

Marple Memorial Park Skate Park Survey Results

Introduction

As part of a programme entitled "Love Marple" during Marple Hall School Enrichment week in early July 2011, pupils with an interest in the skate park and teen area in Marple Memorial Park put together a questionnaire about improvements to the facilities. They then consulted with other pupils at the school to ascertain their views on if, how and why it should be improved.

Pupils also created a display explaining their ideas and suggestions for improvements to the facilities that has been on show at Marple Library throughout the summer.

After Enrichment week Friends of Marple Memorial Park put the same questionnaire on-line via their web site and Face book to seek the views of older users of the skate park facilities who are no longer at school.

Questionnaire results and analysis:

A total of 187 people responded to the questionnaire, 177 (95%) from Marple Hall School and 10 (5%) via the FOMMP on-line questionnaire.

1. Do you use the Memorial park?

Of the 187 responders who completed the questionnaire 144 (77%) were users of Marple Memorial Park and 43 (23%) were not.

2. Do you think our skate park needs to be improved?

A total of 116 park users (80%) felt that the skate park needs to be improved with only 29 (20%) of those who responded believing that it does not. 43 of those questioned, an identical number to those who don't use the park, didn't know or didn't reply.

3. Which of these would you use? Please circle your answers.

Those questioned were asked to identify how they used the teen facilities in the park. Based on the 144 users of the park identified in question 2 it is clear that many of them use it for more than one activity. The results were:

Skate Board	21	15%
BMX	67	47%
Basketball	23	16%
Mini-Scooter	20	14%
Inline Skates	18	12%
Socialise	84	58%

BMX is clearly the most popular activity but it is important to note that well over half of the people who responded also use the facilities for social purposes too.

4. As a user of the skate park are you? Please circle your answer.

This question asked those who use the facilities to identify their skill level. Responses were:

Beginner	50
Intermediate	33
Advanced	11
Other	70

The responses to this question totalled 164, which is more than the number of people who use the park. It is likely that some of those who don't use it answered "Other".

Those who do use the facilities and answered "Other" obviously do not consider themselves to be Beginners or Advanced users but presumably somewhere between each of those and Intermediate. For the purposes of analysis it seems reasonable to assume that the "Other" and "Intermediate" responses can be amalgamated into a single group of "Intermediates" but with a wide range of abilities. The adjusted numbers suggesting:

Beginner	50	35%
Intermediates	83	57%
Advanced	11	8%

5. Is the current skate park good enough to develop advanced skills?

37 (26%) of those who answered this question felt that the existing skate is good enough to develop advanced skills but an overwhelming 106 (74%) believe it is not good enough. 44 people did not answer this question, which is roughly in-line with the non-park users identified in earlier questions and who would be unlikely to provide an answer.

6. Do you have to go to another skate park to develop your skills?

72 users (50%) feel that they do have to visit alternative skate parks to develop their skills, whilst 73 users (50%) do not. When compared with the responses to Q5 these answers suggest that the existing park is sufficient for Beginners to improve their skills but once a reasonable Intermediate level is reached users need new challenges to develop their skills further and they have to go to other skate parks to achieve this.

An additional feature added to the on-line survey asked users to identify which other facilities they visited. Other locations identified in the on-line survey include:

Warrington, Manchester, Projects Manchester, UK Skate, Platt Fields, Bones and "all over the country".

7. If yes, do you have to pay for this facility?

Users who said that they did have to go elsewhere to develop their skills were asked if they had to pay for this, which could include both travel costs and admission fees.

Of the 72 users who said they have to go to other skate parks to develop their skills 54 (75%) said that they have to pay to do so.

8. If yes, how much does it cost you per session?

Costs range from £5 to £20 per session with an average cost of £10.14 per person.

9. Are improvements to the park facilities likely to attract more people?

120 people questioned (64%) felt that improvements to the skate park would attract more users, with only 14 people (7%) feeling that it would not make any difference and 53 (29%) who were not sure or did not answer.

10. If the skate park needs upgrading, can you explain briefly what improvements you would like to be made?

Comments from the Enrichment week survey were summarised as:

More ramps, more jumps, more variety of ramps, separate areas for different abilities, improve basketball court, IMPROVE TOILETS, skate park bowl, skate park roll-ins, new coping, skate park A-box, concert stage/band stand, more colour, more places to socialise.

Comments from the on-line survey include:

The skate park needs to offer other areas for different types of skateboarding such as flat rails, other boxes and kickers. The basketball court also needs a lot of work. It needs new nets that can't be taken down by the "rats in tracksuits" that also use the park. It needs resurfacing and the fence to go around the whole of the court to prevent accidents happening due to the balls going into the skate park.

Half pipe, spine, bowl, jump box, more rails. All concrete as metal is dangerously slippery and wood takes too long to dry.

