

OLD ABERDEEN COMMUNITY COUNCIL SURVEY, 2014 rev.1

Rev.1 incorporates one later submission

Introduction

A questionnaire was included in the December issue of the Auld Toon News to provide residents with an opportunity to comment on a range of local issues. Responders could either use the form included in the newsletter or by using an electronic version accessible on the internet, via our web pages. The first page covered the Old Aberdeen area, while the second page focused on Seaton Park. Responders were encouraged to submit a response from each member of the family. During an open meeting, the Friends of Seaton Park also invited the attendees to complete the Seaton Park questions, copies of which were provided.

The feedback received is summarised below (a few phrases have been redacted to ensure anonymity):

Summary review of responses

The total number of responses received was disappointing, considering that some 1500 newsletters were circulated.

The age range of respondents was limited, with only one respondent under 31. In that Old Aberdeen is the work venue and home of thousands of students, it is evident that we are either not reaching them or they consider this sort of thing an irrelevance.

But there are clearly a number of issues that are of concern, most clearly identified in the text responses. These are, primarily:

- Poor condition of many pavements creating a significant trip hazard
- Poor condition of some road surfaces, particularly the roads with granite setts
- The impact on the area due to conversion of much family housing to student accommodation
- Traffic speeding beyond the safe limits on certain roads
- Frustration with amount of litter on the streets

And, for Seaton Park:

- Continued frustration with the lack of progress in dealing with the flooding
- Condition of some of the paths
- Insufficient toilet provision
- Litter and lack of litter bins

Within the written responses, road safety concerns were raised about parts of Don Street and Balgownie Road. These seem valid comments and will be passed on to ACC Roads department.

Number of questionnaires returned

Responses on paper	12
Responses by internet survey	<u>19</u>
Total responses received	31

Additional Seaton Park only responses 11

Responses

Questions about Old Aberdeen

Q1 Please tell us how you rate living, working or being a student in Old Aberdeen

	No opinion	Very poor	Quite poor	OK	Quite good	Very good	Mean score
Scoring value	0	1	2	3	4	5	--
Street Cleanliness	0	3	8	13	5	1	2.8
Road condition	0	5	12	11	2	0	2.3
Pavement condition	0	8	14	6	2	0	2.1
Public transport	6	2	4	8	9	1	2.5
Local facilities	2	2	4	14	6	1	2.8
Sports facilities	4	1	2	6	8	9	3.3
Parking	2	7	7	10	4	0	2.2
Schooling	17	0	1	10	0	1	1.3
Tourist friendly	0	2	7	10	8	3	3.1
Disability friendly	5	6	5	10	4	0	2.1
Personal safety**	0	1	2	4	4	0	3.0
Attractiveness as a conservation area	0	2	3	11	6	8	3.5

** This question was accidentally omitted from the internet based questionnaire.

Q2 Please add any additional comments you may have about these issues and any other issues you feel are important for the area:

“Large variation in some facilities, e.g. Sports village is very good but other areas - e.g. Seaton Park has suffered from a lack of maintenance and investment.”

“Huge traffic problem on Balgownie Road. Heading North, from Cottown many cars accelerate, making it dangerous, and often impossible, for pedestrians to cross the road. Many animals been killed on that stretch and most motorists are totally unforgiving. Some traffic calming measures; e.g. sleeping policemen, would be helpful to stop this problem before it becomes a tragedy for someone.”

“I feel that you should address the speed limit in Don Street and the Chanonry and get it lowered to 10 as cars drive to fast in these areas. A maximum speed 10 is sufficient it would also help with the noise level that is experienced in the homes of Don Street. As a safety measure. The amount of wheelie bins that are left outside all the time, not only from the Langstane flats but also from the private houses on Don Street. People are unable to use the path because of this and have to walk on the street. The paths are full of leaves and are slippery . I have noticed the leaves have all been gathered from the Chanonry but as you turn onto Don Street this has not been the case. Drivers do not take into account how narrow the foot paths are and at 20,speed by regardless. I am a driver myself and do not go faster than 10 on the Chanonry or Don street. Also Dunbar Street is a disgrace of black wheelie bins and stuff that has been thrown out. This makes Old Aberdeen very unattractive.”

"I believe the area would in a better and more attractive state if more thought went into the design of new building in the immediate vicinity. I understand that new buildings must be erected but more sympathetic designs could be sought e.g. St Peter Street."

