

## PALACE PARK PUBLIC CONSULTATION

### 'Have Your Say' card

The freepost comment cards were distributed in July 2007 throughout the city and district using a database of all partnership groups, schools, commercial waste users, community groups and sports groups. All attractions and accommodation providers within the district were also provided with a number of cards for distribution through their premises. Approximately 800 'Have Your Say' cards were distributed through the database, with a second reminder mailing taking place at the end of August 2007. Cards were also issued to visitors to the Palace Offices including weddings ceremonies.

176 'Have Your Say' cards were returned which included responses from the following groups - Armagh Confederation of Voluntary Groups, Ballymore Open Centre, Armagh Rural Transport, Northern Ireland Tenants Action Project, Marlacoo Rural Association, Lisdown Community Fellowship, Armagh Sports Forum, Milford Women's Institute and Mossfield Community Association.

Comments were analysed under the categories of Heritage/Culture/Art, Recreation, Events, Facilities, Environment.

Category	Comments	Suggested
	Ranger's presence /park manned	4
<b>Heritage/</b>	Sculpture/art	5
<b>Culture/</b>	Amphitheatre	4
<b>Art</b>	Heritage information/information points	2
	Shared cultural events	1
	More visible living history	1
	Heritage tour	1
<b>Recreation</b>	Walking routes	26
	Larger play park for all ages	26
	Cycle path	22
	Tennis courts	15
	Skate board/skating area	14
	Football/nets for kids	7
	Football pitch	7
	Running track	6
	Pitch and Putt	6
	Boating lake	5
	Bridle path/equestrian	5
	Bowling alley	4
	Bowling green	4
	Leisure centre	3
	Orienteering	3
	Large board games/chess	3
	Go karting	2
	Older children activities (archery, tennis, climbing walls, physical obstacle course)	2
	Road bowlers training facility	1

<b>Events</b>	Concerts	29
	Fireworks	4
	Country sports/arts/craft/food Fairs	4
	Themed events	3
	Use of Chapel for events	2
	Evening motor sport events	1
	Police and Fire Service displays	1
<b>Facilities</b>	Band Stand	47
	Public Toilets	22
	Picnic areas/barbecue areas	16
	More seating/vandal proof	14
	Petting corner/mini farm (incorporate dog pound)	10
	Restaurant	7
	Caravan Park	6
	Improved lighting	4
	Signage	4
	More dog fouling bins with bags	3
	Food kiosks	3
	Disabled facilities (toilets, refreshments, paths for wheelchairs)	3
	Water features	3
	Water drinking fountains	2
	Outdoor/Indoor exhibition	2
	Memorial of remembrance for those who lost their lives during the troubles	1
	More Refuse Bins	1
	Pensioners facilities (quiet room, more seating, etc)	1
	Use of glasshouse	1
<b>Environment</b>	Maze	12
	Flower beds	5
	Wildflower garden	5
	Pond area	5
	Allotments	5
	Wildlife nature resource	4
	Butterfly Farm	3
	Develop arboretum	3
	Enforce no drinking laws	3
	Enforce dog fouling laws	2
	Practical environmental programmes	1
	Orchard – Old Armagh Apple Tree varieties	1
	Nesting boxes for wildlife	1
	Easier access to gardens at back of Palace	1

Three responses were received as letters and six via e-mail which have also been included above.

A number of responses were also received that were critical of the Council's presence in the Palace.

## Questionnaire

A random sample of current users of the park were approached and asked to complete a short questionnaire relating to their visit. In total 49 questionnaires were completed. The majority of respondents were from within the city and district with responses received from outside the district from areas such as Belfast, Cookstown, Dundalk, Kilkeel, Templepatrick, Carrickfergus, Peterborough and Sydney Australia.

The breakdown of gender surveyed was as follows:-

Female	55.3%
Male	42.6%

This was further broken down into age ranges below:-

25-49 years	51.1%
20-24 years	12.8%
65+ years	17%

85% of those surveyed were aware that the Demesne could be used by the public.

Although a high percentage of respondents were aware that the Demesne could be used by the public the random sample showed that it was actually seldom used during either the summer or the winter months.

Respondents were asked when they visited the Demesne what they used it for:-

Usage	%
Visit to go for a walk	52.5
Use the restaurant	50
Enjoy flowers and trees/beauty of surroundings/birds and wildlife	42
Relax and think/peace and quiet	35
Get fresh air/keep fit/play sports or games	32.5
Family outing	30
Play park	27.5
Events	20
Visit to walk the dogs	17.5
Other	15
Visit to meet friends	12.5
Meetings/Council services	7.5

Respondents were asked to indicate the importance to them of Heritage/Culture/Art, Recreation, Events, Facilities and Environment.

Category	Very Important
Heritage/Culture/Art	53.2%
Environment	46.8%
Facilities	36.2%
Recreation	29.8%
Events	23.4%

Category	Important
Facilities	44.7%
Recreation	41.9%
Events	38.3%
Heritage/Culture/Art	27.7%
Environment	27.7%

They were then asked to specify what they would like to see under each category. A sample of respondents own views is shown below under each category:-

- **Heritage/Culture/Art** – more tours, restoration of chapel for weddings, more history and exhibitions on Archbishop Robinson's contribution to Armagh, preserve and promote heritage, more literature display panels, living history throughout the Demesne and access to St Brigid's Well.
- **Recreation** – children's facilities, paths for walking and cycling, running track, tennis court, crazy golf and trim trail.
- **Events** – music festivals, vintage car rally, music concerts, family fun days and plays.
- **Facilities** – good clean toilets, public information points, more litter bins that are emptied regularly, good lighting, visible staff, somewhere for outdoor shows and BBQ covered/open area for families.
- **Environment** – all grounds, trees and gardens to be preserved, environmental/education programme, better paths, clean and litter free.

As the Palace Demesne is an historical site respondents were asked for further suggestions on how to best use the Demesne. This question again allowed the respondents to suggest their own ideas. A sample of these is shown below:-

- Log cabins in the wooded area, nature trails in the woods, bridle paths, concerts involving local musicians, school orchestras would all keep the site from being over-developed. It was felt that the courtyard lends itself to events/evening presentations, Christmas markets, and antique roadshow presentations.
- Other suggestions were 'history of trees' horticultural event and exhibitions on famous Armachians, plantation of apple trees, the creation of a pond/lake for rowing boats, tours of the Palace, flowers and plants to view in the conservatory and more wildlife.
- A suggestion was also made to inform the public that the Demesne was open and available to them.