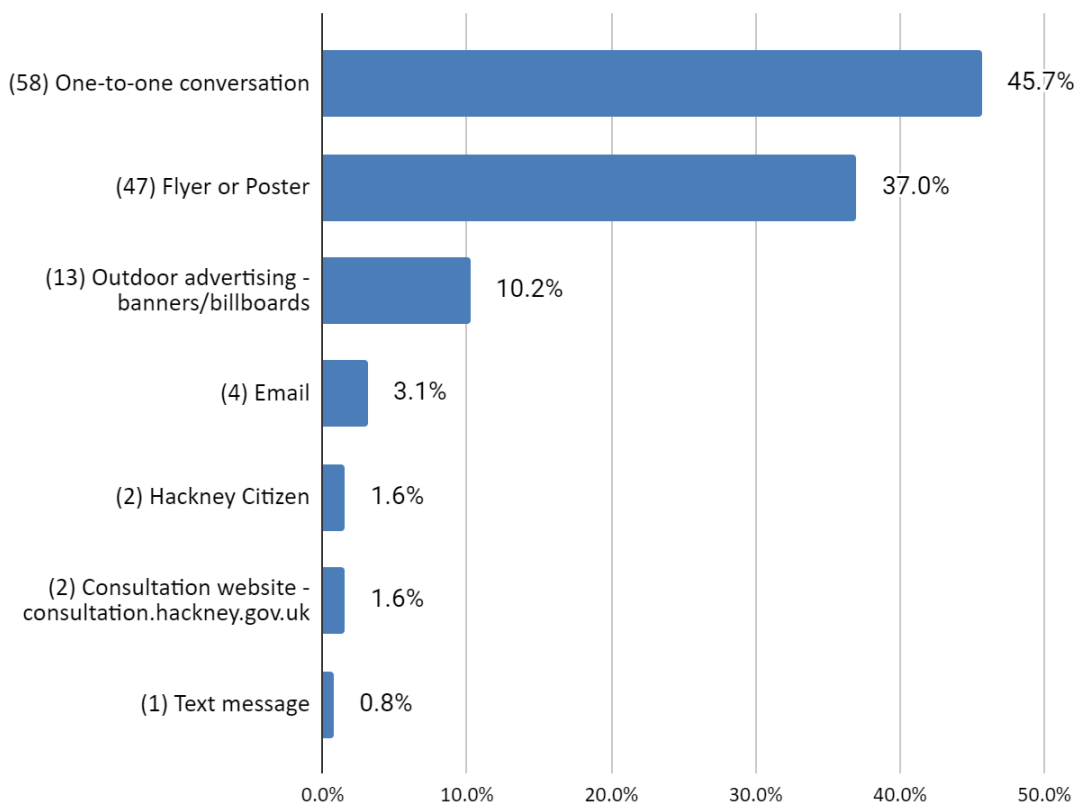
The majority of respondents stated that they were heterosexual (65), followed in much smaller numbers by Bisexual (6), and gay man (5)

**Housing Tenure: Which of the following best describes the ownership of your home? (Base 96)**



The tenure with the highest number of respondents was those who have a home being bought on a mortgage (29), followed by rented privately (22), rented from the Council (16), owned outright (10), rented from a Housing Association (7), don't know (6), shared ownership (4) and leaseholder from the Council (2).

### Please tell us where you found out about this survey?



The majority of respondents (58) via a one-to-one conversation with Council officers. This was followed by those who found out about the survey via the posters with QR codes that were placed on the park railings and on the noticeboards on the nearby Frampton Park Estate as well as the local cafe (47). The other communication channels were in significantly smaller numbers.

This tells us that surveying people in the location itself or in person was the most effective way of getting people to take part and tell us their views.

Of those who stated it was a poster, 12 people were from St Thomas' Place and 7 from Frampton Park Estate. 12 people from St Thomas' Place also said they found out about it via a one-to-one conversation with an officer, while 8 people from Frampton Park Estate said the same.

## Appendix: Correspondence in opposition to proposals

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Caroline Woodley (Cllr)** <[caroline.woodley@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:caroline.woodley@hackney.gov.uk)>

Date: Tue, 9 May 2023 at 11:09

Subject: Re: Hackney Long Burial Grounds

To: [retracted]

Dear [retracted],

Apologies for the delay in responding to your concerns. A consultation was held and ran from 13 Mar to 30 Apr 2023

(<https://consultation.hackney.gov.uk/chief-executives/st-thomas-long-burial-ground/>). As you wrote to me before it closed I will ask that your comments are taken on board and also feed back on the other responses that came in.

I'm very interested in working with local residents on ideas for animating our parks so that they do not fall into neglect and anti social use, and to also support moving on any persistent ASB with the support of local councillors and Safety Neighbourhood Team, so regardless of the outcome I'd be happy to continue discussing options and hope to meet you on site later in the year.

Best wishes,  
Caroline

Cllr Caroline Woodley,  
Cazenove Ward Councillor  
Cabinet Member for Families, Parks and Leisure  
London Borough of Hackney

On Tue, 9 May 2023 at 10:40, [retracted] wrote:

Dear Ms. Woodley,

I am following up on my email from April 27th.

I would greatly appreciate an update from you regarding this matter.

Kind regards,  
Andrea

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **[retracted]**

Date: Thu, Apr 27, 2023 at 10:45 AM  
Subject: Hackney Long Burial Grounds  
To: <caroline.woodley@hackney.gov.uk>  
Cc: [retracted]

Dear Ms. Woodley,

I am a long time resident of St. Thomas's Place (E9) and recently became aware of a Hackney Parks proposal to add an additional Well Street facing gate to Hackney Long Burial Ground and wanted to raise my concerns with this plan.

There has been no formal consultation residents of St. Thomas's Place on the proposal when we will be the most impacted. I understand there have been some canvassing of opinions around the park itself by Hackney Parks but this is not satisfactory.

The small park is currently well served by 3 entrances with an additional servicing gate. I can't understand the rationale for spending tax dollars on installing another gate, particularly in the current cost of living crisis.

The park continues to have significant problems with anti-social behaviour, alcohol consumption, drug dealing/taking and public urination (on and around the large tomb stones). This is particularly bad in the summer months. St. Thomas's laneway itself is favoured by drug dealers given the exits on both ends and general seclusion. I would be interested to know what positive impact an additional gate would bring to the situation, if only giving drug runners on bikes and scooters a convenient entry and exit.

There is currently no investment in the gardens or flower beds in the park even though I believe this could have most positive impact on making the park more inviting and a place where families and children would like to spend time. The park in St. Thomas's square is a testament to this. The proposal references some minor one time enhancements only.

Lastly, I have concerns regarding the safety of the proposal as Well Street is an extremely busy road with a short pavement buffer from the park to the road. The current park configuration provides a very safe environment for children playing. It also not subject to e-bikes and e-scooters using it as a pass through.

I would appreciate your help in ensuring there are no changes made to the grounds.

Kind regards,

[retracted]