



Golders Hill Park, accessible car park survey results

August 2019

Consultant
idacs (UK) Ltd.
8 Harrogate Road
Rawdon
Leeds
LS19 6HJ

Preamble

Idacs certifies that it has carried out the work with due care and diligence to its best belief and knowledge based on the information available. Thus, any reliance placed on the advice and/or information given in this document should be considered in the light of the information available and/or accessible at the time of inspection.

IDACS (UK) Ltd 2019

Document History

Date	Revision	Checked	Authorised	Comments
30/08/19	00	JM	MM	1 st draft for client comments
03/09/19	01	JM	MM	Amended to include survey start date.
23/09/19	02	JM	MM	Amended following client comments.

Consultant: Martin McConaghy MSc MCIOB NRAC Consultant

Contents	page
1.0 Introduction	3
2.0 Summary of survey results	4
Overall response and data issues	4
Q1 Do you currently use the Golders Hill Park accessible car park?	4
Q2 Which best describes you as a user of the accessible car park?	4
Q3 How often do you use the Golders Hill Park accessible car park?	5
Q4 On which days do you usually use Golders Hill Park accessible car park?	5
Q5 When do you usually use the Golders Hill Park accessible car park?	6
Q6 How long do you usually stay when using the Golders Hill Park accessible car park?	6
Q7 During which season(s) do you use the Golders Hill Park accessible car park?	6
Q8 What is the purpose of your visit when using the Golders Hill Park accessible car park?	7
Q9 Do you currently use alternative parking facilities to visit Golders Hill Park?	8
Q10 Would you use Golders Hill Park accessible car park if it was open at the weekend?	8
Q11 Do you currently experience any problems when using the Golders Hill Park accessible car park?	8
Q12 What problems do you experience using Golders Hill Park accessible car park?	9
Q13 Do you have any ideas on how we can maintain safe access to the accessible car park, particularly at weekends?	9
Q14 One potential option would be to use electric gates to manage access to the accessible car park. The gates would be programmed to open when an authorised car approaches. This could be controlled by a phone or online booking system or through a registered users' scheme. Do you have any views on these options?	11
Q15 Do you have any other comments about using the accessible car park at Golders Hill Park?	13
3.0 Conclusions and next steps	16

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Context

Hampstead Heath's Golders Hill Park has a small car park, for the use of disabled people only. At present the facility is open Monday to Friday during park opening hours and closed at the weekends. We understand that the facility is not opened on a weekend as a result of safety concerns following a previous fatality on site. In essence, we are advised that the demand for parking and pedestrian access at weekends is such that it causes traffic issues and presents excessive safety risks which prevent the parking facility from being freely accessible on a weekend.

In addition to the safety concerns at the weekend, there are concerns that weekday use of the facility is oversubscribed/abused leading to a poor and uncertain experience for users.

The Open Spaces Team, who manage the park, have a desire to open the parking facility at weekends to increase access to the park for disabled people. Therefore a survey of existing users was undertaken to collate feedback from users about their current experience and opinions on extending operation into the weekend and / or providing controlled access.

1.2 Methodology

A draft questionnaire was produced by idacs (UK) Ltd. which was then developed by the City of London's Open Spaces Team. The survey was converted into an online format, known as 'survey monkey' and hardcopy versions were made available by post on request or from within the café at Golders Hill Park.

Posters were displayed on site at the car park to advise users of the consultation, providing a website address for the online survey, a telephone number to request a copy by post and to advise hard copy was available in the café. The survey was also promoted through the City of London Corporation Hampstead Heath Facebook and Twitter feeds.

The survey period ran from 19th April 2019 to the 18th July 2019.

Appendix A contains the hardcopy responses. Appendix B contains the online survey responses.

2.0 Summary of survey results

Overall response and data issues

There were 28 respondents to the online survey and 14 hardcopy responses provided. The total responses to the survey was therefore was 42 which is a relatively low response.

