

Consultation Summary Report

Hackney Road Recreation Ground

March 2016

Overview

Hackney Road Recreation Ground is the old burial ground for St Leonard's Church and is the last resting place of Thomas Fairchild. Thomas Fairchild (1666-1729) was a noted Hackney citizen and a horticultural hero, publishing 'The City Gardener' in 1722. His experiments helped establish that plants had a sex and he was the first person to scientifically create an artificial hybrid plant.

Hackney Council would like to improve Hackney Road Recreation Ground and are working with interested parties to raise funds and improve the space. In early 2016 we consulted residents on proposals to improve the Recreation Ground including renaming the park after Thomas Fairchild. We also asked if holding a market in the space would be supported.

Results

The survey ran from 8th January to 5th February 2016 and received 87 responses. Further analysis of the results suggested that a proportion of the responses may have come from a small number of individuals. For this reason, any duplicate responses received from the same IP address have been excluded from the results. The results below are therefore based on 65 responses.

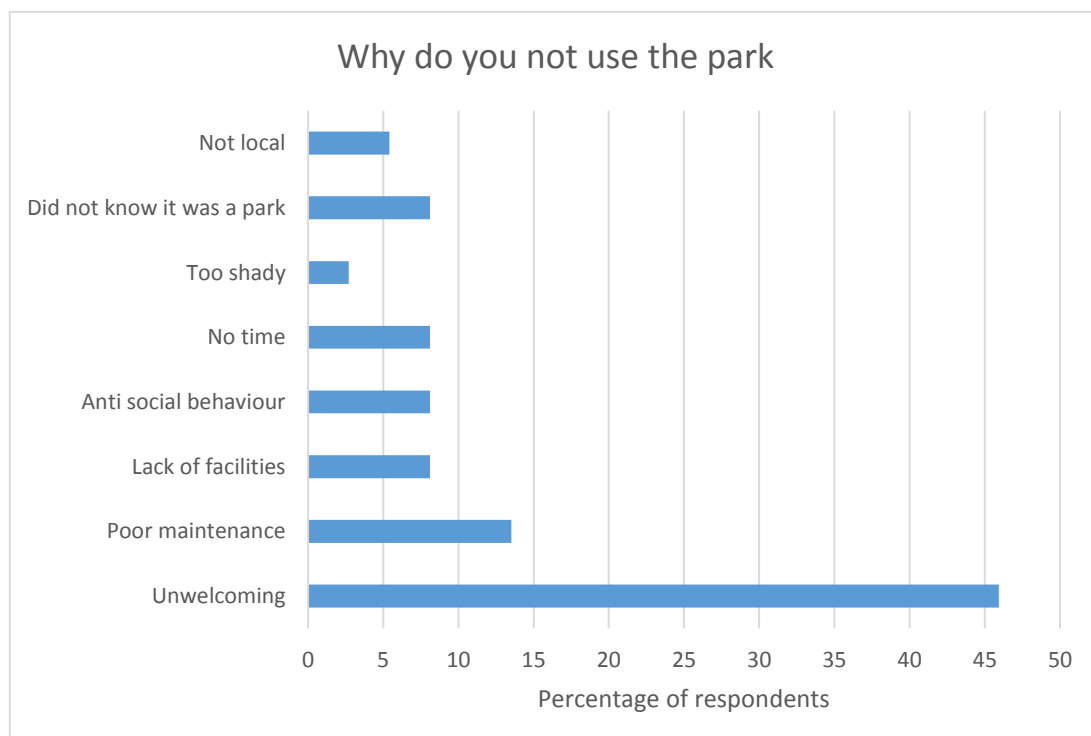
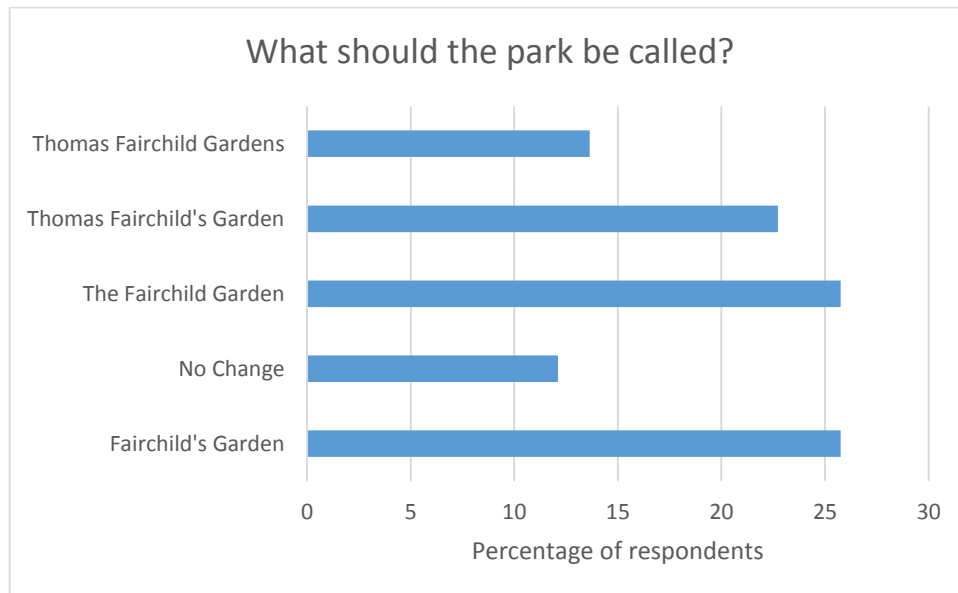
The renaming of the park was well supported. Participants were given a choice of names. The equal most popular suggestions were "Fairchild's Garden" and "The Fairchild Garden". The choice of these two options was given to Reverend Paul Turp from St Leonards Church who selected Fairchild's Garden.