"The granite setts in the streets (particularly College Bounds and High Street) are very poorly maintained. This makes them dangerous for pedestrians and cyclists alike. When walking you have to be very careful of your footing and if on a road bike you have to be extremely careful the front wheel does not fall between the sets. The setts are too far apart and perhaps only 1% have intact bitumen. The lights at the junction of College Bounds and High Street are pointless. Speed cameras are required to give a focus to the 20mph limit. The main culprits appear our 4WD road users."

"Extremely concerned about proliferation of HMOs.
Very bothered by cycling on pavements
Otherwise, a fine and very attractive place to live."

"Local facilities are lacking in terms of being a 'High St'. Feels somewhat lacking as a High St. Could def. do with more to attract and cater for visitors, including tourists. Little information provision, route marking etc.."

"I live on the main street going through Old Aberdeen onto King St. The house stands on its own and students pass every day dropping rubbish. There is no bin to put any rubbish into; i.e. High St / St Machar Dr / Elphinstone Rd where they walk.
Last year I telephoned the Council letting them know that when it was raining, pools of water were drifting too close to my front door. They came and repaired the pavement, but the repair did not last. This year (2014) it's as bad as it was before."

"The condition of the roads is very poor around the Chanonry, Dunbar, Cheyne and Harrow Roads. It's almost as if because they're tucked away the Council just doesn't bother. In particular the setts are now so full of weeds/moss that it can't be long before long term damage is done. The pavements are just as bad. Overall the impression is of neglect.
In the 12 years I've lived here the community feels has disappeared and the prosperous parents of students have turned the area into HMO hell. These conversions are a blight on the neighbourhood."

"Flatten the pavement slabs. They are a danger to old folks!
Smaller, quieter buses; they are a monstrous intrusion!
Stop all cars; the 'young uns' drive too fast (shocking disregard for safety).
Ban the cigarette louts from the front door of the 'St Machar' pub (disgusting)."

"I have lived in Orchard Rd for 37 years and have seen the decline in the area, when I moved here I had one worry in how I could keep my garden blooming like the rest. No worries after introduction of the blight of the HMOs, also resulting in the constant student litter I'm left with.
The pavements are a disgrace and should not be called pavements but gravel.
I totally agree the HMOs should be capped and quickly, I can live with the late night noise, partying etc., but the litter is an issue"

"I love Old Aberdeen and think it is so beautiful. My family love living here and enjoy walking through the High St up to the Chanonry to Seaton Park or to the children's school St Peters. My gripe is the pavement's poor condition on the street we live. It is so uneven and in need of repair, my children always hurt themselves when they run home."

"Cars using street as short cut - main problem"

"Why can't the sunks on Kings Crescent be cleared of weeds etc.. Our pavements are not swept, not the kerbs; tongs are used instead of a brush. The area around the Kirk and the footbridge needs

regular sweeping and the pavements from Canal St to Jute St. Pavements are kerbs in Jute St not swept, tongs are used instead. As the song goes; ""and I will walk 200 miles"" our sweeper walks 200 yards and no brush used.

Lack of yellow lines in Jute St, parking on pavements, entrance to car park.

Dog mess in car park and pavements. Dog dirt has lain on Jute St last year for 1 year. This time its 3 weeks so far.

I am the one that clears the gully drain outside our house of leaves etc. to let the water away.

I am the one that sweeps the car park in Jute St, also I oil the car park gate, I painted the hand rail at the top of the car park, the bottom gate needs replaced, as it is never painted and got damaged, repaired? by the ACC but they did a poor job of repair.

I also spray the weds yearly, cut back plants.

The wooden fencing is needing replaced, from one end to the other. Again, no regular maintenance on the fencing, now the wood has woodworm. I see now that the fencing around the bin area is in need of repairs.

In all our 35 years here the painting of the gate has been maybe twice?

May be a note to all the dog owners in the flats not to let their dogs foul the car park area."

"Very poor uneven pavement with deep puddle of water in front of 7-17 University Rd. Some puddles are very deep, dirty and muddy water with dead leaves, it becomes worse especially after rain and in winter time. A lot of time one cannot walk past each other without walk onto busy street. University Road is busy road residents most are students.

My husband reported the situation a while ago. Council did reply with a very nice letter and did a little bit work of it, an no more progress since. A few years has passed. We have to walk past it every day in order to catch bus from King St"

Orchard Street and King Street from St Peters Cemetery to University Road looks very much a slum area with unkept gardens, over-spilling refuse bins permanently occupying the pavements. Could landlords o the buy-to-let properties not be required to maintain the front gardens or at least keep the main street and area tidy. I'm sure they make enough profit to allow for this. It has become the student area but doesn't need to be an eyesore and embarrassment to residents. Whatever must visitors think of our city.