It is important to note that whilst 42 responses were received, a number of users chose not to answer all questions and effectively skipped some questions. In addition a number of questions permitted multiple responses. For these reasons the responses should not necessarily add up to 100%. Further details on this is provided where relevant in the discussion of the results for each question.

It was noted that there are some discrepancies between the questions provided on the hardcopy and online versions, namely the availability of 'other' options. This is raised within each relevant question that follows.

Q1 Do you currently use the Golders Hill Park accessible car park?

Out of a possible 42 responses to the survey, 40 responses were received for this question.

1 online and 1 hardcopy respondents skipped the question.

Of the responses received to this question:

- 78% confirmed they currently use the access car park
- 22% confirmed they did not use the car park

This confirms that the survey did reach beyond the existing user group to an extent.

Q2 Which best describes you as a user of the accessible car park? (please tick all that apply)

Out of a possible 42 responses to the survey, 36 respondents provided answers for this question. It did however permit multiple answers.

2 online and 4 hardcopy respondents skipped the question.

Of the 36 responses received to this question:

- 59% of respondents were companions of blue badge holders
- 35% were blue badge holders
- 3% used the facility for collection or drop off of a disabled person

- 3% responded using 'other'.

As would be expected, this means that 97% of the responses came from disabled people or the companions (carers/family members etc).

Q3 How often do you use the Golders Hill Park accessible car park?

Out of a possible 42 responses to the survey, 35 respondents provided answers for this question.

2 online and 5 hardcopy respondents skipped the question.

Of the 35 responses received to this question:

- 9% responded daily
- 23% responded 2 or 3 times a week
- 26% responded 2 or 3 times a fortnight
- 23% responded 2 or 3 times a month
- 20% responded 'other' (however the hardcopy didn't provide this option)

From these responses it can be seen 80% of respondents visit the car park several times a month, with 32% visiting more than once a week.

Q4 On which days do you usually use Golders Hill Park accessible car park? (please tick all that apply)

Out of a possible 42 responses to the survey, 32 respondents provided answers for this question.

5 online and 5 hardcopy respondents skipped the question.

Of the 32 responses received to this question:

- 81% used the facility on Monday
- 78% used the facilities on Tuesday
- 78% used the facilities on Wednesday
- 81% used the facilities on Thursdays
- 81% used the facilities on Fridays

From these responses it can be that usage is spread reasonably evenly throughout the week.

Q5 When do you usually use the Golders Hill Park accessible car park? (please tick all that apply)

Out of a possible 42 responses to the survey, 33 respondents provided answers for this question.

4 online and 5 hardcopy respondents skipped the question.

Of the 33 responses received to this question:

- 58% used the facility in the morning
- 39% used the facility at lunchtime
- 79% used the facility in the afternoon
- 18% used the facility in the evening
- 6% responded using 'other'

From these responses it can be seen that there is widespread use throughout the day, peaking in the afternoon and reducing in the evening.

Q6 How long do you usually stay when using the Golders Hill Park accessible car park? (please tick all that apply)

Out of a possible 42 responses to the survey, 33 respondents provided answers for this question.

4 online and 5 hardcopy respondents skipped the question.

Of the 33 responses received to this question:

- 18% used the facility for less than 1 hr
- 58% used the facility for between 1 and 2hrs
- 18% used the facility for 2 to 4 hrs
- 3% used the facility for 4-6hrs
- 6% responded using 'other'

From these responses it can be seen that most users visit for between 1 and 2hrs and few users stay longer than 4hrs.

Q7 During which season(s) do you use the Golders Hill Park accessible car park?(please tick all that apply)

Out of a possible 42 responses to the survey, 33 respondents provided answers for this question.

4 online and 5 hardcopy respondents skipped the question.