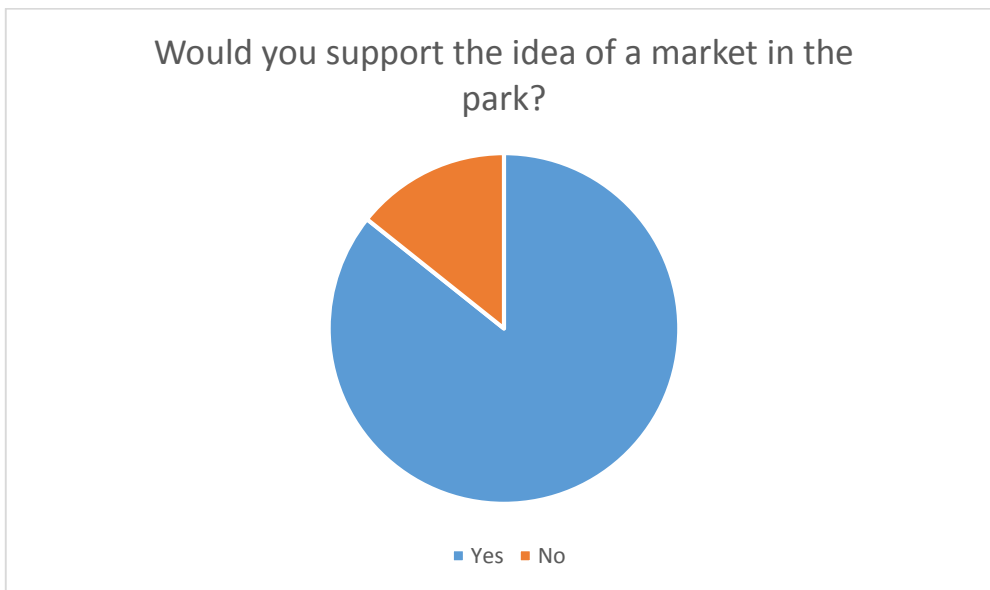
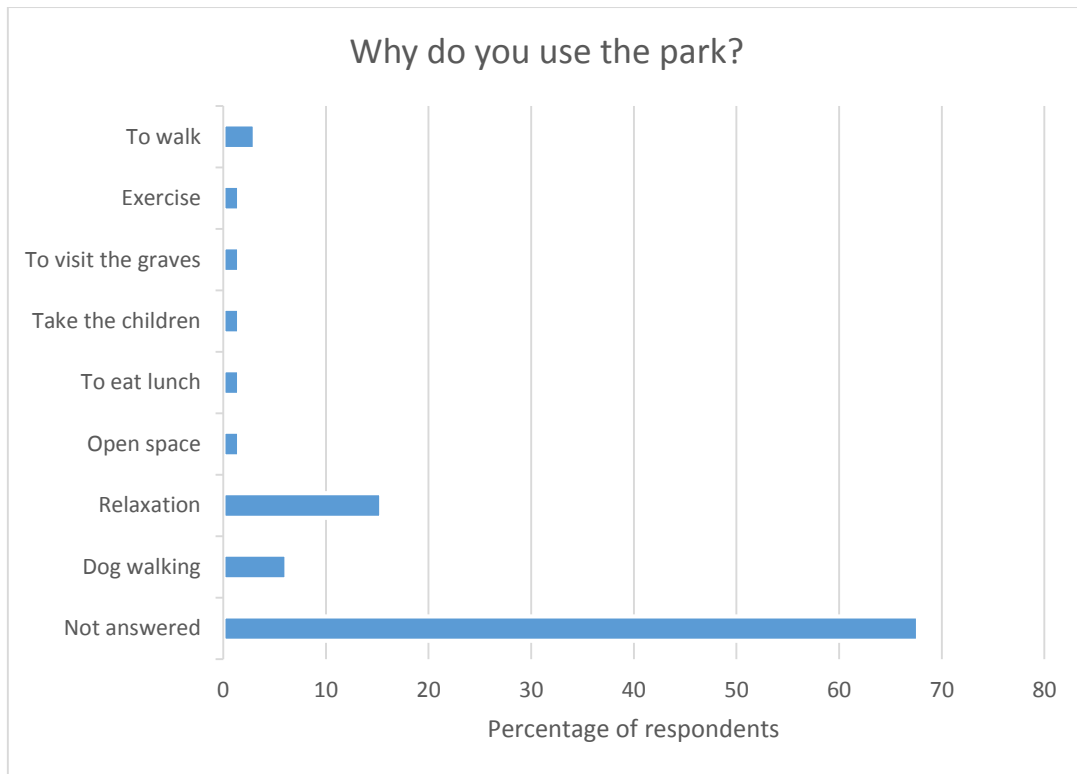
The vast majority of respondents do not currently use the space because it is unwelcoming, "dingy", "grotty", "neglected" and feels unsafe. People perceive that it is poorly maintained and that it suffers from antisocial behaviour. Some respondents did not realise that it was even a public open space.