A King St resident.

Q3 Please tell us how you use Seaton Park

	Rarely or never	A few times a year	Most months	Most weeks	Most days	Mean score
Scoring value	1	2	3	4	5	--
Walking the dog	22	2	3	0	7	2.1
Using the children's play area	24	8	0	1	1	1.4
Playing sports - organised by a group	30	0	0	3	0	1.3
Playing sports – informal	25	4	3	1	0	1.4
Walking to work or University	24	3	4	2	3	1.8
To enjoy the gardens	4	12	8	8	8	3.1
To enjoy the wildlife	5	11	6	7	9	3.1
For exercise	4	5	8	8	12	3.5
For picnics	24	5	2	1	2	1.6
To use the public toilet	27	3	0	1	1	1.3

Q4 Please rate Seaton Park on these issues**

	No opinion	Very poor	Quite poor	OK	Quite good	Very good	Mean score
Scoring value	0	1	2	3	4	5	--
Tourist friendly	2	2	3	5	7		2.7
Child friendly	2	2		3	9	2	3.2
Disability friendly	5	2	2	5	3	2	2.3
Personal safety	3	5	2	6	1	3	2.3

*** These questions were accidentally omitted from the internet based questionnaire.*

Q5 Please add any additional comments you may have about these issues and any other issues you feel are important for the Park:

"The area at the back of the park where the kayak club use is poorly maintained by the Council. It's very muddy and often used as a dumping area."

"Don't sort out the flooding - keep it as a pond!"

"The slalom site needs some work to cut back overhanging trees and shore up the eroded banks. It would be good to have a good quality riverside path linking in with path onto Tillydrone and through Balgownie to the beach."

"I think there should be more than one toilet. My Mum and myself love to see the wildlife in and around Seaton Park, but a lot of the wildlife is scared away by people having barbecues and setting fires, personally I'd ban barbecues and fires, there's nothing wrong with picnics, as long as people are responsible and respect the wildlife and other people and put their litter in a bin. There used to be a few picnic tables by the river, but they were all burnt by irresponsible people for fires and barbecues. Both my Mum and I love Seaton Park, it feels like the countryside, love the nature and wildlife and that it is not commercialized, though we like the idea Friends of Seaton Park have of having a few signs about the history and wildlife of the Park, this would be interesting and educational too. I have some photos of the wildlife if that would help."

"I am very concerned about the amount of rubbish that is being left lying around, I know this is being addressed, as I have spoken to the guys who go and pick it all up, it is quite alarming that people could be so irresponsible, we have a beautiful park, let's keep it like that."

"I think it's wonderful that the park and surrounding areas are free of burger and tea vans such as has happened in the Duthie Park despite having a tea room."

"I didn't know there was a public loo in the park."

"For such a large, heavily used park, there should be more toilets.

Litter is a problem.

Asphalt paths need to be resurfaced.

But basically this is a lovely park"

"The park is a beautiful diverse city park that is loved and valued by many. It is a major city asset that while beautiful and valued, is underinvested, under promoted and therefore not fulfilling its potential.

Biggest issues are flooding, poor quality paths, no BBQ area, no formal sports area, no community area."

"Name plaques for trees and shrubs please. A tree is not just 'a tree'; they have an identity and history."

"Having fond memories of my family outings as a child - teenager in Seaton Park I really enjoy taking my grandchildren there and they love it. Well done everyone who worked to save it. Thank you all."

"When is flooding ever going to be sorted? Paths partially unusable for several years now."

"Project for Kayaking"

"Graffiti and litter mar the potential that Seaton Park undoubtedly has.
Some of the walkways (to Brig o Balgownie) are in poor repair
The park deserves more funding and attention (c.f. Duthie Park)"

"The walkway from the park to Brig o Balgownie and beyond to the beach area is very poor condition."

"Repair drainage and paths."

Q6 Age of respondents

Age range	Under 16	16-30	31-114
	0	1	40

(Includes Friends of Seaton Park responses)

All except one respondent was 31 or older.

Q8 Respondents addresses

All respondents were asked to identify their location; primarily to be able to demonstrate that the survey was honest, but also to provide feedback as to where responses came from.

The following table separates the responses received as a result of the Auld Toon News and those resulting from the Seaton Park meeting.