The existing Skate Park needs resurfacing firstly, as the box hips are completely undefined, with coping being replaced on the quarter pipe. The box coping needs to be replaced with metal edging. The rail that follows the bank up and out should only go out of the bank and should be squared off instead of curved at the end. The sub box needs to be removed and where the edge of the sub box was on the left hand side should be a taller narrower ledge allowing tricks to be done out of the bank on both sides of it, somewhere around 3ft in height, 8ft in length and 2ft in width with metal edging. On the other side of the bank, could be some stairs slightly longer than the current bank with a square rail of medium size running on the right of it. The surface at the top of the bank should all be resurfaced including the rough parts at the back, then on the edge of that new space could be some benches and flat rails.

Resurfacing, greater variety of ramps and boxes, removal of unwanted structures around the skate park I.E spinning swing and metal shelter as all these currently do is draw unwanted attention from local thugs who have nothing better to do than drink and cause trouble at the skate park and its users.

A half pipe, a bowl, and a pole jam.

Best case improvements: a bowl, two half pipes (one small, one large) more grind rails at varying heights and lengths, a half pipe.

A half pipe, a bigger jump box, a volcano/spine ramp - the shape and spacing is very important - plus get rid of the hut where jobs sit and smash bottles on the ramps.

More ramps flood lights.

Decent half pipe bowl quarter pipe box spine.

I haven't been there for a few months, but for one thing at the top of the flat bank where you would rollover is a small lip in the ground, this can be hazardous for skaters who favour small wheels as you can get caught up on it. The fun box ledge coping could do with replacing as its rusted. A lot of skateboarders love to throw themselves down stair sets, so a stair set addition would be a good thing, but small between 3-5 steps so beginners can make good use of it too. A small spine would be good for more transition oriented skaters to make use of, not to mention a mini ramp aka small half pipe, a tall flat bank would be a good addition, same sort of height as the quarter pipe, as the existing one is pretty small for performing tricks on. If you do add a stair set, make it fairly wide, and use some of it for a bank step up so riders can ride up and do tricks out of the stairs, as these are quite fun. Other minor things like flat rails and manual pads would be a good addition Please use a decent builder too, as many potentially cracking council parks get ruined by using builders who do shoddy jobs (look at the Torrington park in Hazel Grove, a terrible example of cheap building and bad ramp design). Paying the extra money to ensure it's a good builder will ensure the users love it.

Bigger and better!

11. Age groups.

The pupils at Marple Hall taking part in the Enrichment Survey are all in the age group of 16 years and under. For the on-line survey an additional question was asked to identify the general age group of those users. Responses were:

16 years and under	4	40%
16 - 20 years	3	30%
20 - 30 years	3	30%
30 years and over	1	10%

Conclusion / Summary:

The survey demonstrates that the skate park, teen area and basketball court created in the year 2000 within Marple Memorial Park are very well used, with 77% of those surveyed saying that they do. This suggests that it is actually used by a very significant

proportion of local teenage school children. There is also a core of older users from late teens through twenties and into their early thirties who have been making use of the facilities for more than ten years since they were originally constructed.

Observations also show that nowadays children as young as three years of age are using the skate park ramps under the watchful eye of their parents or older siblings. It is a credit to the mainly teenage users of the skate park that these very young children are tolerated and given room to try out the ramps on their small bikes, skates and scooters without complaint that they are getting in the way.

Although the facilities are still well used for a broad range of activities by BMX riders, Skate Boarders, In-line Skaters, Mini-Scooter riders and Basketball players they are now quite old and suffering from significant wear and tear. The survey demonstrates that 80% of users believe that they need to be refurbished and improved if they are to continue providing the level of enjoyment, physical challenge and healthy social atmosphere expected from this kind of facility today.

There are a significant number of users who describe themselves as "Beginners" but the largest proportion, approaching 60% of skate park users, consider themselves to be of "Intermediate" skill levels in their chosen activity. The survey suggests that the facilities are still adequate for beginners to improve their skills but 74% of users agree that the current skate park is not good enough to develop advanced skills and 50% of them feel it necessary to travel to other skate parks in order to improve.

Some skate park users travel considerable distances to find suitable facilities, including Manchester, Warrington and beyond. 75% of these users have said that they have to spend between £5 and £20 per session on trips to other skate parks with £10.14 being an average cost per person. Many users may be excluded from travelling to other facilities due to these costs, especially if they are not earning an income or their parents cannot afford to take them or pay for them to go, or if they are not old enough to travel on their own. It is also not practical to travel for short skating sessions, for example after school.

It would be far better for local users if the existing skate park facilities, which are available to all free of charge, were refurbished and improved to a higher standard as this would alleviate the need to travel to other skate parks to improve their skills. This would also have the potential to bring families into Marple and parents could visit local shops or take a walk along the local canal towpaths while their children enjoy the facilities.

In these times when it is seen as important to encourage young people to stay fit and healthy and to avoid growing problems like obesity in children, improvements to Marple Memorial Park's skate park and teen area could contribute significantly to these aims whilst also helping to tackle green issues such as unnecessary travel.

64% of existing users believe that improvements to the skate park would attract more people to make use of it. This would be an advantage to the whole community giving young people a better outlet for their energy and encouraging them to take part in physical activity that would improve their health and enhance their social skills and ability to mix with others at the same time.