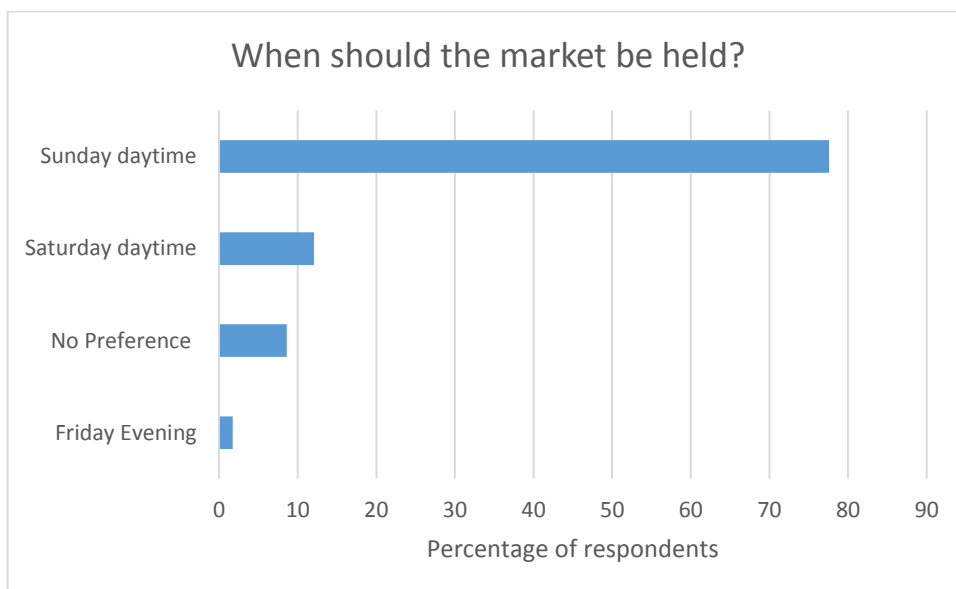
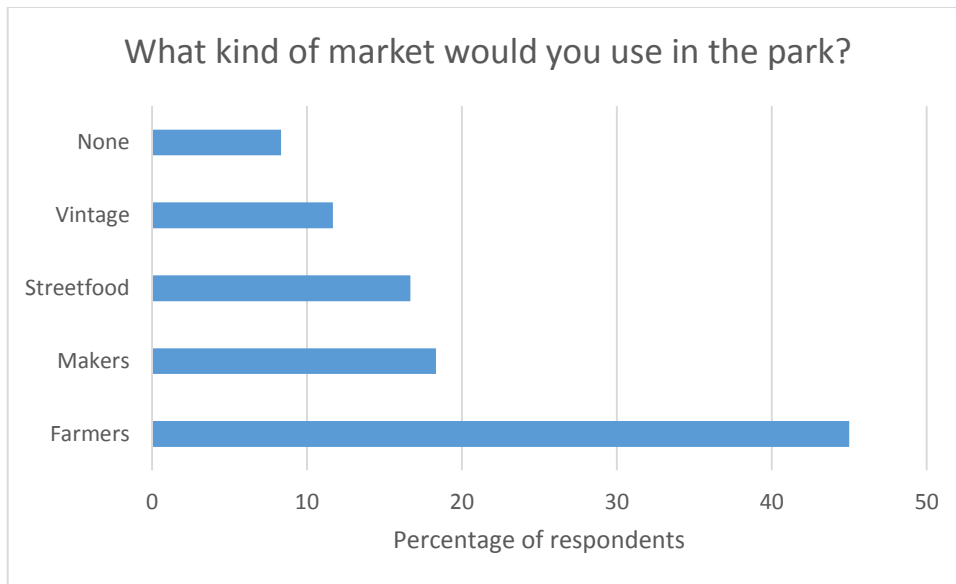
Very few respondents actually use the space. The handful of respondents who do, tend to use it to relax or to walk their dog.

The majority of respondents supported the idea of holding a regular market in the space. The most popular option was for a farmers market to be held on Sundays to tie in with the Columbia Road Flower Market, although there was some concern that this had to be managed well.

A number of respondents stated concern that the council should not be creating a new market when the borough's existing markets needed support to function. Comments were also received about improving the facilities in the park, including bringing the tennis court back into use, installing fitness equipment and planting.







What we are going to do?

We will now start the process to formally change the name of Hackney Road Recreation Ground to Fairchild's Garden and install new welcome signage.

The logistics and permissions required to hold a market in the space will be reviewed.

Funding will continue to be sought to improve the park and make it more welcoming.

If you would like to be kept update to date with plans for the park please email bruce.irving@hackney to be added to the park's contact list.