Of the 33 responses received to this question:

- 61% used the facility in Spring
- 61% used the facility in Summer
- 55% used the facility in Autumn
- 33% used the facility in Winter
- 48% used the facility all year round (however the hardcopy didn't provide this option)

From these responses it can be seen that there is widespread use throughout the seasons, with almost half of all users appearing to use the facility throughout the year (despite the lack of such option on the hardcopy version).

Q8 What is the purpose of your visit when using the Golders Hill Park accessible car park? (please tick all that apply)

Out of a possible 42 responses to the survey, 34 respondents provided answers for this question.

4 online and 4 hardcopy respondents skipped the question.

Of the 34 responses received to this question:

- 97% for visiting Golders Hill Park
- 15% for accessing Hampstead
- 21% for Accessing the Hill Garden and
- 82% visiting Golders Hill Café
- 56% visiting the Gardens
- 32% visiting the Zoo or Butterfly House
- 47% meeting friends and family
- 9% visiting the playground
- 12% advised 'other'

From these responses it can be seen many respondents have several purposes for using the facility, the majority (82%) use the café, over half (56%) visit the gardens and nearly half (47%) are meeting friends and family.

12% responded with 'other' and comments included general walking, outdoor pursuits and getting older family members out for fresh air.

Q9 Do you currently use alternative parking facilities to visit Golders Hill Park?

Out of a possible 42 responses to the survey, 37 respondents provided answers for this question.

3 online and 2 hardcopy respondents skipped the question.

Of the 37 responses received to this question:

- 43% advised the currently used alternatives facilities
- 57% advised they did not use alternative facilities

Neither version of the survey offered the respondent the chance to add any comments on this matter, however the hardcopy responses included the following comments:

“Only when space nearby”

“If I can’t get into the car park”

“Disabled bay at top of Hampstead Way”

Q10 Would you use Golders Hill Park accessible car park if it was open at the weekend?

Out of a possible 42 responses to the survey, 36 respondents provided answers for this question.

4 online and 2 hardcopy respondents skipped the question.

Of the 36 responses received to this question:

- 94% advised they would use the facility if it was open on a weekend
- 6% advised they would not use the facility if it was open on a weekend

This represents overwhelmingly positive response to the potential of opening the facility at weekends.

Q11 Do you currently experience any problems when using the Golders Hill Park accessible car park?

Out of a possible 42 responses to the survey, 34 respondents provided answers for this question.

4 online and 4 hardcopy respondents skipped the question.

Of the 34 responses received to this question:

- 56% responded that they did experience problems when using the facility
- 44% responded that they did not experience problems when using the facility

The responses are fairly evenly split.

Q12 What problems do you experience using Golders Hill Park accessible car park?

Out of a possible 42 responses to the survey, 24 respondents provided answers for this question.

10 online and 8 hardcopy respondents skipped the question.

Of the 24 responses received to this question the responses were:

- 94% Availability of parking spaces
- 17% Accessing the car park
- 8% Exiting the car park
- 42% Non-Blue Badge holders parking there
- 29% Queuing for parking spaces
- 13% Double parking restricting access or exit
- 8% Pedestrians and other Park users

The responses clearly indicate a lack of availability of spaces is an issue, however it is worth noting only 56% of respondents suggest they currently experience a problem accessing the facility (Q11), hence the high number of 'skipped' respondents to this question. The second most common response was use of the bays by non-badge holders, suggesting an issue with monitoring/enforcement.

Q13 Do you have any ideas on how we can maintain safe access to the accessible car park, particularly at weekends?

Out of a possible 42 responses to the survey, 25 respondents provided answers for this question.

12 online and 5 hardcopy respondents skipped the question.

Of the 24 responses received to this question the responses were:

"More signs to let pedestrians be aware"

"Build a separate entrance and exit for cars"

"Maybe clear signage for pedestrians to use walkways and beware of cars on weekends esp. on busy days. Also signs for cars to drive slowly and beware of pedestrians. At present park is out of bounds to my disabled mum on weekends as walking from another car parking spot further away isn't possible."