Post code	Area (approx.)	Old Aberdeen responses	Friends of Seaton Park responses	Total number of responses
AB10 6	Union Grove / Broomhill	1		1
AB13 0	Milltimber	1		1
AB15 5	Midstocket		1	1
AB22 8	Bridge of Don, West	2		2
AB23 8	Bridge of Don, East	1	2	3
AB24 1	Seaton	6	3	9
AB24 2	Tillydrone	3	1	4
AB24 3	Old Aberdeen	15		15
AB24 5	Pittodrie / Beach Boulevard		2	2
AB25 1	Schoolhill		1	1
AB41 7	Pitmedden / Tarves		1	1

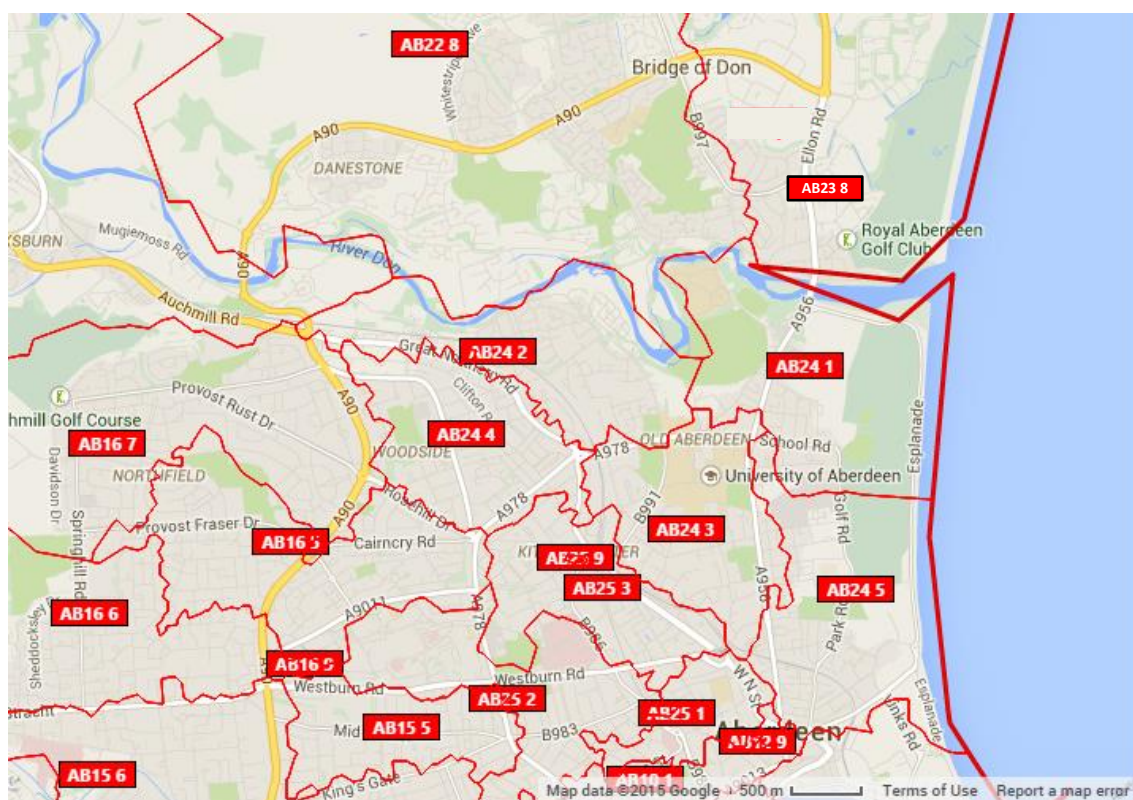
(The last two letters of the post codes have been deleted to maintain anonymity)

A further review collected the post codes of those respondents who were regular users of Seaton Park. They were identified when they had ticked 'Most weeks' or Most days' for one or more activities in Seaton Park (this includes both 'Old Aberdeen' and 'Seaton Park' responses);-

Post code	Area (approx.)	Regular park users
AB10 6	Union Grove / Broomhill	
AB13 0	Milltimber	
AB15 5	Midstocket	1
AB22 8	Bridge of Don, West	
AB23 8	Bridge of Don, East	2
AB24 1	Seaton	1
AB24 2	Tillydrone	1
AB24 3	Old Aberdeen	
AB24 5	Pittodrie / Beach Boulevard	2
AB25 1	Schoolhill	1
AB41 7	Pitmedden / Tarves	1

While the numbers are too low to be statistically significant, it is noted that there are no regular users from post code area 'AB22 8'; Bridge of Don west of the A997. The FOSP Steering Group had, in fact, already identified this area as worth leafleting to advertise the park and the work of the Friends and the survey just serves to underline that this would be a good idea.

The following map shows the location of these post code areas;



Courtesy of <http://www.free-postcode-maps.co.uk/>