



Visitor observation survey February 2019

Introduction

The visitor observation survey of 2019 told us who was and who was not using Headstone Manor Park in February 2019

This survey was very useful to help measure the impact of visitor numbers before and after the restoration project at Headstone Manor Park which commenced in April 2019.

The observation method did not require anybody to be spoken to and relied solely on recording observations of people according to specific categories and details on the survey sheet.

Materials

An observation survey pack was provided for all participants which included the following:

- Clipboard.
- Two to six visitor survey sheets for each hour.
- One to two map sheets for each hour.
- Pencils.
- Eraser.
- Pencil Sharpener.
- Mobile phone.
- Personal identification with a photograph.
- A plastic bag to protect the survey sheet in case of light rain (note that no recording was undertaken during heavy rain).

Survey method

The suggested route around the park started and finished at the car park off Pinner View and was designed to encompass the entirety of the park. It was also designed to last for one hour, using the route as a guide for participants spending the hour moving around the park recording as many visitors as possible.

It was understood that participants were likely to undertake multiple loops for details around certain areas of the park and it was important that this information was also captured, noting the amount of time actually recording the visitors including the start and finish times on the survey sheet.

This was important as this was used to work out the average number of visitors to the park over each hour.

Participants started the route, recording each person that they saw once only on the first occasion that they were seen. Each person was given a unique reference number on the map sheet which was also specific to each survey and was used to follow on from one recording session to another.

These unique reference numbers were prepopulated on the templates for the first 230 people to help speed up the recording process although it was clear that these numbers of people were not actually observed during the one hour in the park, the form required standardisation for future proofing.

It was also stressed that only people found within the park boundary needed to be counted and it was necessary to disregard those people walking on the pavement or the roads which create a natural boundary with most of the park.

At the next stage, records were added including gender, age grouping, cultural background, state (whether they were alone or in a group), accompanied by a dog and whether a disability could be perceived. Their primary activity was added to the final column of the survey sheet and any additional information which could support a comment about disability was added.

A series of abbreviated first letter or number codes were used to help speed up information gathering (for example **5** for **5 - 15** years old, **B** for dark skin, **W** for walking) These codes were unique to the sheets and full terms were used when inputting on the excel database.

How the collected data was used.

After all the observation sessions were completed, the data was analyzed as part of the restoration project at Headstone Manor Park.

This profile of visitors was prepared with demographic information on the population living within the local area to help establish which groups may not be making much use of the park as expected or desired. The distribution of visitors across the site was also mapped to help understand the most and least frequently visited locations within the park.

These findings were supplied to Harrow Council to help make an estimate of the total number of visitors to Headstone Manor Park, the actual visitor profile, and in particular, to evaluate the impact of any projects which are underway or are in preparation and are designed to increase or widen the use of the park.

Projects which are currently under investigation include physical site improvements, outreach work with under-represented groups taster sessions, published trails and marketing and promotional initiatives.

Summary of findings

This project was deemed to be incredibly successful with a total observation of 4,326 sightings.

We would like to thank all participants and park users for their help with this very valuable and useful piece of work.