"Need to provide more blue badge spaces"

"Have someone check people have a blue badge in their car"

"Safe access?? – I didn't know there was a problem!"

"Special permit limited to those over 85 based on Barnet Residency"

"Should be open everyday for disabled blue badge holders"

"it would be welcomed to park inside the park at weekends, especially for my husband who has a blue badge. A code for blue badge holders accessing the car park for disabled blue badge holders might be a good idea"

"It works ok during the week so you should keep it open at weekends and holidays when it is much more difficult to park"

"Laying humps to slow down traffic. Putting in a barrier to keep pedestrians safe. I appreciate it will be difficult though and the park is already suffering from staff shortages to manage things."

"Install another pedestrian entrance from the street nearer cafe or other side of cafe. Or add a fence, ((maybe with a gate as a visual deterrent) between pedestrian walkway and car entrance."

"More enforcement. Especially at School times 2-3? Is there a demand at weekends? Would it be too busy to use the Parking? Ask for more Disabled bays outside the park. Lots of pedestrians to manoeuvre around? Ensure Coaches are not allowed or make them book at weekends. Enforcement is best. It will not be easy!"

"Will not be easy at weekends. Too much activity? Will need enforcement. Is there a demand?"

"I am not aware of any problems about safe access if you drive carefully. We rarely find the car park full though this might be a problem if it was open at weekends. We keep away then."

"Consider disabled spaces in part of what is now the staff yard with access in along the existing delivery vehicle access off West Heath Avenue. Keep the existing disabled car parking provision but giving those who can walk a bit further a choice of an alternative parking location would take some of the pressure off. This would

reduce conflict with pedestrians also. You would need to rationalise the layout of the staff yard - do you really need the polly tunnel?"

"Like it the way it is!"

"To-date I don't have a problem."

"Widen pavement on the side"

"Someone at entry gate to help. Bigger entrance/exit Ice cream van not parked near entrance - can cause a crowd/running children & obstructing road view sometimes"

"as it is during the week"

"By paying the staff to open the car park and not penalising blue badge holders at weekends. I was shocked that there is NO disabled parking at weekends when families including disabled people gather to have fun."

There are a number of comments which seem unrelated to the question posed, however there are a number which suggest typical safety improvements such as signage, speed humps and further separation of entrances/routes for pedestrians.

Q14 One potential option would be to use electric gates to manage access to the accessible car park. The gates would be programmed to open when an authorised car approaches. This could be controlled by a phone or online booking system or through a registered users' scheme. Do you have any views on these options?

Out of a possible 42 responses to the survey, 28 respondents provided answers for this question.

10 online and 4 hardcopy respondents skipped the question.

Of the 28 responses received to this question the responses are set out below:

- 1) "my opinion – is phone only"
- 2) "not necessary"
- 3) "I am against"
- 4) "A good idea but not everyone is online and occasional visits would not be aware of this"
- 5) "Sounds too complicated, particularly for people who don't use mobile phones"

- 6) "not necessary if more space provided for blue badge holders, even if just outside the entrance"
- 7) "access scheme is good but not online booking as most visits spontaneous"
- 8) "I would not want electric gates or to use phone. I do not know sometimes when I am going to the park or could be a last minute decision. Do not have access to a online booking"
- 9) "totally cumbersome and unnecessary to impose restrictions on disabled and elderly people"
- 10) "with an old person you can't make forward arrangements. Depends on how my mother feels on the day, very last minute. Nobody wants permission at sunset Usually noon to 4pm is the more people want to visit."
- 11) "Yes, I think that would be a very good idea, and stop people who do not have blue badges taking advantage of parking in spaces which they are not allowed to do"
- 12) "could be ok"
- 13) "Quite complex and expensive to introduce. Is there a way of blue badge holders having to be buzzed in via an intercom system as used at Kenwood for access to the cafe area with blue badge?"
- 14) "Visiting park is a spontaneous activity and having to book in advance would be inconvenient as would electric gates if a card had to be used to activate. A user 'scheme could work but would have to be free and conditions fair. Number key pad access could work."
- 15) "Enforcement is best. Check the badge photo -make this part of your conditions of entry. Elderly people, electric gates? It will be dangerous."
- 16) "Electric gates not needed. An online system for older people will not work. What happens to those with blue badge but not registered? Occasional visitors?. Enforcement best. Insist on seeing the photo. Just keep the 2.45 to 4pm slot enforced to stop school parents?"
- 17) "I would regret this. I do not use a smart phone which I imagine might be needed. Maybe this is a generational thing. We are in our 70s"
- 18) "Registering in advance is too complicated and takes away the ability to just turn up and use the park like anyone else."
- 19) "This seems expensive and complicated."

- 20) "No"
- 21) "Doesn't allow spontaneity"
- 22) "Not a good idea. It would take to long to get in and out and also some handicapped people may have difficulties operating the system."
- 23) "This does not work if the blue badge holder is not a driver. My mother is blind and travels in different cars, online booking does not allow for this or a spontaneous visit"
- 24) "Good idea (as long as it works!)"
- 25) "This sounds good"
- 26) "Don't like this idea too complicated to book or phone in advance. Sometimes just come spontaneously / drop in as passing etc"
- 27) "Too complicated"
- 28) "Why cant you just open the gates and let people park without making it so difficult (oh silly me you want to CHARGE for the parking)"

The comments provided can be considered as either positive, negative or neutral. Whilst this is subjective in some instances we would consider comments 11, 24, 25 as clearly positive. Comments 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26, 28 are clearly negative. Comments 1, 4, 7, 12, 13, 14, 15 are largely neutral, or pose further questions about the detailed operation of a potential scheme.

Overall we would suggest the view is negative based on concerns around complexity, impact on spontaneity and the need to use the internet/smartphones.

Q15 Do you have any other comments about using the accessible car park at Golders Hill Park?

Out of a possible 42 responses to the survey, 29 respondents provided answers for this question.

11 online and 2 hardcopy respondents skipped the question.

Of the 29 responses received to this question the responses are set out below:

- 1) "Yes I do. This is blatant discrimination. The car park is only available (Monday to Friday) access must be available 7 days a week otherwise action is going to be taken legally!!"
- 2) "I think it should kept for disabled people only every day"
- 3) "It is very convenient, and helpful and as weekends get busy, the idea of having use of the car park at weekends is very helpful and less stressful."
- 4) "An excellent amenity especially for disabled people"
- 5) "I would like to use it at weekends"
- 6) "I think the car park should be just for disabled people & should be open at the weekends as this is probably the only time that people who are working can bring disabled friends and family."
- 7) "Our son is severely disabled and a bleu badge holder. He stays with us at weekends and we really like to take him to the Golders Hill Park so it really annoying not to be able to use the car park at weekends. Often difficult to find nearby parking spaces, even with a blue badge. It would be really good if we could use the accessible car park at weekends."
- 8) "There really are no enough spaces for blue badge holders – could have another four spaces if the space were better placed. Thank you for giving this survey. Very good idea."
- 9) "Yes – most definitely should be available at weekends."
- 10) "I am visually impaired and my husband has Parkinson's, however we do not qualify for a blue badge so we would love to use the car park and would be prepared to pay for it – PS. We think the park is a special area – gardens and other amenity really great."
- 11) "Get rid of that blasted hedge that stops me escorting my mother in a direct line to the café. At least allow a gap for a wheelchair. Provide access to Hill Garden from car park for disabled/elderly in wheelchairs. Create a path up a slope from gate to Golders Hill park to Hill Garden"
- 12) "Should be more disabled parking spaces nearby"
- 13) "Yes, I see several people that park there, sometimes early in the morning, who are not blue badge holders, but dog walkers taking their dogs for walk. Also the signage is very bad at the park, as people are not keeping their dogs on leads, and there are so many dog walkers allowing their dogs to run wild and do poos all over the place, which is upsetting when children roll on and play on the grass. Please put up more signage, Also by the step down to the pond there are

no hand rails, this is very dangerous in icy and wet weather, and could cause accidents, do you have public liability insurance to cover for accidents here. A hand rail would be personally a vital extra."

14) "keep it simple"

15) "Please patrol the car park and challenge misuse of blue badges to park. It is illegal after all but increasingly prevalent in London. My wife often walks the dog here in the morning and says she sees it all the time. It's very obvious but people just don't seem to care."

16) "It is disappointing we can't take disabled mother to park at the weekends. We have to avoid park at busy times of year knowing the car park is so small. Investing in a much bigger car park for disabled would be appreciated."

17) "Could there be another accessible park at the other end down the hill? And a small Cafe? Current system works for us." "We get enormous benefits from our easy access to Golders Hill Park in terms of moderate exercise, access to the open air and green space etc. This kind of facility reduces the risk of our becoming house bound as my wife health deteriorates and any obstacles to access, such as requiring the use of a smart phone, would risk damaging our quality of life. Please leave it as it is."

18) "Great park, well worth visiting."

19) "Usually find a space when we need it."

20) "It would be lovely, if it could be extended a little."

21) "Regrettably I think there needs to be more checking of correct usage of disabled car park. I saw a perfectly able women get off the bus then get into her parked car by the front of Golders Hill Park."

22) "Would welcome increase in parking spaces"

23) "Great we have it. Any chance of more spaces - but just as wide. Wider entry/exit opening?"

24) "Very helpful for those with limited mobility"

25) "That's the point it is not accessible to disabled people at weekends or bank holidays."

The comments provided in this section range from threat of legal action through to statements of how important and special the park is. There are some repeat issues which arise including the need for more accessible bays and better monitoring/enforcement of such as well as other accessibility concerns which should be considered.

3.0 Conclusions and next steps

More than 50% of respondents experience problems accessing the existing bays, with the largest reason stated as 'availability of bays' which appears, at least in part, to be as a result of misuse by non-badge holders. Regardless of weekend access, this matter should be considered further. Provision of additional bays would be beneficial as would increase monitoring/enforcement of the existing provision.

There is almost unanimous support for providing access to the parking facility on a weekend, with users expressing clear views about its importance for working families and the benefits for users. Views on how to achieve this safely are mixed. Some people are unaware of the existing problems and believe the gates should just be opened as they are in the week. There are some who acknowledge the potential for it to be too busy. Some respondents offer suggestions to consider including additional signage, speed humps, further separation of the pedestrian routes and staff to monitor / supervise the facility.

There is clear opposition to the idea of a gated system and it appears this is largely due to the perception of its impact on spontaneity and potential complexity of such a system. It should be noted that no significant details or options for such a system have been put forward at this stage and different options may elicit more favourable responses. For example a scheme that just requires a vehicle registration to be put on the system once a year is likely to be more acceptable than a system requiring booking for each session of use. However, this would not necessarily address the misuse issue identified nor would it address the lack of sufficient number of bays without additional monitoring and provision of more bays.

In the first instance we are of the opinion that a competent designer should review the arrangements on site to determine if there are any improvements that can be made to allow ungated safe access, in itself a complex issue requiring further discussion and consideration. This coupled with monitoring/enforcement and provision of a few more bays would be a significant improvement. If the only solution available is via a gated access system, further discussions with users about how such a system should work would be advisable. Any such scheme must allow multiple methods to access it and be as simple as possible.

There is a risk that introduction of gated access during the week, particularly using a complicated system, may lead to dissatisfaction and the allegation that access has been made worse during the week, which clearly needs to be avoided. Moving forward, we recommend a consulting with users and designers to discuss potential options further, and in more detail, with the objective of providing safe access seven days a week.